The Islamic State Foreign Fighter Phenomenon and the Jihadi Threat to India

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Signed: Anurag Sharma   *Candidate ID No.:* 15212301 *Date:* 30/April/2018

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Acknowledgements

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुर्गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।

गुरुरेव परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥

Gurur-Brahma Gurur-Vishnu, Guru-Devo Maheshwaraha |

Guru-Rev Param-brahm, Tasmai Shri Gurave Namaha ||

{Translation: A Guru (Teacher) is verily the representative of the Trinity— Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. S/He creates, sustains knowledge and destroys the weeds of ignorance.
I salute such a Guru.}
– a verse from Guru Gita-Skanda Purana

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Abstract

Research to-date on the so-called 'Islamic State' (IS) or 'Islamic State of Iraq and Syria' (ISIS) foreign fighters has mainly covered the movement of these from Western countries to Iraq and Syria. A significant, but under-researched, number of foreign fighters from South-Asian countries have also travelled to IS-controlled regions. It is estimated that around 1,000 foreign fighters from five countries in South-Asia, including China, had departed by 2015.

Somewhat surprisingly, India, with the second-largest Muslim population in the world (c.172 million) after Indonesia, has an official count t of just 23 foreign fighters travelling to IS-controlled regions in Iraq and Syria, to 2017. The Indian foreign fighter contingent appears tiny in comparison with the European foreign fighter numbers or those of foreign fighters from other nations in the Indian Subcontinent (e.g. Pakistan, Maldives).

This thesis thus sought to determine if the Indian foreign fighter count is greater than the official count, how Indian foreign fighters compared with other foreign fighters in terms of individual characteristics, and the threat posed by these to India going forward. It is the first substantive analysis of the Indian foreign fighters in IS.

It was found that the number of Indian foreign fighters, including departures for Afghanistan, is 38. Data about these 38 individuals, gleaned from media accounts, court and other official documents, were then subject to analysis. The collected data was categorised according to determinants such as age, gender, home location, education, employment, etc.

Comparison between Indian and European foreign fighters was also conducted to find the similarities and differences between them based on these factors. The biggest difference was in relation to foreign fighters' prior criminal convictions. Many European fighters had criminal backgrounds, whereas only two of the Indian foreign fighters fit this description. Fourteen of the Indians are reportedly dead and just two are returnees, so unlikely to bring about the 'Islamic State-Khorasan' in the Indian Subcontinent by 2020 as called for by IS. This thesis nonetheless also explores the threat posed by returned or returning fighters to India.

Note: All interviews conducted for the purposes of this thesis, were confidential; the names of interviewees are withheld by mutual agreement between the author and the interviewees.

Introduction

India—a land of diverse culture, is popularly known to the Western world for its food and spices. A developing nation with one of the strongest economies in the Indian Subcontinent, India is the home of 1.32 billion people,[1] making it the world's second most populous country after China (c.1.38 billion). In the 21st Century, India is a key player in economics, peace, and security in the Indian Subcontinent. Sharing its geographical boundaries or International land-border with seven countries,[2] India has always been vulnerable to threats from state and non-state actors across the border. Having a territorial dispute over Kashmir with its neighbour in the West, India has retaliated four times militarily (1948, 1965, 1971 and 1999-Kargil War) against Pakistan since its Independence from Britain in 1947.

The so-called 'Islamic State' (hereafter IS) also known as 'Islamic State of Iraq and Syria', emerged as a new challenge in the Middle East region in 2014 and went on to become a global threat over the last three years. The combatant strength of this terrorist organisation is not limited to its local fighters but depends also on the mobilisation of foreign nationals in fighting roles. In fact, it is probably one of the violent organisation with the largest numbers of foreign fighters since the Afghanistan-Soviet Union war in the 1980s.[3] According to an estimate by former British spy chief, around 27,000-31,000 foreign fighters have travelled to join IS in Iraq or Syria.[4]

Research to-date on IS's foreign fighters has mainly covered the movement of these from Western countries to their so-called 'Caliphate' in Iraq and Syria. A significant, but under-researched, number of foreign fighters from South-Asian countries have also travelled to IS-controlled regions however. It is estimated that around 1,000 foreign fighters from five countries in South-Asia, including China, had departed by 2015. Somewhat surprisingly, India,

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[1] United Nations, "Population Division (2017)-India", *United Nations- Department of Economic and Social Affairs.* World Population Prospects: the 2017 revision, custom data acquired via website, Available from: https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/DataQuery/
[2] India's shares an International Land Border with 7 countries, namely Afghanistan, China, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Pakistan.
[3] Peter R. Neumann, "Foreign fighter total in Syria/Iraq now exceeds 20,000; surpasses Afghanistan conflict in the 1980s", *The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence,* 26 January 2015, Available from: http://icsr.info/2015/01/foreign-fighter-total-syriairaq-now-exceeds-20000-surpasses-afghanistan-conflict-1980s/
[4] Guy Faulconbridge, "Militants in Syria attract 31,000 foreign fighters-ex-UK spy chief", *Reuters,* 8 December 2015, Available from: http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crIS-syria-fighters-idUKKBN0TR1K420151208

with the second-largest Muslim population in the world (c.172 million)[5] after Indonesia (c.261 million), has an official count to 2017 of just 23 foreign fighters travelling to IS-controlled regions in Iraq and Syria. The Indian foreign fighter contingent is thus tiny in comparison with the European foreign fighter numbers or those of foreign fighters from other nations in the Indian Subcontinent (e.g. Pakistan, Maldives).

This thesis represents the first substantive analysis of IS's Indian foreign fighters. It seeks to determine if the Indian foreign fighter count is greater than the official count, how Indian foreign fighters compared with other foreign fighters in terms of individual characteristics, and the threat posed by these to India going forward. The thesis is divided into four chapters, an outline of each of which is supplied in the next section.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter One: Contemporary Jihadi Terrorism in India

Starting with the brief data of foreign fighters from the Indian Subcontinent, Chapter One opens the discussion with the short counts of foreign fighters from India and the factors behind these low counts. One possible answer to this could be the marginalisation of Muslim community but it leads to another question that why rest of the Muslim population rejects the philosophy of Islamic extremism. As the research theme of this thesis is the phenomenon of foreign fighters in IS, it is essential to understand the milieu that propagates the terrorism in India. The chapter give introduction to the jihadi groups that propagates the Islamic terrorism over India since 1990s. To understand it clearly, these groups are elaborated in three categories: i) Cross-border outfits, ii) Indigenous or Home-Grown groups, and iii) Transnational terrorist organisations. The section provides insights of the background and operations of these jihadi groups. Later part of the chapter discusses the emergence of Islamic State's Khorasan branch (IS-K) active in the regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Reportedly, the allegiance and mobilisation of few Indians to IS-Khorasan shows the relevance of concern that raise a jihadi threat to India.

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[5]Census 2011, "C-1 Population By Religious Community", *Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India.* Available from: http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/C-01.html; Pew Research Center, "The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections (2010-2050)", *Pew Research Center.* 2 April 2015, Available from: http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/muslims/

Chapter Two: The Foreign Fighter Phenomenon: From the Historical to the Contemporary Perspective

After an introductory part of describing jihadism in India, the chapter highlights the data or information available in literature and various independent research reports on the phenomenon of foreign fighters. It opens the discussion with the brief occurrence of foreign fighters' concept in news-media from 1980s to 2000s. During that period, how terrorist events are reported in media and the term 'insurgents' or 'fighters' used which is now like the contemporary phase of foreign fighters. After a short section on the definition of foreign fighters, the chapter emphasis on the occurrence of Indian foreign fighters in different conflicts, such as Russo-Turk War and the Spanish Civil conflict. The participation of Indian Muslims in these conflicts was merely as an aid to the primary actors in the conflicts. Further, the section discusses the involvements of foreign fighters in the 'Mother of all jihads'—the Afghanistan-Soviet Union war (hereafter Afghan-Soviet war). Moving forward with highlighting the nexus between foreign fighters and IS, the chapter provides an analysis of different variables that affects the mobilisation of foreign fighters and how India's sovereignty is vulnerable to IS threat.

Chapter Three: Indian Islamic State Fighters

As a core theme and relevance to the thesis—Chapter three provides statistical data to analyse the phenomenon of Indian foreign fighters in IS. It initiates the analyses with counts of foreign fighters from India and four European countries—France, Germany, Belgium and the United Kingdom and proceeds to the comparative analysis of the data. The data is categorising and represents the statistics of 38 Indian foreign fighters travelled between 2014-2016— in accordance different factors—age, gender, education, employment, region, and converts. Later section of the chapter highlights the threat posed by IS and al-Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) to the Indian cyberspace. The portion describes the *modus operandi* that these organisations adopts to disseminate their propaganda through social media platforms—targeting Indian Muslim audiences. It also gives brief insight of three Indians who allegedly convicted for their role in promoting IS ideology via online platforms. At many instances, the Indian government officials claimed that Islamic State is not an immediate threat to India, but

the possibility of allegiance of cross-border terror groups with IS or AQIS may pose a serious security concern. Also, looking at the lone-wolf terror attacks in the West, how serious is the situation in the Indian context? The forthcoming chapters— chapter four and conclusion, addresses the concern of lone-wolf attack by returnee IS fighters and the nexus among IS and other jihadi groups, respectively.

Chapter Four: The Threat to India from Returnee Islamic State Fighters

Moving forward towards the recent phenomenon of lone-wolf attacks, chapter-four focuses on the threat pose by the returnee IS fighters. It supports the theory of 'veteran effect' by Thomas Hegghammer that consider a returnee fighter as a much lethal operative. With examples of returnees in the West and the data of Indian foreign fighters, the section compares possible threat from 'indigenous jihadis' and 'returnee fighters'. In the mid portion, the chapter discusses the impact of terrorism in India and three major conflicts—the Khalistan movement, the Kashmir conflict, and the Naxalites-Maoists insurgency, that shaped India's stand on terrorism and its counterterrorism policy. It also highlights the recent developments of Kashmir conflict in context to Islamic State's presence in the Khorasan region or Province and how local law enforcement agencies in India at State-level are tackling the online radicalisation through their media campaigns. At the end, the chapter briefly covers the focal point of returnee Indian foreign fighter and the counterterrorism law applied to them upon their return to India. Also, the profiles of two Indian returnee fighters— Areeb Majid and Subahani Haja Moideen, are discussed to give an insight of their lives in IS and afterwards— upon their return to India. On the basis of the data on Indian foreign fighters—with only two returnees since 2014, the section concludes to the low probability of returnee Indian IS fighters.

Conclusion

The final chapter opens with the summarised content of previous chapters and highlight of the threat of IS to India— either via IS inspired lone-wolves or the possibility of 'fatal' nexus between IS and other jihadi outfits in the Indian Subcontinent. Through the historical lens, the chapter refers to the phenomenon of 'lone-wolf' in British India and how the recent developments in the phenomenon may raise panic alarm for Indian security agencies. As the situation of merger between IS and AQIS is blurred, the final section argues over the role of

Pakistan's premier intelligence agency—Inter-Services Intelligence or ISI, in support to the terror outfits that propagates jihad against India and the nexus among IS and other jihadi groups of Indian Subcontinent. Though there is a less probability of direct threat from transnational terror outfits like al-Qaeda and IS, but as cross-border terrorism has always troubled India and kept its security agencies on toes, the allegiance among transnational and cross-border groups would be a serious threat to the national security of India.

Chapter One

Contemporary Jihadi Terrorism in India

Introduction

In a report by Pew Research Centre, India is a home to the second-largest Muslim population in the world, followed by Pakistan (167 Million)[6] but the total number of foreign fighters from India is only twenty-three (23)[7], which does not stand in comparison to the flow of foreign fighters from other Muslim-dominated nations in Indian Subcontinent such as Afghanistan (50)[8], Maldives (200)[9] and Pakistan (500).[10] The small counts of foreign fighters from India are not going to make a big impact in nearest future but it surely proposed questions regarding the factors responsible for the flow of Indian foreign fighters and the lower count as compared to other countries in South-Asia or Indian Subcontinent. The situation also depicts a scope of further research for scholars and think-tanks about why the second largest Muslim population country in the world has low counts of foreign fighters in IS? What are the pulling factors that attract the Indian Muslim youth to join the terrorist organisations like IS? It is evident that the mosques, *madrasas[11]* and charitable organisations in Kerala, a Southern State in India, are connected with the Saudi Arabia's conservative ideology that gains strength over the years.[12]

The sovereignty of India has always been targeted by the jihadist violence since 1990s. According to a news report by *The Times of India*, since 2005, the terror attacks in India has claimed more than 700 civilian lives and over 3,200 injured.[13] The Constitution of India

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[6] Pew Research Centre, "Pakistani Views on Religion, Politics and Democracy", 10 May 2013, Available from: http://www.pewforum.org/2013/05/10/pakistani-views-on-religion-and-politics-as-election-nears/

[7] Note: Official figure of Indian foreign fighters from The Soufan Group (Nov. 2015) and The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism-The Hague in 2015.

[8] Note: Foreign fighters count by The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism-The Hague in 2015.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Note: A term used for Islamic educational institution.

[12] Sunil Raman, "The New Threat to Islam in India: Hardline Wahabis and Salafis are attracting new converts", *The Diplomat,* 04 February 2016, Available from: http://thediplomat.com/2016/02/the-new-threat-to-islam-in-india/

[13] Dhananjay Mahapatra, "Since 2005, terror has claimed lives of 707 Indians", *The Times of India,* 16 July 2016, Available from: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Since-2005-terror-has-claimed-lives-of-707-Indians/articleshow/53234226.cms

granted equality and rejects the discrimination based on caste system, ethnicity, religion, or gender among its citizens. But being one of the minorities group in India--the Muslim community have suffered the suspicion of harbouring loyalty to Pakistan and have been one of the victims of communal riots. In 2005, the Government of India appointed 'Sachar Committee' led by then-Justice Rajinder Sachar, for the preparation of report on social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community in India. According to that report, the education status of the Muslim community is a matter of serious concern.[14] Accordingly, Muslim graduates had the highest unemployment rate in comparison to other members of minority groups in India.[15] The sense of marginalisation among Indian Muslims might have created a space for jihadism in India.

Jihadist Groups: A Shadow of Islamic Terrorism over India

The security situation in India is vulnerable to the growth of Islamic radicalisation among its Muslim youth population. India is on the verge of threat from extreme-ideological jihadists. During the violent protest in Kashmir—a region in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, the waving of IS's 'black flag' and Pakistan flags are clear indication that Islamic State is trying to hold the Indian Muslims from India. On July 2016, the encounter between militants and the Indian security forces that led to the killing of Hizb-ul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani, was very much violently protested by the local Kashmiris especially a specific group of youth for whom Burhan Wani was an icon in the fight for liberation of Kashmir from India. The violent protest led to 53 days of curfew in the Valley of Kashmir and over 80 dead with nearly 11,000 persons- 7,000 civilians and 4,000 security personnel have been injured during the protest. For the Kashmir separatist groups seeking the establishment of independent Kashmir, the violent protest in Kashmir was a golden opportunity to provoke the youth against Indian security forces; whereas on the other side, this could have been an opportunity for violent jihadi groups to recruit the Indian Muslims to wage war against Indian security forces and the State. The philosophy of jihadism in India propagated by IS or other extremist-jihadi group is traced back to the prophecy of *Ghazwa-e-Hind* (the battle of India), a statement prophesised by the

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[14] Sachar Committee Report- Ministry of Minority Affairs, *Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India,* (Government of India, November 2006), Available from: http://minorityaffairs.gov.in/sites/default/files/sachar_comm.pdf

[15] Stephen Tankel, "Indian Jihadism: The Evolving Threat", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism,* Volume 37(7), 2014, pp. 567-585, Available from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/1057610X.2014.913120

Prophet Muhammad, that two groups- a group that will rise from India and join the forces and the second group led by Jesus, who will be reincarnated in the region of Israel to establish the global Islamic rule, will be saved from the fire of hell.[16] This prophecy is largely referenced in the videos and literature of the Taliban group, al-Qaeda and by the mainstream jihadist groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad(JeM).

This section discusses the profiling of terrorist organisations that are directly or indirectly responsible for terrorist attacks in India. For this purpose, the list of banned organisations is referred from the website of the India's Ministry of Home Affairs.[17] In this list, total 39 terrorist organisations are banned, out of which 14 organisations are Islamic jihadi groups. Along with these 39 terrorist organisations, the list consists of organisations listed in the 'Schedule to the UN Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism (Implementation of Security Council Resolutions) Order 2007. To meet the purpose of this chapter, the section will only discuss the terrorist organisation in relevance to the phenomenon of Indian foreign fighters in IS or other terrorist groups. It also discusses the affiliate groups of transnational organisations mainly al-Qaeda and IS, operating in and outside India. The terrorist organisations are discussed in three categories: (1) Cross-Border terrorist groups, (2) Indigenous jihadi groups, and (3) Transnational terrorist organisations.

Cross-Border Terrorist Groups

Geographically, India shared its land borders with seven countries namely, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Myanmar, Pakistan and Nepal. Out of these seven nations, India opposes the problem of cross-border terrorism from the jihadi groups based in and operating from Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK).[18] Unlike al-Qaeda or IS, the main objective of most of these groups is to liberate the State of Kashmir from India. Reportedly, groups like Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), and Harkat-ul Mujahideen (HuM) are common on the Ministry of Home Affairs' list of 'banned organisations' and the US Department's 'Foreign Terrorist Organisations' list, are supported

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[16] Tufail Ahmad, *Jihadist Threat to India- The Case for Islamic Reformation By An Indian Muslim* (India: Infolimmer Media Private Limited, 2016), 87.
[17] "Banned Organisations", *Ministry of Home Affairs- Government of India,* Available from: http://mha.gov.in/related-links/banned-organizations
[18] Note*: Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir or PoK refer to the region along with Line of Control (LoC) of Pakistani-administered regions of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan regions.*

by Pakistan's intelligence agency—Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).[19] Some of these groups are allied with or support the terrorist groups that fight the Pakistan, even though Pakistan's ISI back these groups.[20] Since 1947, India and Pakistan fought four military wars in years of 1948, 1965, 1971, and 1999; each of these wars were initiated with Pakistan and ended with its defeat. As Pakistan could not counter India on conventional methods like use of armed forces, the Pakistani strategists have determined to use un-conventional methods which include supporting the jihadist groups in the region.[21] In India's list of banned organisations, except IS and al-Qaeda no other group is directly involved in the mobilisation of Indian youth as a foreign fighter to conflict zones. Therefore, few noted groups that are involved directly in the act of terrorism in India, are discussed in this section. Some of the affiliated terrorist groups such as Janood-ul-Khalifa-e-Hind, and Ansar-ut Tawhid fi Bilad al-Hind (AuT)—affiliated to al-Qaeda, are excluded from the India's list of banned organisations. During an interview with the author, an official at India's Ministry of Home Affairs has stated that there is no specific reason behind exclusion of these groups from the list and he is not a right person to comment on it.[22]

Lashkar-e-Taiba / Pasban-e-Ahle Hadis

Lashkar-e-Taiba (hereafter LeT) literally means 'Army of the Pure' or 'Army of the Good', is one of the most active and feared terrorist organisations in South Asia. Commonly known as LeT, it is based and operates mainly from Pakistan and headed by its leader—Hafiz Muhammad Saeed. LeT was formed in 1990 in the Kunar province of Afghanistan as a military wing of the *Markaz-ud-Dawah-wal-Irshad* (MDI), which was an Islamic missionary and charitable organisation in existence since 1986. Following the ideology of Wahhabism, LeT's main objective is to establish the Islamic rule all over India and separation of the state of

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[19] Jayshree Bajoria and Eben Kaplan, "The ISI and Terrorism: Behind the Accusations", *Council on Foreign Relations,* 04 May 2011, Available from: http://www.cfr.org/pakistan/isi-terrorism-behind-accusations/p11644
[20] Bill Roggio, "Pakistan: Friend or Foe in the Fight Against Terrorism?", *FDD's Long War Journal,* 12 July 2016, Available from: http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/07/pakistan-friend-or-foe-in-the-fight-against-terrorism.php
[21] Ibid.
[22] Interview with an official of India's Ministry of Home Affairs by the author, Delhi, India, 27 February 2017.

Kashmir from India.[23] With its main objective, LeT is the strongest ally of al-Qaeda in South-Asia region. Since 1993, the organisation has been involved in several protests and hundreds of deaths in the communal massacres in the valley of Kashmir. In 1996, a group of LeT terrorists killed 16 Hindus at Barshalla, Doda district in Kashmir. The Mumbai terrorist attack in November 2008 is one of the major terrorist attacks coordinated and carried out by 10 LeT members. In response, Indian paramilitary forces retaliated and killed 9 out of 10 terrorists. One terrorist, Ajmal Kasaab was captured alive and presented as a primary evidence of the evil deeds of Lashkar-e-Taiba in the Indian court of Law. Due to political pressure from International community, Pakistan banned LeT and after few days, it re-surfaced as *Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD)* and Hafiz Muhammad Saeed as its organisational chief.

On the surface, *Jamaat ud-Dawa* displayed social work projects and relief activities to attract the funds from domestic and international sources. But internally, JuD was none other than LeT, which was doing recruitment and regulates the funds through its 70 district offices in Pakistan. According to official records of chief administrator of Muridke Markaz (Punjab Province), in 2013-2014, JuD was given a grant-in-aid of 3.73 crores (37.3 million) of Pakistani rupees. In the year 2014-2015, the grant increased to 3.81 crores (38.1 million) of Pakistani rupees.[24] This depicts the internal support of Pakistan government to JuD, a 'front-face' organisation of LeT. Due to its uncompromised spirit of jihad and separation of the state of Kashmir from India, LeT is one of the favourites of Pakistan's ISI agency.

Indians in Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)

In 2013, an assessment on over 900 deceased LeT fighters was done by *Combating Terrorism Center, West Point.*[25] It provides a basic data about LeT recruits. In the list, few terrorists were nationals of Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir (PoK), but large number of terrorists were Pakistanis. In reference to India, four Indian nationals from

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[23] Shanthie Mariet D'Souza and Bibhu Prasad Routray, "Jihad in Jammu and Kashmir: actors, agendas and expanding benchmarks", *Small Wars and Insurgencies,* Vol. 27(4), 19 June 2016, Available from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09592318.2016.1189485

[24] Shanthie Mariet D'Souza and Bibhu Prasad Routray, "Jihad in Jammu and Kashmir: actors, agendas and expanding benchmarks", *Small Wars and Insurgencies,* Vol. 27(4), 19 June 2016, Available from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09592318.2016.1189485

[25] Anirban Ghosh, Arif Jamal, Christine Fair, Don Rassler, and Nadia Shoeb, "The Fighters of Lashkar-e-Taiba: Recruitment, Training, Deployment and Death", *Combating Terrorism Center,* 04 April 2013, Available from: https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-fighters-of-lashkar-e-taiba-recruitment-training-deployment-and-death

Jammu and Kashmir, namely- Abu Shuaib Saani, Abu Shuaib Kashmiri Muhammad Tariq, Abu Saifullah Wazir Ahmed, all three from Baramulla region, and Abu Asim from Srinagar, were members of the organisation.[26]

Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) / Tahrik-e-Furqan

Jaish-e-Muhammad/Tehrik-e-Furqan or 'Army of Muhammad' is another active terrorist group in Kashmir. Likewise, LeT, JeM's primary objective is the separation of Kashmir from Indian control and to attain this objective, JeM has executed several terrorist attacks on Indian soil, mainly targeting the Indian armed forces in the Indian part of Jammu and Kashmir. Ideologically, Jaish-e-Muhammad is a Deobandi[27] terrorist organisation which was created by Pakistan's ISI Directorate.[28] It is believed that Jaish-e-Muhammad has close ties with several regional terrorist groups mainly, Deobandi Afghan Taliban, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), and al-Qaeda. The founder and leader of Jaish-e-Muhammad, Maulana Masood Azhar, was one of the three terrorists released by the Indian government in exchange for the 176 passengers and 15 crew members of the Indian Airline flight 814 in 1999. On 24th December 1999, the Indian Airline flight 814 bound from Kathmandu (Nepal) to Delhi (India), was hijacked by the terrorists associated with Harkat-ul-Mujahideen. The hijacked flight was directed towards Kandahar airport (Afghanistan), where Indian officials delivered three terrorists, Maulana Masood Azhar, Mushtaq Ahmad Zargar and Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh. All three were escorted by the officials of Pakistan's ISI agency.

In 2000, Masood Azhar re-surfaced in Karachi (Pakistan) and announced the formation of Jaish-e-Muhammad. In late 2001, Jaish-e-Muhammad split when its core members disagreed to stay loyal to the government of Pakistan under then-President General Parvez Musharraf, who was aiding American troops to overthrow the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Despite the pressure from its leadership, Maulana Masood Azhar decided to stay loyal to the government of Pakistan and reported all the developments to ISI. The notable terrorist attack on Indian

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[26] Anirban Ghosh, Arif Jamal, Christine Fair, Don Rassler, and Nadia Shoeb, "The Fighters of Lashkar-e-Taiba: Recruitment, Training, Deployment and Death", *Combating Terrorism Center,* 04 April 2013, Dataset (in MS-Excel form), Available from: http://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/LeT-Fighter-Data-Individual-Level-Final-for-release.xlsx

[27] Note: Deobandi follows conservative Islamic orthodoxy of a Salafist model.

[28] C. Christine Fair, "Bringing back the Dead: Why Pakistan Used the Jaish-e-Mohammad to Attack an Indian Airbase", *The World Post*, 07 January 2015, Available from: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/c-christine-fair/bringing-back-the-dead-wh_b_8955224.html

Parliament in December 2001 was carried out jointly by the terrorists of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM). On 26th January 2014, the day when India celebrates its Republic Day, Masood Azhar addressed a large rally in Muzaffarabad, Pakistan via telephone. While addressing, he launched a book, '*Aaina'-* means mirror, based on the diary writings of Afzal Guru, an Indian held guilty for assisting the terrorist involved in Indian Parliament attack. Afzal Guru was hanged to death on 09th February 2013 in the Indian jail.

The first attack carried out by the JeM was a suicide attack. In 2000, a 17-years-old Kashmiri schoolboy and a cadre of Jaish-e-Muhammad, Afaq Ahmad, blew himself in an explosive-laden car in front of Indian Army headquarters in Srinagar, Kashmir. After few months, another notable martyr of Jaish-e-Muhammad, 24-years-old, British national Abdullah Bhai detonated a Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) in front of Indian Army headquarters in Srinagar, killing over a dozen soldiers.[29] Apart from the usually armed conflicts between terrorists of Jaish-e-Muhammad and Indian armed forces in the Kashmir Valley, according to a claim made by the Indian government, the recent terrorist attack on 02nd January 2016 at Pathankot (Indian Punjab) airbase was carried out by the perpetrators belong to Jaish-e-Muhammad. As an estimate by the Indian armed forces, a group of five armed terrorists attacked the Pathankot Airforce Station, which is the important part of the Western Air Command of the Indian Air Force. Allegedly, the Pathankot attackers left a handwritten note in the car of Superintendent of Police, the note said[30] :

> "Jaish-e-Muhammad Zindabad — Tangdhar se le kar Samba Kathua, Rajbagh aur Delhi tak, Afzal Guru shaheed kay jaanisar tum ko miltay rahega inshallah A G S 25-12-15" [Translation: Long live Jaish-e-Muhammad — From Tangdhar (in Kupwara) to Sambha Kathua (in Jammu), Rajbagh (Srinagar) and Delhi, you will keep meeting with Afzal Guru's loyalists who are ready to lay down their lives for him]."

Later, United Jihad Council (UJC), a Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir (PoK) based militant group claimed the responsibility of the Pathankot Airbase attack. The United Jihad Council is a corporation of thirteen militant outfits, including Lashkar-e-Taiba. However, Jaish-e-Muhammad declines the union claimed by United Jihad Council's Spokesman, Syed Sadaqat

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[29] Shanthie Mariet D'Souza and Bibhu Prasad Routray, "Jihad in Jammu and Kashmir: actors, agendas and expanding benchmarks", Small Wars and Insurgencies, Vol. 27(4), 19 June 2016, Available from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09592318.2016.1189485
[30] Muzamil Jaleel, "Afzal Guru and the Jaish's jihad project", *The Indian Express,* 12 January 2016, Available from: http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/afzal-guru-and-the-jaishs-jihad-project/

Hussain.[31] The United Jihad Council operates from Muzaffarabad in the Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir (PoK) region and Jaish-e-Muhammad joined United Jihad Council in the year 2000 whereas Lashkar-e-Taiba became its member in 2003.[32]

Hizb-ul-Mujahideen / Hizb-ul-Mujahideen Pir Panjal Regiment

Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM) or 'Party of Mujahideen' is an Islamist militant wing based in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK). The outfit was founded by Muhammad Asan Dar in September 1989 and has been actively involved in the dispute of Jammu and Kashmir since then. Reportedly, Hizb-Ul-Mujahideen's formation was influenced from Pakistan's famous religious-political party *Jamaat-e-Islami* and supported with training and funding by none other than Pakistan's ISI agency to counter the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF)—an organisation that supports the complete independence of the state of Kashmir.[33] The outfit was on the edge of a split when several voices from the group including its operational commander, Abdul Majeed Dar, thought of more peaceful approaches in the matter of Kashmir's independence from India. In July 2000, four of its leaders and Abdul Dar declared a unilateral ceasefire in the valley which was unwelcomed by the organisation's Pakistan-based commander, Sayeed Salahudeen. In the year 2002, Dar was criticised of being an agent of India's external Intelligence agency, Research & Analysis Wing (R&AW) and was ousted from the group along with other four commanders who supported the declaration. In 2003, Abdul Majeed Dar was assassinated by unknown militants who opened the fire upon him and his mother and sister.[34] It is believed that his pro-peace talks were not appreciated by other militant groups, but no outfit claimed responsibility for his assassination.

The formation of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen was aimed to counter the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), which was favouring the complete independence of the Jammu and

[31] Peerzada Ashiq, "United Jihad Council claims responsibility for Pathankot attack", *The Hindu,* 04 January 2016, Available from: http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/united-jihad-council-claims-responsibility-of-pathankot-attack/article8064932.ece

[32] Shanthie Mariet D'Souza and Bibhu Prasad Routray, "Jihad in Jammu and Kashmir: actors, agendas and expanding benchmarks", Small Wars and Insurgencies, Vol. 27(4), 19 June 2016, Available from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09592318.2016.1189485

[33] "Hizb-Ul-Mujahideen: Mapping Militant Organisations", *Stanford University*, 08 August 2012, Available from: https://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/223?highlight=Hizb+ul+mujahideen

[34] Mukhtar Ahmad, "Abdul Majid Dar shot dead", *Rediff India Abroad News,* 23 March 2003, Available from: http://www.rediff.com/news/2003/mar/23jk.htm

Kashmir. The Hizb-ul-Mujahideen always stands for the integration of Kashmir into the Pakistan and therefore advocates the 'Islamisation' of Kashmir. The Hindu population of Kashmir was working as a knot that ties the State with India. Therefore, for Islam to be preserved and prevail in Jammu and Kashmir, it was necessary to separate the State from India. In late 1989 and early 1990, a 'project' of ethnic cleansing was initiated against the Hindu Pandits, who were descendants of Hindu priests and original inhabitants of the Kashmir valley for 5000 years. On 19 January 1990, a Hindu pandit nurse working at the Soura Medical College Hospital in Srinagar was raped and later killed by the Pakistan-backed terrorists.[35] Banners were made, declarations were published in the local newspapers and the announcements were made from the local mosques asking the Kashmiri Pandits to evacuate the valley as soon as earliest. The properties that belong to Pandits were either destroyed or taken over by the terrorists and local Muslims. As a result, between February and March 1990, from 140,000 to 190,000 Kashmiri Hindu Pandits fled the valley of Kashmir and settled in Jammu, Delhi or other parts of India.[36] The continuation of a terror campaign by JKLF and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen led to killings of local Hindus, Sikhs including high profile Hindu officials and prominent personalities of the Jammu and Kashmir.

In January 2002, then-Pakistan President General Parvez Musharraf passed a declaration that only Kashmiri groups but no Pakistani national would wage a jihad under the excuse of Kashmir. In his address, Musharraf said that "No organisations will be able to carry out terrorism under the pretext of Kashmir…whoever is involved with such acts in the future will be dealt with strongly whether they come from inside or outside of the country".[37] This statement turned the recruitment strategy of Hizb-Ul-Mujahideen and other terrorist groups in the valley and they inclined towards recruiting more Kashmiri youth to increase the presence and support among locals of the valley.

In a recent terrorist encounter, Burhan Muzaffar Wani— a 22-years-old commander of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen was killed in an operation with Indian armed forces on 08th July 2016. He was one of the prominent faces of this outfit on social media and had outreach the youth of South

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[35] K. P. S. Gill, "The Kashmiri Pandits: An Ethnic Cleansing the World Forgot", *Freedom from Fear: South Asia Terrorism Portal*, Available from: http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/kpsgill/2003/chapter9.htm

[36] Shanthie Mariet D'Souza and Bibhu Prasad Routray, "Jihad in Jammu and Kashmir: actors, agendas and expanding benchmarks", Small Wars and Insurgencies, Vol. 27(4), 19 June 2016, Available from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09592318.2016.1189485

[37] "Musharraf declares war on extremism", *BBC News,* 12 January 2002, Available from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1756965.stm

Kashmir. Due to his social media campaign and insurgency operations, Government of India announced a bounty of one million Indian Rupees for finding him. In one of his videos, Burhan Wani appeals the youth of the Kashmir to join Hizb-ul-Mujahideen for establishing the 'Caliphate' in the region and claimed to have recruited at least 30 youth from South of Kashmir.[38] Upon killing of Burhan Wani, the leader of Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hafiz Muhammad Saeed quoted him as a 'Martyr':

"Burhan Wani was martyred. Lakhs of Kashmiris came to the streets to attend his funeral. Did you see a man who was being carried on shoulders by the crowd? Do you know this youth who was leading the procession? Do you know who he is? He is 'ameer' of LeT".[39]

The killing of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen militant, Burhan Wani made him a martyr for the youth of Kashmir and bring the unrest in some areas of the Kashmir Valley. Police stations and security forces are being attacked by mobs whereas stone pelting is reported in the areas as well. Due to the unrest, the *Amarnath Yatra,* a holy Hindu pilgrimage has been suspended and resumed later.

Harkat-ul-Mujahideen / Harkat-ul-Ansar / Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islami

Harkat-ul-Mujahideen or Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islami (HuJI) means "Islamic Jihadi Movement" is an Islamic fundamentalist organisation that follows the ideology of Deobandi School of radical Islam. HuJI mainly operating in Pakistan and Bangladesh but had conducted militancy in some parts of India. HuJI is born out of the Afghan-Soviet war when it started its jihadist activities in Afghanistan alongside Afghani Islamist groups. But after the end of the conflict with Soviets in 1989, the outfit placed its focus on Kashmir issue and began to spread out with branches in India, Myanmar and Bangladesh. In 1995, HuJI leader Saifullah Akhtar involved with Pakistan Army's Generals Zaheer ul Islam Abbasi and Monstasir Billah, in a plan to topple the then-Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto. The plan was to eliminate

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[38] Toufiq Rashid, "In a new video, J-K militant Burhan Wani asks youth to join him", *The Hindustan Times,* 26 August 2015, Available from: http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/in-new-video-j-k-militant-burhan-wani-asks-youth-to-join-him/story-q83k8ndWm2Wf6TUWI5TtmN.html

[39] "Hafiz Saeed Says Burhan Wani Funeral Procession Led By Lashkar 'Ameer'", *NTDV,* 29 July 2016, Available from: http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/hafiz-saeed-says-burhan-wani-funeral-procession-led-by-lashkar-ameer-1437582

the top ranks of civil and military establishments and replace the sovereignty with the Caliphate.[40]

In 1990, HuJI played a major role in Kashmir militancy. HuJI was led by Ilyas Kashmiri, founder of HuJI and senior al-Qaeda operative in the region. Kashmiri, associated with al-Qaeda operative Omar Sheikh, was involved in the killing of American journalist Daniel Pearl. In February 2000, Kashmiri killed an Indian Army personnel and beheaded him in the northern part of Kashmir. To prove his brutality, he photographed himself with the head and circulated the photograph among his group and Pakistani media. He began his militant career with Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) but due to growing differences with its leader, Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, he left the group and formed HuJI. In June 2011, the operational commander and leader of HuJI—Ilyas Kashmiri was killed in the US predator drone strike.

The terrorist attacks in India perpetrated by HuJI members are few as compare to the other militant groups. The 2010 bombings at German Bakery in Pune, the 2011 bombing outside the Delhi High Court in Delhi, the 2007 bombing at Mecca Masjid (Mosque) in Hyderabad, are few incidents partially claimed by HuJI. In 2005, a suicide bombing was carried out by a Bangladeshi national, Mohatasin Bilal at the Andhra Pradesh's Counter Terrorism Special Task Force Police headquarters. Some of the attacks in India, such as 2011 Delhi bombing and 2010 bombing in Pune was operationally coordinated with the 'home-grown' radical Islamist outfit-SIMI (Students Islamic Movement of India). Reportedly, prior to these attacks the members of SIMI provided shelter and logistics help the terrorists of HuJI-Bangladesh and some of the members of SIMI joined Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami- Bangladesh.

Indigenous Jihadi Groups

Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI)

Originated in 1977, Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI)— was an indigenous banned Islamist student organisation in India formed as a student wing of *Jamaat-e-Islami Hind* (JIH).[41] It was formed at Aligarh district in an Indian state of Uttar Pradesh by

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[40] Farhan Zahid, "A Profile of Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami (HuJI), Movement of Islamic Holy Warriors", *Foreign Analysis No. 3- Centre Francais de Recherche sur le Renseignement,* 2014, Available from: http://www.cf2r.org/images/stories/foreign_analyzes/fa-3.pdf
[41] 'Jamaat-e-Islami Hind' is an Indian branch of Jamaat-e-Islami which was established in 1941.

Mohammad Ahmadullah Siddiqui as a founding president of the organisation. At the time of its formation, Mohammad A. Siddiqui was a Professor of journalism and public relations at the Western Illinois University Macomb, United States.[42] The parent organisation of JIH—*Jamaat-e-Islami* (JeI) was founded by Maulana Sayyid Abu'l-A'la Mawdudi as an Islamist revivalist organisation. In 1920s, Mawdudi witnessed the Hindu-Muslim communal riots and he was concerned about making Islam the supreme organising principle for the social and political life of the Muslim community.[43] Influenced by the network of Islamists worldwide, the young members of *Jamaat-e-Islami Hind* were not content and believed that the organisation is not fuelling its founder Mawdudi's vision of establishing the Caliphate.[44] In 1981, SIMI decided to split from its parent organisation, *Jamaat-e-Islami Hind* over the grounds of differences regarding the visit of Yasser Arafat—the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), to India and greeted him with black flags in Delhi.[45] Young activists of SIMI viewed Arafat as a Western puppet, while the top-brass of *Jamaat-e-Islami Hind* considered him as a champion of the Palestinian cause. To continue its image as a hard-liner Islamist organisation, SIMI sought self-governance and separation from *Jamaat-e-Islami Hind.* The radical shift in SIMI's ideology was based on three principles- (i) governing human life on the basis of the Holy Quran, (ii) propagation of Islam, and (iii) Jihad for the cause of Islam.[46]

Since its inception in 1977, SIMI was an active, home-grown Islamic fundamentalist terrorist group that works towards the goal of 'liberating India from the power of Westernisation' by converting its people to Islam either forcefully or with violence, under the Sharia law. After the incident of demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992, SIMI's ideology turned more radical and violent. By the year 1996, SIMI coined the issue of Babri Masjid demolition among India's Muslim population and propagated that India's secular democratic image could not provide protection to the Muslim community in India. Regardless of being not-so-popular extremist

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[42] "What is SIMI: All you wanted to know about the banned organisation", *The Hindustan Times,* 31 October 2016, Available from: http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/what-is-simi-all-you-wanted-to-know-about-the-banned-organisation/story-Du9UmH5Jq1vMnBqu02LVbK.html

[43] V. S. Subrahmanian, Aaron Mannes, Animesh Roul, and R. K. Raghavan, *Indian Mujahideen: Computational Analysis and Public Policy* (India: Springer International Publishing, 2013), 21.

[44] Ibid, 25

[45] "Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI)", *South Asia Terrorism Portal,* Available from: http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/terroristoutfits/simi.htm

[46] HT Correspondent, "What is SIMI: All you wanted to know about the banned organisation", *Hindustan Times,* 31 October 2016, Available from: http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/what-is-simi-all-you-wanted-to-know-about-the-banned-organisation/story-Du9UmH5Jq1vMnBqu02LVbK.html

organisation, SIMI grew rapidly. It published periodicals in different regional languages and established its own printing press to propagate its message of 'Islamic revolution'.[47] SIMI urged Indian Muslims to walk over the path of Mahmud of Ghazni, an 11thCentury Muslim conqueror who invaded India and murdered many Hindus after destroying their temples, a place of worship.[48] By the year 2000, SIMI turned into a big home-grown jihadi group with 400 full-time workers and around 20,000 dedicated volunteers. Along with such organisational strength, SIMI also had special wings for Madrasa students and children aged between 7-11 years, namely the *Shaheen Force*.[49]

To seek further growth of the organisation, SIMI's leaders turned out to Pakistan-based extremist and terrorist organisations. These groups and Pakistan's ISI agency took the advantage of communal riots of 1992 and assisted SIMI members to get trained covertly under ISI officers with the aim of launching rebellious attacks in India.[50] In 2000, the arrest of SIMI member and his accomplice—a Chinese Muslim from Xinjiang in China, at the border between West Bengal and Bangladesh have revealed the connection between SIMI and an Islamic group in Western China struggling for the independence.[51] In 2001, after the 11 September attacks in the United States, SIMI praised the act of al-Qaeda's leader Osama bin Laden and organised demonstrations in the Indian states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Gujarat. Soon after this, SIMI was declared as a terrorist organisation and proscribed under the India's Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 [UA(P)A]. Following the proscription, Safdar Nagori who served as national president of the organisation, got arrested during nation-wide crackdowns on SIMI's offices, while other SIMI members went underground. In his interview in 2001, Nagori claimed himself as 'very bitter about being an Indian' and if threat against Muslims continued in democratic India, Muslims 'will not take it lying down'.[52] For some beliefs, after the arrests of its main leaders and members, SIMI was dismantled but there are some evidences that another home-grown jihadi group, Indian Mujahideen or IM is nothing

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[47] Yoginder Sikand, "The SIMI Story", *Counter Currents,* 15 July 2006, Available from: https://www.countercurrents.org/comm-sikand150706.htm
[48] Shishir Gupta, *Indian Mujahideen: the enemy within* (India: Hachette India, 2012)
[49] Yoginder Sikand, "The SIMI Story", *Counter Currents,* 15 July 2006, Available from: https://www.countercurrents.org/comm-sikand150706.htm
[50] Arindam Banerji, "The Threat in the North East", *Rediff News,* 27 April 2004, Available from: http://www.rediff.com/news/2004/apr/27ariban.htm
[51] Yoginder Sikand, "The SIMI Story", *Counter Currents,* 15 July 2006, Available from: https://www.countercurrents.org/comm-sikand150706.htm
[52] Sayantan Chakravarty, "I am very bitter about being an Indian'', *India Today,* 02 April 2001, Available from: http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/our-madarsas-are-not-nurseries-of-terror-simi-leader-safdar-nagori/1/232611.html

but a new *avatar* or manifestation of SIMI. This belief is based on an interrogation of captured Indian Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Taiba member Zabiuddin Ansari *aka* Abu Jundal who was giving instructions to the terrorists of November 2008 Mumbai attacks.[53] Ansari claimed that SIMI was the 'backbone' for Islamic jihadi groups in India and had been involved in every major terror attack on Indian soil, as the ground support and recce was done by SIMI members only.[54]

Indian Mujahideen (IM)

Another indigenous jihadi group formed in India, Indian Mujahideen (hereafter IM) has not yet officially declared its allegiance to the Islamic State but many of its key members has supported the IS's ideology and joined the outfit. The birth of IM was not a result of any political or religious motive and it was not an influence of Islamic religious writings but was motivated by the desire to revenge the atrocities and actions, such as *Babri Masjid* demolition in 1992 and Gujarat massacre in 2002, on the Muslim community in India. To understand the ideology and various aspects of IM as a terror group, it is important to give a glance at another terror group— Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), from where the IM originated. SIMI was founded on 25th of April 1977 in Aligarh, a city in northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. The SIMI was an emerged wing of *Jamaat-e-Islami-Hind* (JIH), an Islamic organisation in India. The rise of early years of IM has been drawn from Sadiq Israr Sheikh. Like Riyaz and Iqbal, Sadiq was born in a family that migrated to Mumbai. In 1996, he began to attend the meetings of SIMI. In April 2001, Sadiq Sheikh eventually met Asif Re za Khan— a gangster in Gujarat. Riyaz and Sadiq had known each other from the days of SIMI. Through Asif Khan, they came together for the project of IM. After receiving training from LeT in Pakistan, Sheikh initialised recruitment cadre in Azamgarh, a city in the State of Uttar Pradesh, in 2002. Another member of the group, Atif Amin, was responsible for providing manpower for the attacks through his Azamgarh cell. Atif Amin was killed in a shootout by Delhi Police in October 2008. Sadiq Sheikh acted as a link between the Azamgarh cell and the IM's senior leadership in Mumbai. Riyaz's brother, Iqbal Shahbandri raised the operatives for a specialist

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[53] V. S. Subrahmanian, Aaron Mannes, Animesh Roul, and R. K. Raghavan, *Indian Mujahideen: Computational Analysis and Public Policy* (India: Springer International Publishing, 2013), p. 40.
[54] Rajnish Sharma, "SIMI backbone of terror outfits: Abu Jundal", *The Asian Age,* 26 July 2012, Available from: http://archive.asianage.com/india/simi-backbone-terror-outfits-abu-jundal-865

computer services cell. Whereas Riyaz and his cell sourced explosives and components for a bomb, that were assembled into usable devices.

According to the dossier compiled by the India's National Investigation Agency (NIA), the Islamic State is believed to be using the banned organisation— Indian Mujahideen (IM) to recruit young Muslims from the Indian states, mostly from Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Jammu & Kashmir.[55] In June 2010, the Government of India banned the Indian Mujahideen and all its affiliations and front organisations under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967. IM group was responsible for terrorist activities in India since the year 2005, especially the serial bomb blasts in September 2008, at various locations in New Delhi. According to a report by the Ministry of Home Affairs, "Indian Mujahideen is a shadow outfit of the banned SIMI and Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba and is directly controlled by Pakistan's ISI".[56] In the media note on Indian Mujahideen, the US Department of State quoted that,

"Indian Mujahideen (IM) maintains close ties with Pakistan-based terrorist groups, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Harkat ul-Jihadi-i-Islami (HuJI). IM's primary goal is to carry out terrorist actions against non-Muslims in furtherance of its ultimate objective- Islamic Caliphate across South Asia."[57]

In August 2013, the arrest of IM's leader Yasin Bhatkal and other important operatives revealed the role of their outfit in the 2006 Mumbai train bombings and the nature of support from cross-border terrorist group— LeT and Pakistan's. ISI[58] The split between the top leaders of IM— Shafi Armar and Bhatkal brothers—Yasin and Riyaz Bhatkal, gave a birth to new terrorist outfit, Ansar-ut-Tawhid fi Bilad al-Hind (AuT) which later pledged allegiance to the Islamic State.[59]

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[55] Mail Today Bureau, "Intel agencies fear over 100 Indians fighting with ISIS", *India Today*, 29 August 2014, Available from: https://www.indiatoday.in/india/north/story/isis-indian-youths-nia-islamic-state-indian-mujahideen-206163-2014-08-29

[56] "Indian Mujahideen declared as terrorist outfit", *Deccan Herald*, 04 June 2010, Available from: http://www.deccanherald.com/content/73373/indian-mujahideen-declared-terrorist-outfit.html

[57] Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, *Terrorist Designations of the Indian Mujahideen,* (US Department of State, 15 September 2011), Available from: https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/266633.htm

[58] V. S. Subrahmanian, Aaron Mannes, Animesh Roul, and R. K. Raghavan, Indian Mujahideen: Computational Analysis and Public Policy (India: Springer International Publishing, 2013), p.37

[59] FP Staff, "Indian Mujahideen operative behind recruiter Yusuf al-Hindi's online identity, reveals Islamic State sympathiser", *First Post*, 28 June 2017, Available from: https://www.firstpost.com/india/indian-mujahideen-operative-behind-recruiter-yusuf-al-hindis-online-identity-reveals-islamic-state-sympathiser-3753589.html

<u>Ansar-ut Tawhid fi Bilad al-Hind (AuT)</u>

Ansar-ut Tawhid fi Bilad al-Hind (hereafter AuT) or "the supporters of monotheism in the land of India", AuT is a first Indian jihadi group which is based around Afghanistan-Pakistan border area and had pledge allegiance to the IS in 2014. As a separate outfit, this group is not listed in India's banned terrorist organisations. Reportedly, AuT is a splinter organisation of IM, headed by its former-member Shafi Armar. Formed in 2012 as a result of a rift within IM, earlier during 2012-2013, the founder of IM decided to send its cadre to Afghanistan for training and fighting in alliance with al-Qaeda and the Taliban, but some of the IM members wanted to go to Syria which led to the split within the IM.[60] In 2013, via its media unit, *al-Isabah* media, AuT released a video with a title- 'In the Land of Hind: *Usood ul Hind* (Lions of India)' which featured six Indians namely, Abu Laees (from Andhra Pradesh), Abu Mohammad and Abu Bashir (from Uttar Pradesh), Abu Massav and Abu Sayeed (from Karnataka) and Abu Humaira (from Maharashtra). As reported by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the video was issued by Maulana Abdul Rehman al-Nadwi[61] al-Hindi, who is none other than Mohammad Sultan Armar.[62] This is the first time, AuT marked its presence and propagated the message to vast community of Indian Muslims to participate in the global jihad.[63]

The propaganda in the video was very clear and directed towards the Indian Muslims to fly to Syria and Afghanistan, mainly to get trained for an insurgency in India. The video portrayed AuT's leader with six other Indians depicting the images of past communal riots in India such as 2002 Gujarat riots, 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots, and the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992. A message was declared that "Oh Indian Muslims, if you can't understand, you will perish. Since independence from British yoke in 1947, Indian Muslims are living in fear and dread

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[60] Balasubramaniyam Viswanathan, "Ansar-ut Tawhid: Seizing the Reins from Indian Mujahideen in India?", *Geopolitical Monitor*, 04 October 2015, Available from: https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/ansar-ut-tawhid-seizing-the-reins-from-indian-mujahideen-in-india/

[61] Note: 'Nadwi' is a title given to the alumni of Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama based in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India.

[62] Balasubramaniyan Viswanathan, "Ansar-ut Tawhid: Seizing the Reins from Indian Mujahideen in India?", *Geopolitical Monitor,* 04 October 2015, Available from: https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/ansar-ut-tawhid-seizing-the-reins-from-indian-mujahideen-in-india/

[63] Husanjot Chahal, "Ansar ul-Tawhid: Evolution and Operational Dynamics", *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies,* 23 March 2016, Available from: http://www.ipcs.org/article/india/ansar-ul-tawhid-evolution-and-operational-dynamics-5006.html

under the Hindus…who worships cows".[64] Till 2014, AuT did not claimed any allegiance to any Islamic terrorist organisation but on October 2014, AuT officially pledged allegiance to the IS and adapted the its ideology as a part of their campaign through videos and several texts via online. Since then AuT is prominently involved in the process of radicalising and recruiting the Indian Muslims for Islamic State.[65]

Dukhtaran-e-Millat (DeM): The 'Only Women' Extremist Organisation

As an exceptional outfit, Dukhtaran-e-Millat (hereafter DeM) literally means "Daughters of the Nation", is an all-woman militant group which favours the establishment of Sharia law in the valley of Kashmir and separation of the State from India. In other words, Dukhtaran-e-Millat is a 'soft-terrorist' organisation that uses the threats to impose its policies and openly support jihad in the valley but did not engaged in arm violence so far. Established in year 1987, the group is led by Ayesha Andrabi, a self-claimed 'jihadi feminist'. This group is one of the active members of All Parties Hurriyat Conference.[66] In 2013, 'Pragaash' meaning the Light of Dawn was the 'all-girls' music group from Kashmir, had to disassemble after receiving threats online and fatwa issued by the local cleric. DeM's chief Ayesha Andrabi supported the fatwa by saying that it is according to the beliefs of Sharia law and it is better if the girls leave their 'rebellious' behaviour to avoid any harsh consequences.[67] Andrabi is hardliner follower of Syed Ali Shah Geelani, an important leader of the Hurriyat Conference who denounced IS as an 'anti-Muslim'.[68] In 1990, Ayesha Andrabi got married to Ashiq Hussain Faktoo, co-founder of Hizb-ul Mujahideen. After his arrest in 1992, Ayesha involved more actively to build the biggest network of 'jihadi women' in Kashmir.[69] In an interview

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[64] Animesh Roul, "Ansar-ut Tawhid and the Transnational Jihadist Threat to India", *The Jamestown Foundation: Terrorism Monitor,* Vol. 12 no. 12, (2014), Pg. 5, Available from: https://jamestown.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/TerrorismMonitorVol12Issue12_01.pdf

[65] Husanjot Chahal, "Ansar ul-Tawhid: Evolution and Operational Dynamics", *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies,* 23 March 2016, Available from: http://www.ipcs.org/article/india/ansar-ul-tawhid-evolution-and-operational-dynamics-5006.html

[66] Note: All Parties Hurriyat Conference is an alliance of 26 political, religious and social organisations the objective of which is separation of the state of Kashmir from India.

[67] "Dukhtaran-e-Millat (DeM)", *Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium,* Available from: https://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/dukhtaran-e-millat-0

[68] Toufiq Rashid, "Dukhtaran-e-Millat chief Asiya Andrabi denies IS links", *Hindustan Times,* 31 December 2015, Available from: http://www.hindustantimes.com/punjab/dukhtaran-e-millat-chief-asiya-andrabi-denies-IS-links/story-uSQaI3tGwRuMcn9g6Q00tL.html

[69] Pradeep Thakur, "For the first family of militancy, a troubled road", *The Times of India,* 15 March 2015, Available from: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/sunday-times/deep-focus/For-the-first-family-of-militancy-a-troubled-road/articleshow/46571622.cms

with *Hindustan Times,* Ayesha or Asiya stated that her organisation is fighting for the freedom of Kashmir from the oppression of 10 lakh personnel of Indian security forces in the valley, she does not know or care about who the Islamic State is.[70] On 25 March 2015, Ayesha Andrabi hoisted Pakistan's national flag and sung its national anthem in the valley of Kashmir. She openly claimed it on *Times Now—* an Indian news channel, that people in large number participated and supported this act, referring to the hoisting of Pakistan's national flag.[71] Ayesha was charged under Section 13 of the India's Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967. The Indian security forces are yet to confirm any reported terrorist attack conducted by DeM, though they suspect that DeM operates as a supportive arm to other jihadi groups in the valley.[72] During a probe regarding financial support to terrorist activities and unrest in Kashmir in 2016, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) told *NDTV,* around 240 million Indian Rupees or 3700 thousand US Dollars had been transferred via 10 different bank accounts to fuel the unrest in Kashmir. Much of this money has been routed to the pro-Pakistan separatist groups like Jammat-e-Islami and Dhuktaran-e-Millat.[73] So far, DeM has not been a direct security threat but could prove as fatal weapon of radicalisation and anti-India activities in the valley of Kashmir.

Transnational Terrorist Organisations

Al-Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)

The Indian Subcontinent is a Southern region of Asia. Geographically, it is defined as a region situated on Indian Plate,[74] ranging from the Himalayas towards the Indian Ocean but it usually includes India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives. It was September 2014, when al-Qaeda has launched a new regional group— 'Al-Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent or AQIS'. The creation of the group focused on the operations across the South

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[70] Toufiq Rashid, "Dukhtaran-e-Millat chief Asiya Andrabi denies IS links", *Hindustan Times,* 31 December 2015, Available from: http://www.hindustantimes.com/punjab/dukhtaran-e-millat-chief-asiya-andrabi-denies-IS-links/story-uSQaI3tGwRuMcn9g6Q00tL.html

[71] Times Now, *I hoisted Pakistan flag and sung Pakistani national anthem- Asiya Andrabi,* 2015 YouTube Video, 0:40s, from an interview aired on Times Now, 22 March 2015, posted by "Times Now", 24 March 2015, Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45-MQSrKDPw

[72] "Dukhtaran-e-Millat", *South Asia Terrorism Portal,* Available from: http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/dukhtaran.htm

[73] Sudhi Ranjan Sen, "Probe into Pakistani Funding for Kashmir Unrest Leads to 10 Bank Accounts", *NDTV,* 17 August 2016, Available from: http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/probe-into-pakistani-funding-for-kashmir-unrest-leads-to-10-bank-accounts-1445376

[74] Note: 'Indian Plate' is a major tectonic plate spanning the equator in the eastern hemisphere.

Asia, but the leadership of the outfit was based in Pakistan. The birth of AQIS was a reason behind the split between two terrorist groups— al-Qaeda and IS. Both groups were trying enough to gain the popularity and loyalty among other jihadist groups across the globe, and Islamic State's declaration of Caliphate in Iraq and Syria seem like a threatening sign for replacement of al-Qaeda as a leader of global jihad. Following the formation of AQIS, al-Qaeda launched *Resurgence*— a magazine to promote jihad in Indian Subcontinent. According to a statement in *Resurgence*, the Ameer or Emir of the group— Ayman al-Zawahiri will be the leader of the group and under his guidance, several jihadi groups of the region will join in to merge into a single organisation, *Jammah Qaeda al-Jihad.*[75] The regional jihadist groups based in India—Indian Mujahideen, Pakistan and PoK's TTP, HuJI, JeM, LeT, are likely to compile into AQIS.[76]

The formation of AQIS in Indian subcontinent is an effort to deal with regimes of South Asia that favours the prevention of Caliphate in the region- the governments of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Myanmar. Although there is no recorded terrorist incident directly executed by AQIS in India but in a video released by AQIS's media wing—Al-Sahab on 02 May 2015, it claimed responsibility for killing four Bangladesh bloggers in Dhaka city of Bangladesh and in the same video, AQIS's chief Asim Umar mentioned through their statements, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other members of his Cabinet propagates a war against Muslims.[77]

Islamic State - Khorasan Province (IS-KP)

With its thrilling terrorist actions in Iraq and Syria, the Islamic State marked itself as one of the lethal Islamic terrorists group in the contemporary era of terrorism. In 2006, after the death of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), a new group emerged with the name 'Islamic State of Iraq' or ISI under the leadership of Abu Omar al-Baghdadi. After four years of its formation, the leader Abu Omar al-Baghdadi was killed in US led air-strikes and his brother Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi took charge of the ISI. In March 2011, the

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[75] As-Sahab Media (Subcontinent), "Resurgence", Issue 01, Fall 2014, Available from: https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/resurgence-1.pdf
[76] Bill Roggio, "Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent incorporates regional jihadist groups", *The Long War Journal,* 05 September 2014, Available from: http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/09/analysis_al_qaeda_in.php
[77] HT Correspondent, "Al-Qaeda's India wing mentions PM Narendra Modi in video", *Hindustan Times,* 05 May 2015, Available from: http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/al-qaeda-s-india-wing-mentions-pm-narendra-modi-in-video/story-YJwISfqhHE8XDc6kYOOZuO.html

outbreaks of civil war in Syria gives the golden opportunity to Islamic State of Iraq for further widen its outreach to Syria. In 2013, after announcing the alliance with Jabhat al-Nusra, another notable terrorist group affiliated to al-Qaeda in Syria— Islamic State of Iraq declared itself to be known as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) but later Jabhat al-Nusra rejected this claim and appealed to al-Qaeda for their judgement.

According to the report in *Express News,* after extending its territory in regions of Iraq and Syria, IS has unveiled its radical masterplan to take over most part of the world by the year 2020.[78] The Khorasan regions were part of the plan where the regions from Europe to Africa to Indian Subcontinent were shaded in black- the colour of IS's so-called Caliphate. According to the map, Khorasan is a historic name for a region that covers Afghanistan, Pakistan and part of India, and other surrounding countries. In South Asia, especially in Afghanistan and Pakistan, IS has formed its new branch— the Khorasan Province or *Wilayah Khorasan.* The branch is led by former Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) commander Hafiz Saeed Khan, who was the first group commander officially announced by the IS.[79] Reportedly, the outfit's leader Hafiz S. Khan was killed in a US airstrike in July 2016. Till now, there is no official announcement about the name of new leader of the outfit. In a perspective of IS threat to India, the establishment of IS-Khorasan group and the support from Jundallah[80]— a group based in Pakistan, may pose a security concern for India. The arrests of around half-a-dozens of alleged IS sympathisers from Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh and very recent, an encounter in Lucknow city of Uttar Pradesh in which a self-inspired one member of IS module was killed, depicts the nexus among jihadists throughout nation-wide. Since 2014, the impressions of IS ideology among handful of Indian Muslims from different states such as Telangana, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Jammu and Kashmir, and Gujarat, is illustrative with the mobilisation of over 23 Indian Muslims travelled to Iraq and Syria conflict zones. During the Kashmir protests over the killing of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani, the violent protesters waved the IS and Pakistan flags depicts the presence of dreadful outfit in the hearts of few Indian Muslims, if not physical. Allegedly, the missing of 21 people from the Indian

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[78] Jake Burman, "IS Warning: World in FINAL STAGES of radical Islam masterplan to TAKE OVER the WEST", *Express,* 21 December 2016, Available from: http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/597254/IS-Map-Europe-Terror-Organisation-Andrew-Hosken-Caliphate-Abu-Musab-al-Zarqawi

[79] "Islamic State moves in on al-Qaeda turf", *BBC News*, 25 June 2015, Available from: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-31064300

[80] Note: Jundallah is a terrorist group based in Pakistan, associated with Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TT-P).

state Kerala in June 2016 suspects that these people have travelled to Nangahar province in Afghanistan to join the IS-Khorasan outfit. According to a UN report, around 70 foreign fighters of IS have come from Iraq and Syria to form the core branch of jihadists in Afghanistan.[81] Terrorist organisations such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) which is supported by Pakistan's ISI, are motivated to send its fighters to Afghanistan to join the IS-Khorasan Province. Reportedly, Pakistan's GHQ Rawalpindi is entirely funding its 'S-Wing' of ISI-*Wilayat Khorasan (ISI-WK)* in Afghanistan, and several Indians have been mobilised there by ISI but later sent back to India to wait for further instructions.[82] Till now, India was only concern over the ISI- supported cross-border jihadist groups and India's indigenous terrorist outfits but the presence and progression of IS-Khorasan Province, could pose as a potential threat to India's national security.

Foreign Fighters in India: An Exceptional Case of Afghan Mujahideen in the Valley of Kashmir

As reported in various Indian news-media, small number of Indians travelled and joined the extremist groups majorly in the combat zones of Iraq and Syria. In 1993, mainly Afghan Mujahideen crossed the Indian border and slipped into the state of Jammu and Kashmir and were fighting alongside Kashmiri militants and Muslim separatist groups, targeting the Indian armed forces in the region. According to an Indian security official, who was a part of intelligence operations in Kashmir at that time, the total number of foreign fighters is about 400, out of which 200 were Afghans.[83] This is one of the rare incidents where foreign fighters from one of the neighbouring countries of India joined the civil conflict of Kashmir. Supporting the statement, a scholar Alan Kruger stated that the geographical closeness of a neighbouring country to the conflict zone attracts the highest number of foreign fighters.[84] In his analysis report of 311 foreign insurgents captured in Iraq insurgency during April to October 2005, the

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[81] AFP, "Islamic State gaining ground in Afghanistan: UN", *Yahoo News,* 26 September 2015. Available from: https://www.yahoo.com/news/islamic-state-gaining-ground-afghanistan-un-235952988.html

[82] Madhav Nalapat, "ISI, IS join hands to launch strikes against India", *Sunday Guardian Live,* 28 January 2017. Available from: http://www.sundayguardianlive.com/investigation/8199-isi-IS-join-hands-launch-strikes-against-india

[83] Sanjoy Hazarika, "Afghans joining rebels in Kashmir", *The New York Times,* 24 August 1993. Available from: http://www.nytimes.com/1993/08/24/world/afghans-joining-rebels-in-kashmir.html

[84] Alan B. Krueger, "The National Origins of Foreign Fighters in Iraq." In *Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association* (Chicago: 2007),Available from: https://www.aeaweb.org/annual_mtg_papers/2007/0105_1430_1601.pdf

proximity to Baghdad city was one of the key factors that draw large number foreign fighters from Saudi Arabia.[85]

In the Kashmir valley, the presence of Afghan Mujahideen meant the toughest challenge for the Indian security forces. Based on anonymity, a security expert explained that because most of the Afghan Mujahideen were veteran of the Afghan war against Soviet Union, they were fully trained in understanding strategies, working knowledge of explosives and capable of withstanding the battle for long hours.[86] In an interview with Al-Jazeera, conducted in Muzaffarabad—the capital of *Azad Kashmir* (Pakistan Occupied Kashmir), a 38-year-old veteran of the Afghan-Soviet war, claimed that the primary objective of his organisation i.e. Hizb ul-Mujahideen is to end the Indian military occupation in Kashmir through jihad.[87] Another news report on militancy in Kashmir by *The Guardian (London),* dated 17 August 1995 was titled "Foreign Fighters Swell Ranks of Kashmiri Separatists".[88] According to the reports, Indian officials reported a surprise rise in the number of foreign fighters in the summer of 1995; estimating 1,500 foreign nationals operating in Kashmir. Most of these foreign fighters were from *Azad* Kashmir and Pakistan and the rest from Afghanistan, Sudan, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia.[89]

Conclusion

In its history, India was ruled by the rulers from different casts and creeds, but in twenty-first Century, India is a home of people belong to various religions and creeds and World's second-largest Muslim population after Indonesia. During the Colonial rule, the establishment of Islamic law or Sharia law was never a concern but post-independence and the event of partition of India and Pakistan as two nations of separate religious identities, followed

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[85] Alan B. Krueger, "The National Origins of Foreign Fighters in Iraq." In *Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association* (Chicago: 2007),Available from: https://www.aeaweb.org/annual_mtg_papers/2007/0105_1430_1601.pdf .

[86] Sanjoy Hazarika, "Afghans joining rebels in Kashmir", *The New York Times,* 24 August 1993, Available from: http://www.nytimes.com/1993/08/24/world/afghans-joining-rebels-in-kashmir.html

[87] Asad Hashim, "Afghan Mujahideen 'owe Kashmir a debt", *Al-Jazeera,* 22 September 2013, Available from: http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/09/2013920153418770798.html

[88] Suzanne Goldenberg, "Foreign Fighters Swell Ranks of Kashmiri Separatists", *The Guardian (London),* 17 August 1995, Available from: https://www-nexis-com.dcu.idm.oclc.org/results/enhdocview.do?docLinkInd=true&ersKey=23_T24978888299&format=GNBFI&startDocNo=0&resultsUrlKey=0_T24978896902&backKey=20_T24978896903&csi=138620&docNo=1

[89] Ibid.

by the mass-murder of Hindus and Sikhs in newly-created Pakistan and Muslims in India had shaped the mind-set of an Indian Muslim with hallucinations of threat for being a minority community in a Hindu nation. After Independence, in October 1948, India responds to the first infiltration of Pakistan army and tribal fighters in the independent state of Jammu and Kashmir. As a result of intervention by the United Nations, the infiltrated area has become a disputed land between India and Pakistan with an imaginary boundary as 'Line of Control'. Since 1990, jihad as a tool in Kashmir has been used by feared Pakistan state to boast its national identity against India. In last 20 years, several jihadi groups emerged in the region of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Pakistan, which are sponsored by Pakistan's premier intelligence agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) for jihad against India in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Although, these jihadi groups are banned in India's list of banned terrorist organisations but since their base is either in Pakistan or PoK, it is easier for them to radicalise the Indian Muslim youth by propagating the bitter incidents from the past where victimisation of Muslim community was very much highlighted.

As a growing nation at fast-pace, India is not only facing a threat from cross-border terrorist organisation but also confronted to the terrorist activities conducted by the domestic Islamic jihadi groups. The story of jihadi threat does not conclude here but it continued towards a threat from transnational terrorist organisations such as al-Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and Islamic State (IS). Considering the IS's vision to create the final apocalypse in India as mentioned in the Islamic mythological literature, '*Ghazwa-e-Hind',* Indian security agencies shall keep an alert regarding the IS's future territorial expansion towards India. The presence of IS in Afghanistan-Pakistan border area as an image of IS-Khorasan province is an effort to access India and its neighbouring countries through Pakistan. Signs of IS have already been detected through its graffiti and waving of IS's flags in PoK and parts of Kashmir, especially after the killing of Burhan Wani— a Hizb-ul Mujahideen commander in Kashmir. Surprisingly, Southern part of India has also marked the presence of IS's ideology introduced among Indian Muslims. Among 23 Indian Muslims who travelled to Iraq or Syria to join IS, maximum number of fighters belongs to Southern states such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka. However, most of peace-loving Muslim population of India has condemned the IS as a terrorist organisation and its ideology as un-Islamic. In near future, India being a progressive nation is a core part of South Asia propaganda of both, al-Qaeda and IS. These groups' affiliations in the region have tried to win the hearts and radicalise

the minds of Indian Muslim youth and somewhere they succeed to a level. The competition between al-Qaeda and IS, having radical Islamic ideology and vision of establishment of the Caliphate in South Asia, may result in upsurge of Islamic terrorism in India.

Chapter Two

The Foreign Fighter Phenomenon: From the Historical to the Contemporary Perspective

Introduction

This chapter discusses and analyses the scholarly literature and independent research conducted on the phenomenon of foreign fighters, especially those who travelled to Iraq in Syria in the period 2014 – 2016 to join the Islamic State (IS). According to an assessment in December 2015 on the flow of foreign fighters into Iraq and Syria, *The Soufan Group* estimated that, around 27,000 to 31,000 people from 86 countries have travelled to Iraq and Syria to join IS and other violent Salafist groups.[90] According to TE-SAT report of 2017, more than 5,000 fighters in Iraq and Syria, are from member nations of the European Union.[91] As per the report by *The Soufan Group*, the 'official estimates' suggests around 760 fighters from Germany, 1,700 from France, and 470 from Belgium had left to join the IS as of October 2015.[92] These fighters might come back as trained terrorists and pose a potential threat to the national security and this signifies a growing concern for the nations in the European Union. On the other side, countries in South Asia are not untouched from the 'Caliphate project' of IS. The IS's flimsy dream of establishing a 'Caliphate' in South Asia by 2020[93], mainly in the countries in the Indian Subcontinent, is projecting an image to attract Muslim population from the region to join their religious-ideological cause also.

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[90] The Soufan Group, "*Foreign Fighters: An updated assessment of the flow of foreign fighters into Syria and Iraq",* December 2015, Available from: http://soufangroup.com/foreign-fighters/

[91] Europol, "European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2017", 2017, Available from: https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/tesat2017.pdf

[92] Ibid.

[93] PTI, "IS map of areas it wants to take over by 2020 includes India", *The Times of India,* 10 August 2015. Available from: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/IS-map-of-areas-it-wants-to-take-over-by-2020-includes-India/articleshow/48425666.cms

Understanding the Phenomenon of Foreign Fighters

In recent years, the conflicts in Iraq and Syria has led to the widespread use of the term 'foreign fighter' in reports by the think-tank organisations and news stories in the Western media.[94] In simple words, a 'foreign fighter' is someone who leaves or tries to leave the West to fight somewhere else.[95] Since 1980s, news reports or media mentioned the term 'foreign fighters' or 'foreign insurgents' in reference to various conflicts. The following section discusses the term widely used by new media during 1980s to 2000s.

Defining a 'Foreign Fighter'

According to the United Nations Security Council's resolution 2178 (2014)[96], a foreign fighter is defined as an:

> "individuals who travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict, and *resolving* to address this threat."

Thomas Hegghammer defined a 'foreign fighter' as an unpaid combatant, physically involved in a conflict with no prior links other than religious kinship.[97] Another definition of foreign fighter is given by Cerwyn Moore and Paul Tumelty—m "foreign fighters are non-indigenous, non-territorialised combatant who, motivated by religion, kinship, and/or ideology rather than monetary reward, enter the combat zone to participate in hostilities.[98] The definitional complexity in the identity of foreign fighter is a challenge to assess and understand the phenomenon. Among various definitions of foreign fighter, a definition proposed by an

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[94] Cerwyn Moore, "Introductory Comments to Foreign Fighters Research: Special Mini-Series", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol 27. No. 3 (2015): 393-394, Available from:
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09546553.2015.1032030?needAccess=true
[95] Thomas Hegghammer, "Should I Stay or Should I Go? Explaining Variation in Western Jihadists' Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting", *American Political Science Review* 107, no.1 (2013): 1-15, Available from: http://hegghammer.com/_files/Hegghammer_-_Should_I_stay_or_should_I_go.pdf
[96] United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 2178 (2014)", S/RES/2178 (2014)* (United Nations Security Council, 24 September 2014), Available from:
http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/docs/2015/SCR%202178_2014_EN.pdf
[97] Thomas Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and Globalisation of Jihad", *Quarterly Journal: International Security*, Vol. 35. no. 3, (Winter 2010/11): 53-94, p. 53, Available from:
http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/20601/rise_of_muslim_foreign_fighters.html
[98] Cerwyn Moore and Paul Tumelty, "Foreign Fighters and the case of Chechnya: A Critical Assessment", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism,* Vol 31. No. 5 (2008): 412-433, p. 412, Available from:
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/10576100801993347?needAccess=true

Azerbaijani intelligence official— Jahangir Arasli seems more acceptable— "A (Islamic) foreign fighter is a volunteer combatant actor with no apparent link to the area of the ongoing armed conflict, yet bound to it by her/his sense of the perceived Muslim religious duty."[99] For example, a Pakistani-Taliban fighter fighting with the Pakistan government forces will be a local, whereas Pakistani-Taliban fighter in Afghanistan will be considered as a foreign fighter. As another example to understand the definition provided by Jahangir, for the residents of Iraq, the American forces in Iraq are more 'foreigner' than the jihadi fighters from Saudi Arabia and Yemen.[100] In other words, the term 'foreign fighter' has become a synonym to those ideologically or religiously motivated individuals who travelled to distant countries to defend their community under distress caused by the occupancy of foreign forces.[101] The involvement of foreign fighter could affect and possibly change the momentum of the conflict and further enhance the confidence level of the group or organisation to carry out further violent operations.

Foreign fighters in news from 1980s to 1990s

According to David Malet, the first appearance of term 'foreign fighter or a foreign insurgent' occurred in March 1988 newspaper edition of *The Times* (London)[102], however the very first textual appearance of term 'foreign fighters' appeared in the news report of 7 August 1982 by *United Press International,* in relation to the evacuation of PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) fighters from the west Beirut. As reported in news, Salam, a leading figure in the diplomatic negotiations said that "among the first to leave will be foreign fighters with the PLO, men from number of countries including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Somalia."[103] On 21 March 1988, the phenomenon of foreign fighter appeared as a headline in *The Times (London),* covering a story on victory of Afghan Mujahideen- "*Khost* outpost falls to mujahidin

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[99] Alex Peter Schmid and Judith Tinnes, "Foreign (Terrorist) Fighters with IS: A European Perspective", ICCT Research Paper, *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism-The Hague,* December 2015, Available from: https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/ICCT-Schmid-Foreign-Terrorist-Fighters-with-IS-A-European-Perspective-December2015.pdf

v[100] Barak Mendelsohn, "Foreign Fighters- Recent Trends", *Foreign Policy Research Institute,* Spring 2011, Available from: http://www.fpri.org/docs/media/mendelsohn.foreignfighters.pdf

[101] Kylie Baxter and Renee Davidson, "Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Managing a twenty-first century threat", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 37 no. 8, 2016: pp. 1299-131, Available from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01436597.2016.1159127

[102] David Malet, "Why Foreign Fighters? Historical Perspectives and Solutions", published in *Orbis Journal of Foreign Affairs,* 2009, Available from: http://davidmalet.com/uploads/Why_Foreign_Fighters_Malet.pdf

[103] David Zenian, "The date for the start of the evacuation of…", *United Press International,* 07 August 1982, Available from: http://www.upi.com/Archives/1982/08/07/The-date-for-the-start-of-the-evacuation-of/9805397540800/

led by foreign fighters".[104] It was a victory of Saudi, Egyptian and Pakistani fighters against pro-Soviet government forces".[105]

Foreign fighters in news from 1990s to 2000s

There was subsequent mentioning of 'foreign fighters' appeared in several British newspapers in context to the involvement of the Croatian separatist forces against the Yugoslav government.[106] In this conflict, among five-thousand paramilitary strength of HOS (*Hrvatske Obrambene Snage*) or Croatian Defence Forces[107] has more than hundred foreign fighters, mostly English and Scottish nationals.[108] In context to the foreign fighters' appearance in Indian Subcontinent, in their August 1993 edition— *The New York Times* published a news report on Afghan fighters in context to India, quoting a statement of an Indian security official, who was closely associated with intelligence operations in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir, estimated that "there are about 200 Afghans fighting in Kashmir but we (Indian intelligence) believe that the total figure of foreign fighters is about 400".[109]

Historical Occurrences of Indian Muslims in Conflicts

The emergence of foreign fighters from the Indian Subcontinent, particularly Indian Muslims is not a new occurrence. In 1858, with the downfall of the Mughal Empire, the entire Indian Subcontinent came under the British rule and Muslims in India had lost their long-lasting political supremacy over other religious communities such as Hindus.[110] The kinship of Indian Muslims with Ottoman Empire appeared during Russo-Turkish War in 1877-1878, where Indian Muslims considered the possible collapse of the Ottoman Empire as a serious

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[104] Edward Gorman, "Khost outpost falls to Mujahidin led by foreign fighters", *The Times (London),* 21 March 1988, Available from: https://www-nexis-com.dcu.idm.oclc.org/docview/getDocForCuiReq?lni=41B4-YDS0-00YK-00TW&csi=280434&oc=00240&perma=true

[105] David Malet, "Why Foreign Fighters? Historical Perspectives and Solutions", published in *Orbis Journal of Foreign Affairs,* 2009, Available from: http://davidmalet.com/uploads/Why_Foreign_Fighters_Malet.pdf

[106] Ibid.

[107] Note: Croatian Defence Forces: A military wing of the Croatian Party of Rights (1991-1993)

[108] Marcus Tanner, "Foreigners rally to Croatian Flag", *The Independent (London),* 31 October 1991, Available from: http://www.angelfire.com/in/beograd/1991.16.html

[109] Sanjoy Hazarika, "Afghans joining rebels in Kashmir", *The New York Times,* 24 August 1993, Available from: http://www.nytimes.com/1993/08/24/world/afghans-joining-rebels-in-kashmir.html

[110] Salih Pay, "Indian Muslims, Ottoman Empire and Caliphate during Colonial Period", *International Journal of Business and Social Science,* Vol. 6 no. 2, February 2015, pp. 284-289. Available from: http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_6_No_2_February_2015/32.pdf

threat to the future of Islam. At the breakout of Russo-Turkish war, Indian Muslims provided the Ottoman Red Crescent Society with notable financial aid.[111] In return to this aid, the Ottoman Empire admired the aid campaigns by Muslims in South-Asia with a 'Letter of Appreciation'. In 1920s, during the Colonial period in India, , around 18,000 Indian Muslims went to Turkey to wage jihad to defend the Ottoman Empire.[112] In the beginning of World War I, the Ottoman Empire addressed all Muslims in the Indian Subcontinent through a 'Jihad Statement' for a war against Western Colonialism.[113] The mobilisation of those Indian Muslims was a part of *Khilafat Movement* (1919-1924)—a political campaign launched by Muslims in India to stimulate the British government to protect the Ottoman Caliphate during the aftermath of World War I. The *Khilafat Movement* by South-Asian Muslim community was a notable and influential movement for strengthening the Turkish national struggle. Some of the notable members of *Khilafat Movement* were Aga Khan, Syed Ameer Ali, Abdelbari, Mushir Hosain Kidwai and Isfahani, and the associations such as *Khuddam al-Kaaba*, led the supporters of Turks.[114] In September 1920, the *Khilafat Movement* committee decided at the meeting in Bombay (now Mumbai) that Indian people should not collaborate with the British government in context to Ottoman Caliphate; demonstrations and meetings in other cities of India declared an unarmed war by the Indian Muslims against the British government.[115] Conclusively, Indian Muslims tried their best to support the Ottoman Empire through campaigns, demonstrations, and diplomatic relations. But, the very possible support from them could not avoid the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in its struggle against the West. However, Indian Muslims participated in Turkish War of Independence as to look after the Caliphate.[116]

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[111] Salih Pay, "Indian Muslims, Ottoman Empire and Caliphate during Colonial Period", *International Journal of Business and Social Science,* Vol. 6 no. 2, February 2015, pp. 284-289. Available from: http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_6_No_2_February_2015/32.pdf
[112] R. Upadhyay, "Jihad in India: Time to Review, Re-Interpret and Understand-Analysis", *South Asia Analysis Group* (Paper no. 6172)*,* 22 September 2016, Available from: http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/node/2056
[113] Salih Pay, "Indian Muslims, Ottoman Empire and Caliphate during Colonial Period", *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, Vol. 6 no. 2, February 2015, pp. 284-289. Available from: http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_6_No_2_February_2015/32.pdf
[114] Salih Pay, "Indian Muslims, Ottoman Empire and Caliphate during Colonial Period", *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, Vol. 6 no. 2, February 2015, pp. 284-289. Available from: http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_6_No_2_February_2015/32.pdf
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid.

Conflict of Large Foreign Fighter Contingent

In case of modern conflicts, the appearance of foreign fighters in distant conflict zones is not a new phenomenon. Historically, the occurrence of foreign fighters was significant in two major conflicts- the Spanish civil war (1936-1939) and the Afghan-Soviet war (1979-1989). These two conflicts had significant numbers of foreign nationals of various countries joining these conflicts and subsequently termed as foreign fighters.

The Spanish Civil Conflict (1936-1939)

In the Spanish Civil War, the foreign volunteers were fighting for both sides— Communists fighting against fascism and Catholic fighters against Communism.[117] The 1936 Spanish Civil conflict was a fascist-backed military coup led by General Francisco Franco against the socialist-led coalition government of republicans, communists and anarchists.[118] The term 'foreign fighter' was non-existent around the conflict period, therefore, the volunteers were referred as foreign involvement in the conflict. As being foreign fighters, the citizens of the US who joined the communist faction had neither a deep understanding of Marxist theory nor a desire to establish a full communist state but, were interested in obtaining social justice for poor minorities.[119] During the civil war, two main groups were active and favourites of foreign fighters: The Popular Front and the International Brigades. Both groups were different and had no connection among their fighters except that neither were Spanish.[120] The nationalists received support and aid from fascist nations: Italy and Nazi Germany, whereas the Soviet Union and the International Brigade (composition of volunteers from Europe and the United States), were aiding the Republicans in the conflict.[121]

The International Brigade was operating under the control of *Comintern*, an abbreviation for Communist International, an association of national communist parties founded in 1919.[122] Several thousand volunteers from all over the world took the call of the Republicans and joined

[117] Barak Mendelsohn, "Foreign Fighters- Recent Trends", *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, Spring 2011, Available from: http://www.fpri.org/docs/media/mendelsohn.foreignfighters.pdf
[118] David Malet, "Why Foreign Fighters? Historical Perspectives and Solutions", published in *Orbis Journal of Foreign Affairs*, 2009, Available from: http://davidmalet.com/uploads/Why_Foreign_Fighters_Malet.pdf
[119] Ibid.
[120] R. Dan Richardson, "Foreign Fighters in Spanish Militias: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939", *Military Affairs*. Vol. 40 no. 1, February 1976, Available from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1986842
[121] "Spanish Civil War", *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Available from: https://www.britannica.com/event/Spanish-Civil-War
[122] "Third International", *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Available from: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Third-International

the International Brigade.[123] Among the significant numbers of volunteers from most of the European countries, the French were the largest foreign group with estimate counts of 28,000.[124] However, there is no confirmed report on actual counts of foreign fighters in the International Brigade but approximately, the total number of international volunteers reached about 60,000.[125] In the Spanish Civil conflict, some of them were fighters and others were engaged in supportive services, such as humanitarian aid to the Republicans.

India's Involvement in the Spanish Civil Conflict

In British India— the Indians, especially the anti-colonial politicians developed a strong interest in the Spanish civil war. Various English language newspapers published about the happenings of the Spanish civil war on the daily basis.[126] Detailed information about the conflict was provided by well-known authors such as George Orwell, H.G. Wells and Mulk Raj Anand, who were involved in transnational networks in correspondence with the Republicans.[127] Among other intellectuals involved in the Spanish civil conflict, Mulk Raj Anand was a young author, living in Great Britain and had represented India at the 'World Congress of Writers Against Fascism' in Madrid in 1935.[128] In 1937, Anand travelled to Spain and joined the International Brigade but his role was more journalistic than military. Thought he joined the International Brigades for three months, he communicated his experiences of being with the International Brigades to the Indian socialist and communist network by publishing several articles in the *Congress Socialist and National Front*.[129]

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[123] Shirsho Dasgupta, "Eighty Years Later, A Homage to Catalonia: Indians and the Spanish Civil War", *The Wire,* 22 May 2016, Available from: http://thewire.in/37202/80-years-later-a-homage-to-catalonia-indians-and-the-spanish-civil-war/

[124] "International Brigades", *Encyclopaedia Britannia*, Available from: https://www.britannica.com/topic/International-Brigades

[125] Ibid.

[126] Maria Framke, "Political humanitarianism in the 1930s: Indian aid for Republican Spain", *European Review of History: Revue europeene d'histoire,* Vol. 23 no. 1-2, 2016, pp. 63-81, Available from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13507486.2015.1117421

[127] Ibid. p. 66.

[128] Shirsho Dasgupta, "Eighty Years Later, A Homage to Catalonia: Indians and the Spanish Civil War", *The Wire*, 22 May 2016, Available from: http://thewire.in/37202/80-years-later-a-homage-to-catalonia-indians-and-the-spanish-civil-war/

[129] Maria Framke, "Political humanitarianism in the 1930s: Indian aid for Republican Spain*", European Review of History: Revue europeene d'histoire*, Vol. 23 no. 1-2, 2016, pp. 63-81, p. 66, Available from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13507486.2015.1117421

Not only through the writings of Mulk Raj Anand, the Indian public also received the insights into the Spanish Civil conflict through the writing of Indian National Congress leader— Jawahar Lal Nehru. Other than Mulk Raj Anand, two other Indians joined the International Brigades under pseudonyms. Gopal Mukund Huddar joined the British contingent of the International Brigades as 'John Smith'.[130] His war and prison experiences were widely covered by the Indian press, which celebrated him as 'the only Indian who fought against Francisco Franco'.[131] Another British-Indian member of the International Brigades was Dr Madan Mohan Lal Atal who joined the British Left-Wing organisation's- Medical Aid Committee to support the Republicans for 10 months while working in different Spanish hospitals.[132] In London, another important leader of Indian National Congress, V.K. Krishna Menon appealed to Indian nationals living in Britain to come forward to aid Republican Spain. The Spain-India Committee also organised cultural events to raise funds. Indira Nehru[133], who was studying at the University of Oxford, often helped in organising these events and even spoke at some of them.[134] In 1939, the Spanish Republic lost the conflict and General Francisco Franco established a dictatorship, with Madrid as his capital. About ideology, the historical reference of foreign fighters in the Spanish Civil war is not different from the contemporary situation of foreign fighters participating in the Islamic extremist organisations in the conflicts in Iraq and Syria. The conflicts in Iraq and Syria are more focused on the establishment of a 'Caliphate' and motivated by religious fundamentalism, whereas the foreigners in the Spanish Civil conflict were inspired by the ideologies of communism, anarchism, and socialism but the locals in the Spanish Civil War were inspired by religion.

The Afghanistan-Soviet Union Conflict (1979-1989)

The mobilisation of foreign fighters in a conflict empowers the transnational terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda, as the volunteer participation is the foremost indication of an

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[130] Maria Framke, "Political humanitarianism in the 1930s: Indian aid for Republican Spain*", European Review of History: Revue europeene d'histoire*, Vol. 23 no. 1-2, 2016, pp. 63-81, p. 66, Available from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13507486.2015.1117421
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Note: 'Indira Nehru' was the maiden name of Indira Gandhi.
[134] Shirsho Dasgupta, "Eighty Years Later, A Homage to Catalonia: Indians and the Spanish Civil War", *The Wire*, 22 May 2016, Available from: http://thewire.in/37202/80-years-later-a-homage-to-catalonia-indians-and-the-spanish-civil-war/

individual's wish to get involved in extreme violence.[135] The conflict between the Soviet Union or USSR forces and the Afghan mujahideen is popularly known as the 'Afghan-Soviet war'. During 1980s, as many as 35,000 mujahids or foreign fighters—in today's terminology, participated in the "Mother of all jihads".[136] During 1980-1992, an estimate of 5,000-20,000 foreign fighters had joined the Mujahideen cadre in the conflict. By confirmed nationalities, these foreign fighters were from Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, United States and the Europe.[137] The Sunni jihadist vision in the Afghan-Soviet war was focused on the struggle to liberate Afghanistan through force of arms. In the Afghan-Soviet conflict, the call for volunteer 'mujahid' was made on theological grounds.[138] Primarily, the participation of foreign fighters including Arabs, in the 'Afghan jihad' was not significant because their counts were extremely small in comparison to the local Afghan fighters. An estimate of 20,000[139] foreign fighters, mostly Arabs in Afghanistan, were mainly engaged in humanitarian efforts. Most of these fighters had served in supportive roles in humanitarian organisations, media offices, and hospitals.[140] Their humanitarian efforts were supported by Arab and other Muslim nations, such as the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

The 'high-tide' of foreign fighters began to flow with the significant change in the concept of transnational jihad under the leadership of Abdullah Yusuf Azzam—a Palestinian by nationality and the founder of the 'Office of Services of the Holy Warriors' in Afghanistan. Being frustrated with the low number of foreign fighters, Azzam issued a *fatwa* declaring that the struggle in Afghanistan was a 'holy jihad' and fighting in this struggle was a 'holy duty'

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[135] Thomas Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and Globalisation of Jihad", *Quarterly Journal: International Security*, Vol. 35. no. 3, (Winter 2010/11): 53-94, Available from: http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/20601/rise_of_muslim_foreign_fighters.html

[136] Brian G. Williams, "On the Trail of the 'Lions of Islam': Foreign Fighters in Afghanistan and Pakistan, 1980-2010", *Foreign Policy Research Institute,* Elsevier Limited, pp. 216-239, Available from: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0030438711000056

[137] Thomas Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and Globalisation of Jihad", *Quarterly Journal: International Security*, Vol. 35. no. 3, (Winter 2010/11): 53-94, p. 61, Available from: http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/20601/rise_of_muslim_foreign_fighters.html

[138] Kylie Baxter and Renee Davidson, "Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Managing a twenty-first century threat", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 37 no. 8, pp. 1299-1313, Available from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01436597.2016.1159127

[139] Thomas Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and Globalisation of Jihad", *Quarterly Journal: International Security*, Vol. 35. no. 3, (Winter 2010/11): 53-94, p. 53, Available from: http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/20601/rise_of_muslim_foreign_fighters.html

[140] Barak Mendelsohn, "Foreign Fighters- Recent Trends", *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, Spring 2011, Available from: http://www.fpri.org/docs/media/mendelsohn.foreignfighters.pdf

for all Muslims.[141] This *fatwa* left the impression on the conscious of young extreme Islamists who decided to join the conflict and do their part to protect the *Umma*, the Muslim community. Abdullah Azzam acquired the status of being the spiritual father of jihad.[142] The call for jihad further incensed the prospective fighters to travel Afghanistan and protect their Muslim brothers. This mobilisation gave birth to a new concept of Islamist foreign fighter that did not exist before the 1980s.[143] After the end of the Afghan-Soviet war, the Afghan civil war began but instead of evolving into a new conflict, some of the foreign fighters started to leave Afghanistan to return to their respective countries. In addition to the battlefield experience, the foreign fighters also gained the skills and network that would have a great impact on spreading the radical Islamic ideology and further assisted in setting up new terrorist organisations, committed terrorist attacks and fought abroad in the different conflict zone.[144] These fighters were influenced by radical Islamic ideology to protect the Muslim *ummah* (community) around the world. Post-conflict, not all foreign fighters returned to their respective countries, but some settled there only to continue an average life.[145] Reportedly in 1993, some Afghan Mujahideen aided by Pakistan's ISI slipped into the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir to fight alongside Kashmiri militants and separatist groups against the Indian Armed Forces. According to an Indian security official, who was a part of intelligence operations in Kashmir, the total number of foreign fighters in Kashmir was about 400, out of which 200 were Afghans.[146] During the Afghan-Soviet conflict, there was no reported involvement of Indians as foreign fighters in Afghanistan but post-2008, some members of proscribed terror group—Indian Mujahideen (IM), had travel to Afghanistan for unknown reasons. It is suspected that these members may have involved in training with other terrorist groups and later joined IS in Iraq or Syria.

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[141] Amber Atteridge, "Foreign Fighters Post Conflict: Assessing the Impact of Arab Afghans and Syrian-Iraqi Foreign Fighters on Global Security", *International Institute for Counter-Terrorism and IDC Herzliya,* Spring 2016, Available from: https://www.ict.org.il/UserFiles/ICT-Foreign-Fighters-Post-Conflict-May-16.pdf
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Sanjoy Hazarika, "Afghans joining rebels in Kashmir", *The New York Times,* 24 August 1993, Available from: http://www.nytimes.com/1993/08/24/world/afghans-joining-rebels-in-kashmir.html

Nexus Between Foreign Fighters and Islamic State

In August 2014, a Finnish fighter of Somali descent appealed to Muslims around the world to make *hijra*[147] to the 'Khilafah'.[148] The foreign fighters in IS are also emerging from the member countries of European Union (EU). The available information on the number of foreign fighters in Islamic State is purely based on the estimation. The estimated numbers of foreign fighters among most developed nations of European Union are relatively high. In October 2013, the Radio Free Europe published a set of data on the foreign fighters[149] in Iraq and Syria, from different reliable and unreliable sources.[150] According to this database, out of 19,000 fighters, about 32 percent are originating in Europe (including Turkey).[151] In a report by the *ICCT* in 2015, Belgium (470), France (1700), Germany (760), Italy (87) and the United Kingdom (760) scored higher numbers of foreign fighters from the European Union.[152] Geographically, the South-Asia region comprises of modern states namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The Muslim majority population nations in South-Asia are Afghanistan (99.7%)[153], Bangladesh (89.1%)[154], Maldives (98.4%)[155] and Pakistan (96.4%).[156] Out of these eight countries of the South Asia region, the total number of foreign fighters from four countries— Afghanistan (50), India (23), Maldives (200) and Pakistan (500) are 773.[157] The data on foreign fighters was unavailable for Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The data was likely to non-concrete due to its dependability on information from news reports and government sources and it is unclear if the fighters are

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[147] Note: Hijra is an Arabic word meaning 'emigration'.
[148] Jessica Stern and J.M. Berger, IS*: The State of Terror* (India: Thomson Press, 2015), p.75.
[149] Note: counting all fighters in various jihadi groups active in Iraq and Syria, not just IS.
[150] Jessica Stern and J.M. Berger, *IS: The State of Terror* (India: Thomson Press, 2015), p.78.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Alex Peter Schmid and Judith Tinnes, "Foreign (Terrorist) Fighters with IS: A European Perspective", ICCT Research Paper, *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism-The Hague*, December 2015, Available from: https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/ICCT-Schmid-Foreign-Terrorist-Fighters-with-IS-A-European-Perspective-December2015.pdf
[153] "Afghanistan", *Central Intelligence Agency- The World Factbook,* Available from: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html
[154] "Bangladesh", *Central Intelligence Agency- The World Factbook,* Available from: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bg.html
[155] "Maldives", *Global Religious Futures Project: Pew Research Centre.* Available from: http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/maldives#/?affiliations_religion_id=0&affiliations_year=2010&region_name=All%20Countries&restrictions_year=2013
[156] "Pakistan", *Central Intelligence Agency- The World Factbook,* Available from: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pk.html
[157] Alex Peter Schmid and Judith Tinnes, "Foreign (Terrorist) Fighters with IS: A European Perspective", ICCT Research Paper, *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism-The Hague*, December 2015, Available from: https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/ICCT-Schmid-Foreign-Terrorist-Fighters-with-IS-A-European-Perspective-December2015.pdf

affiliated to IS or any other jihadi group only in Iraq or Syria. In their book, *Islamic State: The State of Terror*, authors Jessica Stern and J.M. Berger mentioned two situations as in October 2014, then FBI director James Comey told an estimated "dozen or so" Americans had joined IS, whereas in November 2014, anonymously a government official told that more than "100" Americans had travel to Syria to fight.[158] Such discrepancy in the information is a challenge towards reliable data on foreign fighters. According to a study by the Soufan Group, the age of a jihadi foreign fighter is between 18 and 29 years old, whereas another research report by the ICSR (International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation) claims to between 16 and 38 years at the time of their mobilisation.[159]

Factors Affecting the Flow of Foreign Fighters

This section will examine the various factors responsible for the flow of foreign fighters into IS. An analysis of various factors is conducted based on literature mainly focused on foreign fighters from the European countries. In their article on the social analysis of German foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq, Sean Reynolds and Mohammed Hafez emphasised that foreign fighters are more "destabilising, more violent and less susceptible to de-escalation" than local insurgents.[160] Foreign fighters' combat experience on foreign soil makes them more lethal than native terrorists. In his study of "Veteran Effect" of Western foreign fighters returning to home for attacks, Thomas Hegghammer concluded that although most foreign fighters may not return for domestic attacks but on the basis of existing evidences of a "veteran effect", the returnee are more lethal operatives.[161] compared to "self-starters" with no training abroad, returnee fighters plot deadlier and more sophisticated attacks.[162]

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[158] Jessica Stern and J.M. Berger, *IS: The State of Terror* (India: Thomson Press, 2015), p. 79.

[159] Rajan Basra, Peter R. Neumann and Claudia Brunner, "Criminal Pasts, Terrorist Futures: European Jihadists and the New Crime-Terror Nexus", *The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence,* 2016, Available from: http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/ICSR-Report-Criminal-Pasts-Terrorist-Futures-European-Jihadists-and-the-New-Crime-Terror-Nexus.pdf

[160] Sean C. Reynolds and Mohammed M. Hafez, "Social Network Analysis of German Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq", *Terrorism and Political Violence,* Available from: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09546553.2016.1272456

[161] Thomas Hegghammer, "Should I Stay or Should I Go? Explaining Variations in Western Jihadists' Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting", *American Political Science Review* Vol. 107, 1 (2013): Pg. 11, Available from: http://hegghammer.com/_files/Hegghammer_-_Should_I_stay_or_should_I_go.pdf

[162] Aaron Y. Zelin, "Foreign Fighter Motivations" (Statement submitted for the conference: Taking the Fight to ISIL: Operationalising CT Lines of Effort Against the Islamic State Group), *Washington Institute for Near East*

Mario Diani defined social movements as a "network of informal interaction between a plurality of individuals, group and/or organisation, engaged in a political and/or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity."[163] In a case study on Belgian foreign fighters in IS, Rik Coolsaet describes four factors: (i) Social isolation, (ii) Invasion of Iraq in 2003, (iii) group dynamics, and (iv) the sense of adventure,[164] primarily responsible in foreign fighter mobilisation. As one of the four hypotheses on how and why German foreign fighters mobilised for the Syrian Civil War, Sean Reynolds claimed that the German foreign fighters are primarily immigrants who have not successfully integrated within the German society; whereas the probability of native German convert joining the IS in Syria is very low.[165] Contrary to Reynold's claims, Alex Schmid and Judith Tinnes argue that Muslims who go to fight with IS are either second generation children of Muslim immigrants or recent converts to Salafist ideology.[166] Some experts note similar factors under two main categories- external motives and internal motives. External motives include factors related to a weak government, poor access to quality education and lack of social-economic liberties, whereas the internal motives comprise more of fighter's personal needs. These motives stem from the personal requirements that are fulfilled by joining an organisation and may become more important over time.[167] In the words of John Horgan, foreign fighters wish for something meaningful in their lives, some seek thrill, and some seek redemption.[168] The sense of religious rewards such as entry into heaven and the much-discussed myth of 'marrying the 72 virgins' provokes the internal motivation in a jihadi fighter. On the other side, a mix of political sentiments, religious belief and personal circumstances are sufficient to explain participation in foreign conflict.[169] In a video released by the media unit of IS, Indian foreign fighters appeared and claimed to

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Policy. 2015, Available from:
https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/other/ZelinStatement20150202.pdf

[163] Mario Diani, "The Concept of social movement", *The Sociological Review,* Vol. 40, Issue. 1, (01 February 1992): 1-25, pg. 8, Available from: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-954X.1992.tb02943.x

[164] Rik Coolsaet, "Facing the Fourth Foreign Fighters Wave- What Drives Europeans to Syria, and to Islamic State? Insight from the Belgian Case", *Egmont Paper 81- The Royal Institute for International Relations,* March 2016, Available from: http://www.egmontinstitute.be/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/egmont.papers.81_online-versie.pdf

[165] Sean C. Reynolds, "German Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq" (MA diss., Naval Postgraduate School, 2016), pg. 14, Available from: http://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/48583

[166] Alex Peter Schmid and Judith Tinnes, "Foreign (Terrorist) Fighters with IS: A European Perspective", ICCT Research Paper, *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism-The Hague*, December 2015, Available from: https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/ICCT-Schmid-Foreign-Terrorist-Fighters-with-IS-A-European-Perspective-December2015.pdf

[167] Jessica Stern and J.M. Berger, *IS: The State of Terror* (India: Thomson Press, 2015), p. 82.

[168] Erin Banco, "Why Do People Join IS? The Psychology of a Terrorist", *International Business Times,* 05 September 2014, Available from: http://www.ibtimes.com/why-do-people-join-IS-psychology-terrorist-1680444

[169] Jessica Stern and J.M. Berger, *IS: The State of Terror* (India: Thomson Press, 2015), p. 83.

take revenge of the political atrocities on Indian Muslims, including Gujarat riots in 2002 and demolition on Babri Masjid in 1992.[170] The demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 is somewhere linked up to the religious sentiments of the Indian Muslims. Therefore, the role of religion in context to the formation of a foreign fighter is unavoidable. The interpretation of Islamic references to the apocalypse is a major selling point of IS's propaganda for foreign fighters, who wish to travel to lands where the final battles of the apocalypse will take place.[171]

Economic, Political and Social Variables

Along with analysing the factors that influence an individual to be a foreign fighter, it is essential to consider the economic, political and social factors of the origin country. Political freedom, civil liberties, economic development, unemployment and inequality are some of significant indicators that play a role in the   making of a terrorist—a group or a fighter. . There is a misconception that poor economic conditions drive individuals to join terrorist groups. An empirical study suggests that terrorism is not a by-product of poorly handled political conflicts and economic challenges.[172] In his article on 'root causes of terrorism', Edward Newman suggests that there is a connection between terrorism and social, economic, political and demographic conditions.[173] The political grievances and adverse social conditions such as— poverty, social inequality and exclusion, when combined with certain factors, result in the emergence of a terrorist activities.[174] The Government's lack of control over the economy does provide a plenty space to the transnational terrorist organisations to establish its base of operation and gather support.

 In reality, many foreign fighters in IS come from countries with high economic development, low income inequality and highly developed political institutions.[175] In an analysis of 311

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[170] Zee Media Bureau, "IS' video: Indian jihadists warn of revenge for Babri Masjid, Kashmir, Gujarat, Muzaffarnagar", *Zee News,* 21 May 2016, Available from: http://zeenews.india.com/news/india/IS-video-indian-jihadists-warn-of-revenge-for-babri-masjid-kashmir-gujarat-muzaffarnagar_1887613.html
[171] William McCants, "How ISIL Out-Terrorized Bin Laden", *PoliticoMagazine,* 19 August 2015, Available from: http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/08/IS-jihad-121525
[172] James A. Piazza, "Economic Development, Poorly Managed Political Conflict and Terrorism in India", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* Vol. 32, 5 (2009): 406-419, Available from: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/10576100902831552
[173] Edward Newman, "Exploring the 'Root Causes' of Terrorism", *Studies in Conflict &Terrorism* Vol. 29, 8 (2006): 749-772, Available from: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10576100600704069
[174] Ibid.
[175] Efraim Benmelech and Esteban F. Klor, "What Explains the Flow of Foreign Fighters to IS?", *National Bureau of Economic Research,* Working Paper no. 22190, April 2016, Available from: http://www.nber.org/papers/w22190

foreign nationals captured in Iraq from April to October 2005, an American economist Alan B. Krueger found that among other factors, GDP (Gross Domestic Product), political and civil liberties are important variables in understanding the mobilisation of an individual as a foreign fighter.[176] Accordingly, the lower civil liberties in the origin country directly impact and associated with the greater number of foreign insurgents. As an example, a study depicts that the largest numbers of captured insurgents were from the neighbouring country i.e. Saudi Arabia, where large Muslim population has low level of political rights and civil liberties and geographically closer to Iraq.[177]

To explain the relation between the GDP and the flow of foreign fighter, Benmelech and Klor illustrates with the example of Finland, which has the largest number of IS foreign fighters in relation to the counts of its Muslim population. Finland's GDP per capita in 2010 was $46, 205, which makes it one of the wealthiest nation of the world, is also in the top ten countries with the most IS fighters in relation to its Muslim population.[178] This result suggests that inequality and poverty are not the root causes for people joining IS. Considering the data of political rights and civil liberties in ratio to Muslim population, the research also suggests that most IS foreign fighters originate from established governments.[179] In case of India, the regions and states such as Jammu & Kashmir and the North-East regions, with the highest rate of terrorist activity are more clearly linked with the factors of legacy of Separatism, ethnic conflict, communal conflict and high population growth.[180]Therefore, it is essential for any nation to address the factors that results in support for terrorism.

Anchoring

Anchoring means a level of personal time committed to family and work that restricts the access of an individual to mobilise and join a social movement.[181] In other words, the less

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[176] Alan B. Krueger, "The National Origins of Foreign Fighters in Iraq", *CiteSeerX- Penn State University,* 2006, Available from: https://www.aeaweb.org/annual_mtg_papers/2007/0105_1430_1601.pdf
[177] Ibid.
[178] Efraim Benmelech and Esteban F. Klor, "What Explains the Flow of Foreign Fighters to IS?", *National Bureau of Economic Research,* Working Paper no. 22190, April 2016, Available from: http://www.nber.org/papers/w22190
[179] Ibid.
[180] James A. Piazza, "Economic Development, Poorly Managed Political Conflict and Terrorism in India", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* Vol. 32, 5 (2009): 406-419, Available from: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/10576100902831552
[181] Sean C. Reynolds, "German Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq" (MA diss., Naval Postgraduate School, 2016), pg. 35, Available from: http://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/48583

anchored individual will be more likely to join a conflict as a foreign fighter. Such individuals would not be bound by duties and responsibility towards family or work. Other anchoring factors include career, education, marriage or other romantic relationships, and children. The more an individual is involved in either anchoring factors, the less likely s/he will mobilise to join the conflict. As mentioned earlier, education is also an anchoring factor. The case study of 87 Italian foreign fighters by Francesco Marone shows that main four fighters- Guiliano Delnevo (male), Anas el-Abboubi (male), Maria Giulia Sergio (female), and Meriam Rehaily (female) had no profound knowledge of Arabic or Islamic studies and did not have a higher education.[182] In the Indian subcontinent, Islamic State is targeting educated youth who do not belong to the traditional Islamic schools or *madrasa*.[183]

Social Networking

Social networking is an important factor in foreign fighter mobilisation. The act of being personally invited to join a movement or conflict by a friend or a close family member who is already involved in the movement is one of the most powerful mobilising factors. Pre-existing personal networks are fertile ground for radicalisation and mobilisation because such networks build further connections with like-minded individuals and provide a space for gradual radicalisation over time. A strong personal network also reduces the risk factor where the recruiting efforts will be discovered by local authorities.[184] David Malet explains the working of a jihadist recruitment cell with a case study of Morocco. An Islamist group worked as a 'watcher' in a local mosque where few people express their anger and hatred about US invasion of Iraq and issue of Palestine. The recruiters discuss social justice and the duty to intervene call for Muslim brotherhood and protection of the *Ummah*. People who agree with the ideology of recruiters were subjected to background checks and psychological assessments. In the final phase, individuals who passed these assessments were assigned a 'handler' who smuggled them out of the country on false passport or travel documents.[185]

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[182] Francesco Marone, "Italy's jihadists in the Syrian Civil War", *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism-The Hague,* 2016, Available from: https://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/ICCT-Marone-Italys-Jihadists-in-the-Syrian-Civil-War-August2016-1.pdf

[183] Abdul Basit, "IS Threat in South Asia: A Growing Reality", *RSIS Commentaries: Nanyang Technological University,* (RSIS Commentaries, No. 210: 2016), Available from: https://dr.ntu.edu.sg/handle/10220/41399

[184] Sean C. Reynolds, "German Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq" (MA diss., Naval Postgraduate School, 2016), pg. 12, Available from: http://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/48583

[185] David Malet, "Why Foreign Fighters? Historical Perspectives and Solutions", published in *Orbis Journal of Foreign Affairs*, 2009, Available from: http://davidmalet.com/uploads/Why_Foreign_Fighters_Malet.pdf

Socialisation or building personal networks is the foremost stage of radicalisation that further employed an individual into extremism. The support of local organisations that are already established in the origin country can help recruiters to recruit a specific breed of foreign fighters. In Western Europe, some of the examples of such organisations are *al-Muhajirin* in Britain, *Sharia4Belgium* in Belgium, Forsane Alizza in France, and Millatu Ibrahim in Germany.[186] Often Western governments are concerned with online radicalisation; the verifiable examples of purely internet-based radicalisation remain rare.[187] With the development of technology and availability of social media platform, it is a lot easier to access different social media applications (such as Facebook, Twitter) and to share the information among jihadi sympathisers around the world. Marc Sageman opposes the theory that the Internet plays a significant role in radicalisation and mobilisation of foreign fighters.[188] Also, Rebasa and Bernard rejects that the Internet as a major factor in radicalising the foreign fighters from Europe, that the conversion from radicalisation to fighting as a foreign fighter always takes place in a face-to-face social network rather than in cyberspace.[189]

Anti-Islamic State Foreign Fighters

Likewise, foreign fighters who pledge allegiance to IS, there is a group of foreign fighters who are fighting against IS. In a systematic approach of its own kind, Nathan Patin discusses not only the numbers of anti-IS American foreign fighters who joined different groups to fight IS in the conflict zones of Syria and Iraq but also their backgrounds and motivations. Nathan's report is based on information collected in July and August 2015. He collected the data from news reports, public domains on the Internet, and social media. According to the report, the anti-IS American foreign fighters belong to thirty-one states across the United States, with 16 from Texas with twice the number, eight of foreign fighters from the state of California.[190] According to a research report on 300 anti-IS foreign fighters, among

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[186] Aaron Y. Zelin, "Foreign Fighter Motivations" (Statement submitted for the conference: Taking the Fight to ISIL: Operationalising CT Lines of Effort Against the Islamic State Group), *Washington Institute for Near East Policy.* 2015, Available from:
https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/other/ZelinStatement20150202.pdf
[187] Sean C. Reynolds, "German Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq" (MA diss., Naval Postgraduate School, 2016), pg. 73, Available from: http://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/48583
[188] Ibid, pg. 6.
[189] Ibid, p. 28.
[190] Nathan Patin, "The Other Foreign Fighters: An Open Source Investigation into American Volunteers Fighting the Islamic State", *Bellingcat*, 26 August 2015, Available from: https://www.bellingcat.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/The-Other-Foreign-Fighters.pdf

different anti-IS groups in Iraq and Syria, Syrian-Kurdish YPG has 31% and the Iraqi-Kurdish Peshmerga have 22% of the foreign fighters who are fighting IS and other Sunni extremist groups in the region.[191] American have switched among groups, for instance, the Americans started with the YPG in Syria and later travelled to Iraq to fight along with either the Peshmerga or Assyrian Christian militias- Dwekh Nawsha and the Nineveh Plains Protection Units (NPU).[192] According to the dataset, 300 anti-IS fighters belong to 26 countries around the world. The largest numbers come from the United States which accounted for 114 (38%) following by the United Kingdom (13.7%), Germany (8%), France (6.3%), Sweden (5.7%) and Canada (4.7%) of the fighters in the database.[193]

On another side, the United Kingdom, Germany and France are also the top three European nations to provide foreign fighters to IS. James, a 46-year-old Scottish fighter is one of the three western volunteers or anti-IS foreign fighters who joined the Assyrian Christian militia group Dwekh Nawsha in Iraq's northern Nineveh province.[194] James served in the British army for seven years and fought in Northern Ireland before going into private security. He explains his reason for joining the anti-IS group, saying:

> "Daesh[195] is growing in Great Britain. Unfortunately, in my country, I cannot do anything, I cannot say anything, or I will go to prison. My only other option to do something about it is to come here, where I can get the weapon, where I can fight Daesh."[196]

The recruitment campaign of anti-IS foreign fighters entered the world of social media too. The Facebook page and the website of 'The Lions of Rojava' actively seeks volunteers to join-in

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[191] Henry Tuck, Tanya Silverman and Candace Smalley, "Shooting in the right direction: Anti-IS Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq", (Horizons Series No.1), *Institute for Strategic Dialogue,* 2016, Available from: http://www.strategicdialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/ISD-Report-Shooting-in-the-right-direction-Anti-IS-Fighters.pdf

[192] Nathan Patin, "The Other Foreign Fighters: An Open Source Investigation into American Volunteers Fighting the Islamic State", *Bellingcat*, 26 August 2015, Available from: https://www.bellingcat.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/The-Other-Foreign-Fighters.pdf

[193] Henry Tuck, Tanya Silverman and Candace Smalley, "Shooting in the right direction: Anti-IS Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq", (Horizons Series No.1), *Institute for Strategic Dialogue,* 2016, Available from: http://www.strategicdialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/ISD-Report-Shooting-in-the-right-direction-Anti-IS-Fighters.pdf

[194] Florian Neuhof, "Anti-IS foreign legion: Ex-skinheads and angry white men swell ranks of Christian militia fighting Islamic State", *International Business Times,* 13 July 2015, Available from: http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/anti-IS-foreign-legion-ex-skinheads-angry-white-men-swell-ranks-christian-militia-fighting-1510550

[195] Note: 'Daesh' is an Arabic acronym for Islamic State.

[196] Florian Neuhof, "Anti-IS foreign legion: Ex-skinheads and angry white men swell ranks of Christian militia fighting Islamic State", *International Business Times,* 13 July 2015, Available from: http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/anti-IS-foreign-legion-ex-skinheads-angry-white-men-swell-ranks-christian-militia-fighting-1510550

and fight against the IS. As explained by the administrator of the 'Lions of Rojava' website, those interested in applying as anti-IS foreign fighter would be joining the Kurdish forces fighting in the Syrian territories.[197]

Adding further, the applicants to join the brigade of the 'Lions of Rojava' are from various sectors; some of them are activists, revolutionaries, specialists like scientists, engineers.[198] Stefan Latisevs, a British who spent several months in International Peshmerga Volunteers[199] group (IPV), told *Vocativ* over Facebook that after some time most American anti-IS fighters turned into 'rambo'; the Peshmerga, or the YPG does not require 'Rambo' but team players. However, Europeans with military backgrounds are quite acceptable due to their multi-cultural background and different ethics.[200] According to a report, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard (IRGC) is recruiting hundreds Shia from Afghanistan to fight alongside Assad's forces in Syria. In return, these Shia fighters are lured by the promises of an Iranian residence permit and a monthly salary of US Dollars 500.[201] As told by Syed Bilal Hussain Abidi, a senior Shia cleric and spokesman of the India-based Shia group, *Anjuman-e-Haideri,* "the group is looking for million volunteers to create a human chain around the holy shrines of Karbala and Najaf, in case the IS attacks and destroy these holy shrines."[202] Reportedly, in June 2014, around thirty-thousand Indian Shia Muslims volunteered to fight against IS in Iraq to protect the Shiite shrines. These volunteers ranged from students to professionals such as bankers, doctors, and engineers.[203] However, the government of India has said that it could not allow Indians to travel to Iraq to join anti-IS groups.[204] The sectarian conflict between Shi'ites and Sunnis could be an interesting point for Indian Shias to fight against the IS, which is a Sunni terror organisation.

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[197] Adi Cohen, "Volunteer Anti-IS Fighters join up on Facebook", *Vocativ,* 02 June 2016, Available from: http://www.vocativ.com/321997/volunteer-anti-IS-fighters-join-up-on-facebook/
[198] Ibid.
[199] Note: International Peshmerga Volunteers is another group of foreign volunteers who support the Kurds, raising money and sending fighters into Kurdish territories in northern Iraq to fight against IS.
[200] Adi Cohen, "Volunteer Anti-IS Fighters join up on Facebook", *Vocativ,* 02 June 2016, Available from: http://www.vocativ.com/321997/volunteer-anti-IS-fighters-join-up-on-facebook/
[201] Abha Shankar, "The Saudi-Iran Rivalry and Sectarian Strife in South Asia", *The Diplomat,* 06 October 2016, Available from: http://thediplomat.com/2016/10/the-saudi-iran-rivalry-and-sectarian-strife-in-south-asia/
[202] Ibid.
[203] Jijo Jacob, "30,000 Indian Shia Muslims Ready to fight IS 'Bare Handed' in Iraq", *International Business Times,* 27 June 2014, Available from: http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/30000-indian-muslims-ready-fight-IS-bare-handed-iraq-1454415
[204] Ibid.

Is India's Sovereignty Vulnerable to Islamic State Threat?

The numbers of IS sympathisers in India have grown recently, from six cases reported in 2014 to 75 cases in 2016 shows the IS' presence in India but not at the scale relative to Europe or America.[205] The mobilisation of Indian foreign fighters in Islamic State is an evidence of its presence but does not confirm IS as an imminent threat to India. Recent report by the Brookings Institution-India discusses the data of Indian foreign fighters in IS. According to the report, 142 Indian citizens confirmed to be affiliated with IS out of which 42 are abroad, including 16 in Afghanistan.[206] The report claims to have only 10 IS sympathisers among 142 Indian citizens reportedly affiliated with IS. Only 10 sympathisers from a nation of 174 million Muslims i.e. India, seems an uncertain data in comparison to the counts of Indian foreign fighters travelled abroad and arrested in India. Regarding the Indian foreign fighters killed and returnees, the report claims that eleven are confirmed killed whereas two are returnees.[207] The reported data is very similar with the data collected by the author for this research thesis. Out of 38 Indian foreign fighters travelled to IS-controlled regions in Iraq/Syria/Afghanistan, 14 are reportedly killed and two returned to India. The report by the Brooking Institute also claims that these foreign fighters belong to the well-prosperous regions of India, Kerala, Telangana, Maharashtra, and Karnataka which is an identical information collected and analysed by the author in this research project. The report did not mention anything regarding IS's online propaganda and its other activities on Indian cyberspace.

In late 2016, a postgraduate student from the University of British Columbia in Canada authored first academic work focusing on IS and India. In his postgraduate thesis titled '*IS threat to India: how should India respond?*', author Asim Kumar Arun attempted to examine the IS as a threat to India and proposed the policy prescription to counter that threat.[208] Discussing the numbers of Indian foreign fighters, Asim Kumar stated that "less than 30 Indians as compared to 25,000 foreign fighters are known to have migrated to IS area".[209] In his work, the author referred to the *Soufan Group's* assessment on foreign fighter regarding the

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[205] Dhruva Jaishankar, "Assessing the Islamic State threat to India: It is a serious but manageable challenge", *Brookings Institution*, 08 May 2017, Available from: https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/assessing-the-islamic-state-threat-to-india-it-is-a-serious-but-manageable-challenge/
[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid.
[208] Asim K. Arun, "IS threat to India: how should India respond?" (MA Thesis. The University of British Columbia, December 2016), Available from: https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/24/items/1.0340694
[209] Ibid, pg. ii.

number of foreign fighter from India. The literature discusses briefly about Indians in Syria, policies such as social integration, counter-radicalisation, de-radicalisation, etc. About IS's involvement in Indian cyberspace, author only briefly points to the 5-steps of online recruitment process explaining how the young recruits are drawn to 'Facebook' pages and then later meet in-person for further activities. As a limitation, both literatures— the Brookings Institute's report and Arun's thesis, failed to discuss IS sympathisers' existence and activities of them over Indian cyberspace. Both authors missed to mention a notable Indian online IS sympathiser, Mehdi Masroor Biswas aka @*ShamiWitness* who ran and became one of the 'strong voices' for IS on twitter. With around 17,000 followers,[210] he was involved in broadcasting the IS's propaganda and luring potential recruits for jihad. Along with understanding the phenomenon of Indian foreign fighters, there is a need to research and analyse the online behaviour of IS's sympathisers who can remotely radicalise and recruit a jihadist.

Conclusion

The theory of foreign fighters has been appeared over several occasions. Historically, the Spanish Civil conflict of 1930s and the Afghan-Soviet war in 1980s are important examples where foreign fighters of different nationalities gathered at respective conflict zones and participated in a cause. The 15th Century kinship between Indian Muslims and the Ottoman Empire came in light during Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), where Indian Muslims felt that the collapse of the Ottoman Empire would be a serious threat to the existence of Islam. Therefore, during 1920s around 18,000 Indian Muslims travelled to Turkey to join jihadi movement to save the Ottoman Empire.[211] The rise of IS and occupation of some territories in Iraq and Syria depicts different picture of conflict which is mainly focused on religious and establishment of Islamic state or caliphate in the region. As the human resource is one of the strengthen pillar of an existence of any group to operate in full capacity, IS's religious ideology and organisational existence is largely surviving on its strength of foreign terrorist fighters. According to an estimate of IS's foreign fighters involved in conflicts in Iraq and Syria, around

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[210] "Unmasked: the man behind top Islamic State Twitter account", *Channel 4 News*, 11 December 2014, Available from: www.channel4.com/news/unmasked-the-man-behind-top-islamic-state-twitter-account-shami-witness-mehdi

[211] R. Upadhyay, "Jihad in India: Time to Review, Re-Interpret and Understand", *South Asia Analysis Group* (Paper no. 6172), 22 September 2016, Available from: http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/node/2056

27,000 to 31,000 people[212] travelled to join IS and other extremist groups. According to the same report,[213] more than 5,000 people are citizens of various countries of the European Union, which reflects growing concern of extremism and radicalisation that needs to be addressed. The movement of a foreign fighter is a result of several factors, such as anchoring, social networking and different economic and social variables. According to a case study on German foreign fighters, the probability of a German native to join IS in Syria is minimal as compare to immigrants who are unsuccessful to integrate within German society. To stop the growing rate of mobilisation of foreign fighters to the conflict zones like Iraq and Syria, the policy makers must understand the factors of isolation of Muslim community within any society and minimise the risk factor of radicalisation with the involvement of religious leaders. Different anti-IS groups such as 'Lions of Rojava', peshmerga and YPG have experienced members especially the war-veterans of US or UK armed forces. Out of 300 anti-IS fighters, majority belong to United States (38%) and United Kingdom (13.7%). Fighters from same geographical locations are divided in two different categories of foreign fighters that are involved in conflict in Iraq and Syria. The first category is of radical extremists who believe in violence and brutality against humanity to establish the Islamic state and the other category is of fighters who are fighting against those radical extremists. Considering IS's vision of expansion of Caliphate by the year 2020 towards the Indian Subcontinent and mobilisation of Indian foreign fighters does shows the presence of IS among Indian Muslim youths but as the counts of Indian foreign fighters are very small and law-enforcement's vigilance on the matter. Therefore, it would be too early to predict that Islamic State is an immediate threat to India. Also, we cannot underestimate an allegiance of cross-border terrorist groups based in Pakistan and Bangladesh, such Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jammat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) respectively to the transnational terrorist organisations like AQIS and IS that may pose a troublesome situation for India; for which Indian government must work towards the development in their counterterrorism and foreign fighter policies.

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[212] The Soufan Group, "Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq", *The Soufan Group*, December 2015, Available from: http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf
[213] Ibid.

Chapter Three

Indian Islamic State Fighters

> *"Indeed, the ummah of Islam is watching your jihad with eyes of hope, and indeed you have brothers in many parts of the word being inflicted with the worst kinds of torture. ……. Muslims' rights are forcibly seized in China, **India**, Palestine…………O Muslims everywhere, glad tidings to you and expect good……by Allah's grace- you have a state and khilafah, which will return your dignity, might, rights and leadership…….It is khilafah that gathered the Caucasian, **Indian**, Chinese, Shami, Iraqi…….."* – Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.[214]

Introduction

Islamic State's self-claimed leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has announced his intentions not to limit the region of Islamic State to Iraq and Syria but to expand it further towards East and establish the Islamic State of Khorasan, which includes Afghanistan, the Central Asian Republic nations, Eastern Iran and Pakistan. According to the report by *India Today*, IS has unveiled its terrifying plan to take control of the Middle East region, North Africa, most of the Indian Subcontinent and parts of Europe by the year 2020, to complete its Caliphate. The plan is highlighted through a map where the regions from Europe to Africa and the Indian sub-continent are shaded in black—the colour of IS' Caliphate.[215]

This chapter discusses the emergence of IS's strategy of 'Caliphate' in South Asia region, particularly targeting India. It will also discuss the factors responsible for the mobilisation of a 'handful' Indian Muslims to the conflict zones in Iraq or Syria. Along with the profiling of Indians who are killed in these conflict zones, it also discusses the profile of two Indians, Areeb Majeed and Subahani Haja Moideen, who fought for IS in Iraq and Syria and got arrested by

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[214] Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's Message as Caliph", *Middle East Forum,* 02 July 2014, Available from: http://www.meforum.org/4744/abu-bakr-al-baghdadi-message-as-caliph *(Emphasis added)*

[215] PTI, "IS map of areas it wants to take over by 2020 includes India", *India Today,* 10 August 2015, Available from: http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/india-in-2020-if-IS-plans-succeed/1/457594.html

Indian law-enforcement officials upon their arrival to India. In recent times, the rise in foreign fighters in IS from different countries has been a core theme of research among different scholars and independent research groups like The Soufan Group, ICSR, and ICCT. These research groups collected data on foreign fighters from various sources, reliable and non-reliable, for their assessment on the on-growing issue of foreign fighters. In a statement given by India's Minister of Home Affairs Rajnath Singh, there is negligible support from Indian youth for IS and he gave credit to families from Muslim community for discouraging their children from getting influenced by the terror group.[216] Similarly, according to an official of 'Internal Security Division' at India's Ministry of Home Affairs, "…the cultural roots and family values among Indians are much stronger that it weans away an Indian Muslim youth to join such jihadi outfits".[217] But on the flip-side of this narrative, the mobilization of Indian foreign fighters to conflict zone raises the question of why these Indians travelled to conflict zones even as others from the same community stayed back. As an assumption, IS might not be an immediate threat but its ideology and an increase in the count of sympathisers poses a concern for the government and intelligence community of India. Recent reports of Indians involved in fighting for IS in combat zones of Iraq/Syria have sparked concern over the possible presence of IS's ideology in India with the larger picture of its outreach in the Indian subcontinent.

Mobilisation of Indians in Islamic State

Defining a "foreign fighter" could refer to a violent combatant who willingly leaves its country of residence with an intention to get trained or to take up arms against the opposite group in a conflict zone. As stated earlier, the main objective of Islamic State is to establish the 'so-called' global *Caliphate* by carrying out terror activities across different countries in the world including India.[218] In the case of European Union, foreign fighters from France, Germany, Belgium and the United Kingdom constitute most of the 'European foreign fighters' who joined IS.[219] According to a report, France with 1700 fighters, is followed by Germany

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[216] "No immediate threat to nation from IS, says Rajnath Singh", *India Today,* 16 December 2014, Available from: http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/IS-rajnath-singh-immediate-threat-bangalore-techie-terror-group/1/407159.html
[217] Interview with an official of India's Ministry of Home Affairs by the author, Delhi, India, 27 February 2017.
[218] PTI, "IS map of areas it wants to take over by 2020 includes India", *India Today,* 10 August 2015, Available from: http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/india-in-2020-if-IS-plans-succeed/1/457594.html
[219] "Most European IS fighters come from France, Germany, UK- study", *RT News,* 01 April 2016, Available from: https://www.rt.com/news/338080-europe-IS-foreign-fighters/

and UK with 760 and Belgium with 516 foreign fighters from the region.[220] Post-radicalisation from the radical propaganda, only a few Muslim youth from India have expressed their cohesion, allegiance and support to IS and have left India to become a jihadi under the supervision of their IS handlers. This section discusses the deployment of Indians in Iraq and Syria as a fighter with IS affiliation. It also analyses data collected by different research/think-tank organisations as well as information gathered by the author from different news reports and interviews with subject-matter expertise. According to investigation agencies as many as 67 Indians have joined IS, but the numbers could be higher.[221] To meet the primary and essential requirements of this paper, the analysis is based on collective information of 38 Indians, who travelled to IS-controlled regions in Iraq and Syria.   The counts of Indian foreign fighters collected by the author are very near to the numbers mentioned in news-media reports. According to a report by an Indian security agency, around 75 Indians have so far joined IS, out of these 45 travelled from India, while remaining were the Indian Diaspora.[222] It is essential to study the mobilisation of foreign fighters as they are more violent and less open to de-escalation in comparison to local terrorists.[223] It is difficult to give a single answer to the question—What motivates these individuals to join terrorist organisations, in spite of being educated, with strong cultural values and decent employment in their home country? In 2010, a special report on foreign fighters by the United States Institute of Peace depicts the case studies of 2,032 individuals who were trying to channelize their frustration through revenge, achieve social status in the form of recognition, or experience a sense of thrill by joining al-Qaeda.[224] Regardless of the motives of these foreign fighters, they pose a serious security threat both at home and abroad.

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[220] Berenice Boutin, Gregory Chauzal, Jessica Dorsey, Marjolein Jegerings, Christophe Paulussen, Johanna Pohl, Alastair Reed and Sofia Zavagli, "The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union- Profiles, Threats & Policies", *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism- The Hague,* April 2016, Available from: https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ICCT-Report_Foreign-Fighters-Phenomenon-in-the-EU_1-April-2016_including-AnnexesLinks.pdf

[221] "10 Malayalee IS recruits returned home after training; NIA starts hunt for key recruiter", *Asianet Newsable,* 20 October 2016. Available from: http://newsable.asianetnews.tv/south/IS-10-recruits-returned-to-india-nia-hunts-for-key-recruiter

[222] Rezaul H. Laskar, "Pro-Islamic State group warns of attack on Taj Mahal", *Hindustan Times,* 19 March 2017, Available from: http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/pro-islamic-state-group-warns-of-attack-on-taj-mahal/story-nnoYq5kP43TXHHU6x0d9wJ.html

[223] Sean C. Reynolds, "German Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq" (MA diss., Naval Postgraduate School, 2016), pg. 3, Available from: http://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/48583

[224] (Col.) John M. Venhaus, "Why Youth Join al-Qaeda", *United States Institute of Peace,* May 2010, Available from: https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR236Venhaus.pdf

In 2015, the government of India updated the list of 'proscribed terrorist organisations' which includes the native and transnational terrorist organisations. As on 30 March 2015, IS—named as 'Islamic State/Islamic State of Iraq and Levant/Islamic State of Iraq and Syria/*Daish*, and all its manifestations' was declared as banned terrorist organisation under Section 35 of India's Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.[225] In a news report, the National Investigation Agency revealed that in 2015 only two cases were registered related to IS whereas in 2016, the numbers increased to 12 .[226] This highlights the presence of IS propaganda among Indians. For analysis, the collective data on Indian foreign fighters is divided among different groups, such as age, gender, education, employment, region and converts. As mentioned earlier, it is difficult to provide an actual analysis as much of the verified data is with the Indian intelligence agencies and difficult to access for academic purposes.

Age

This section analyses the data of Indian foreign fighters by classifying them into different age groups. The data is collected from two main categories: (i) Indians who left India to join IS and, (ii) Indians arrested in nation-wide raids and while moving out of India with intentions to travel to IS-controlled conflict regions, mainly in Iraq and Syria. As much of the data is collected from various news and media sources, there are limitations to acquiring the 'actual age' and the possibility of getting 'no age' of an individual foreign fighter remains.

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[225] Ministry of Home Affairs: Government of India, *List of Banned Terrorist Organisations under section 35 of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967* (India, As on 30-March-2015), Available from: http://mha.nic.in/BO
[226] PTI, "Converted Hindus, Engineer among 52 IS terrorists held by NIA", *The Indian Express,* 19 January 2017, Available from: http://indianexpress.com/article/india/converted-hindus-engineers-among-52-IS-terrorists-held-by-nia/
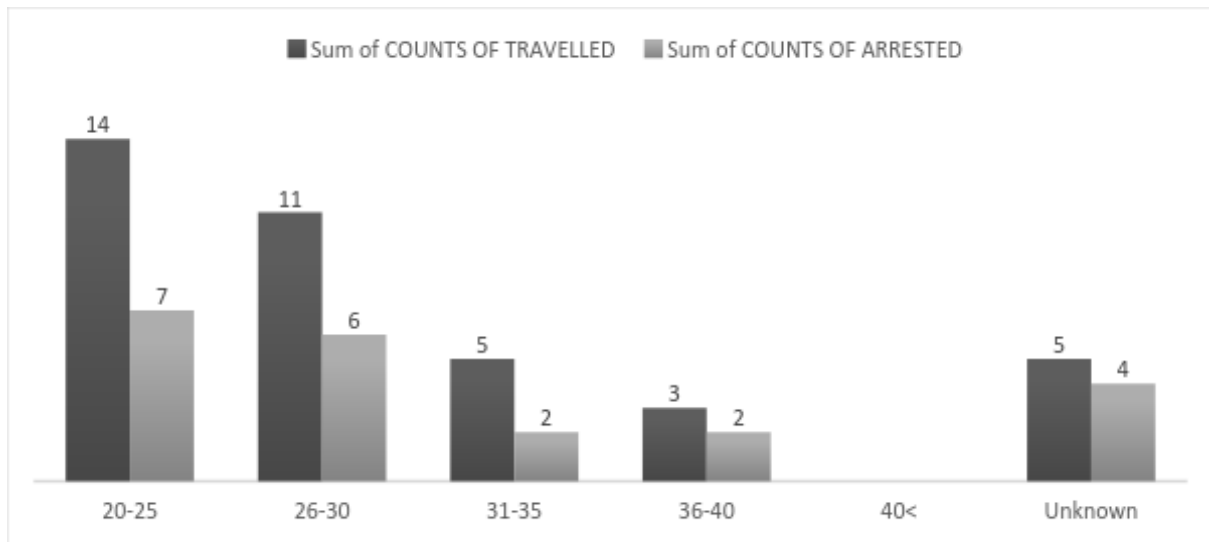
Figure 1: Age-wise classification of Indian Foreign Fighters

Figure 1 shows the age-wise classification of Indian foreign fighters who travelled to IS-controlled areas and individuals arrested, suspected to be affiliated with IS. In both categories—travelled and arrested, majority of Indian foreign fighters belong to the age group of 20-25 years and 26-30 years, 14 and 11 respectively. According to a report by The Soufan Group, the usual age group of the individuals known to have travelled to join IS as foreign fighters is 18-29 years; some of them are in their 30s.[227] The age-wise data of Indian foreign fighters nearly matches the foreign fighters' data from Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom. According to the age-wise study conducted by ICCT, the average age of a Belgian foreign fighter is 25.7 years. Many of foreign fighters from Germany and the United Kingdom are younger than the age of 30 years.[228] The average age of the 38 Indian foreign fighters is 28 years and almost 66% of them are under the younger or equal to age of 30 years. This age-wise data shows the similarity between the European and Indian foreign fighters irrespective of the cultural and geographical differences.

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[227] Richard Barrett, "Foreign Fighters in Syria", *The Soufan Group,* June 2014, Available from: http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/TSG-Foreign-Fighters-in-Syria.pdf

[228] Berenice Boutin, Gregory Chauzal, Jessica Dorsey, Marjolein Jegerings, Christophe Paulussen, Johanna Pohl, Alastair Reed and Sofia Zavagli, "The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union- Profiles, Threats & Policies", *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism- The Hague,* April 2016, Available from: https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ICCT-Report_Foreign-Fighters-Phenomenon-in-the-EU_1-April-2016_including-AnnexesLinks.pdf

Referring to India's Census of population of 2011, around 31% of the population belongs to the age group of 18-35 years.[229] According to the dataset, Indian foreign fighters below 35-years are 73.68% of the total count i.e. 38. As depicted through figures, the count of Indian foreign fighters who travelled to IS-controlled conflict areas in comparison with the total population of India, is an insignificant number. But on considering the percentage of these foreign fighters (approx. 74%) in comparison with the percentage of Indian population in the age-group of 18-35 years i.e. 31%, these figures are worrisome. In 2016, India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) conducted nation-wide search operations and arrested 52 individuals suspected to be linked with IS in India. NIA revealed that out of these 52— 28 belonged to the age group of 18-25 years, 20 belonged to the age group of 25-40 years and the remaining four to the age group above 40 years.[230] There are no media or government reports on "older" Indian foreign fighters over 40 years, who travelled to IS-controlled regions. Conclusively, the study shows that based on an age-wise data analysis, the case of the Indian foreign fighters is no different but instead equals to the cases of European foreign fighters.

Gender

The phenomenon of the foreign fighter is a male phenomenon,[231] maybe this is the reason behind few examples of women as foreign fighters in conflict zones. Perhaps the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) is one of the major conflicts where women served mainly as nurses but also many women were involved as combatants on equal terms with men.[232] In June 2014, IS's declaration of the Caliphate and call for 'foreign fighters' received a positive response from citizens of Western countries, mainly Europe and North America. The majority of these travellers are men but there is a rise in the number of women, with an estimated figure

[229] Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, *Census of India, 2011: C-13 single year age returns by residence and sex* (India: Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, 2011), Available from: http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/C-series/c-13/DDW-0000C-13.xls
[230] PTI, "Converted Hindus, Engineer among 52 IS terrorists held by NIA", *The Indian Express,* 19 January 2017, Available from: http://indianexpress.com/article/india/converted-hindus-engineers-among-52-IS-terrorists-held-by-nia
[231] Edwin Bakker and Seran De. Leede, "European Female Jihadists in Syria: Exploring an Under-Researched Topic", *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism- The Hague,* April 2015, Available from: https://www.icct.nl/download/file/ICCT-Bakker-de-Leede-European-Female-Jihadists-In-Syria-Exploring-An-Under-Researched-Topic-April2015.pdf
[232] Lisa Lines, "Female Combatants in the Spanish Civil War: Milicianas on the Front Lines and in the Rearguard", *Journal of International Women's Studies,* Vol 10 no. 4 (May 2009), pp. 168-187. Available from: http://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1265&context=jiws

of 550 who left their homes and travelled to Iraq and Syria to join IS.[233] In 2015, an article in *Dissent* magazine stated that the number of women foreign fighters from European countries, North America and Australia, amount to around ten percent of the total number of foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria.[234] Whereas in 2014, The Soufan Group claims that the number of women from Europe is 18 percent of the total number of European foreign fighters.[235] Women travelling to conflict zones with a purpose to join jihadist extremist groups, is a new aspect in the phenomenon of foreign fighters.

The recent examples of women's active participation in jihadi activities include the Belgian convert Muriel Degauque, American citizen Colleen Renee LaRose popularly known as "Jihadi Jane" and the British national Samantha Louise Lewthwaite.[236] "Jihadi Jane" was a convert to Islam in her 30s, radicalised and actively involved in the recruitment process of other foreign fighters.[237] Colleen R. La Rose was convicted of plotting the killing of a Swedish artist, Lars Vilks for drawing the cartoon of Prophet Muhammad, and was sentenced for federal punishment for ten years.[238] Islamic State is not the first terrorist organisation to introduce women fighters in its group. The women in the Chechen suicide squad also known as the "Black Widows" wore explosive belts and were determined squad members equipped with a stronger will than the men regarding suicide missions.[239] Thenmozhi Rajaratnam, a female member of a notable South Asian terror group— Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), successfully carried out a suicide mission targeting then-Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on May 1991.[240] In Indian subcontinent, this was the 'first-of-its-kind' suicide mission executed by "a woman on Indian soil."

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[233] Atika Shubert, "The Women of IS: Who are they?", *CNN,* 29 May 2015, Available from: http://edition.cnn.com/2015/05/29/middleeast/who-are-the-women-of-IS/
[234] Rafia Zakaria, "Women and Islamic Militancy", *Dissent,* Winter 2015, Available from: https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/why-women-choose-IS-islamic-militancy
[235] Richard Barrett, "Foreign Fighters in Syria", *The Soufan Group,* June 2014, Available from: http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/TSG-Foreign-Fighters-in-Syria.pdf
[236] Edwin Bakker and Seran De Leede, "European Female Jihadists in Syria: Exploring an Under-Researched Topic", *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism- The Hague,* April 2015, Available from: https://www.icct.nl/download/file/ICCT-Bakker-de-Leede-European-Female-Jihadists-In-Syria-Exploring-An-Under-Researched-Topic-April2015.pdf
[237] Ibid.
[238] Stephanie Siegel and Tracy Connor, " 'Jihad Jane' Colleen LaRose Became a Terrorist for Love", *NBC News,* 14 January 2015, Available from: http://www.nbcnews.com/news/investigations/jihad-jane-colleen-larose-became-terrorist-love-n284636
[239] Paul Quinn-Judge, "The Chechen Suicide Squad", *Time,* 28 October 2002, Available from: http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,384829,00.html
[240] T. E. Narasimhan, "5 things to know about the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case", *Business Standard,* 19 February 2014, Available from: http://www.business-standard.com/article/politics/5-things-to-know-about-the-rajiv-gandhi-assassination-case-114021900625_1.html
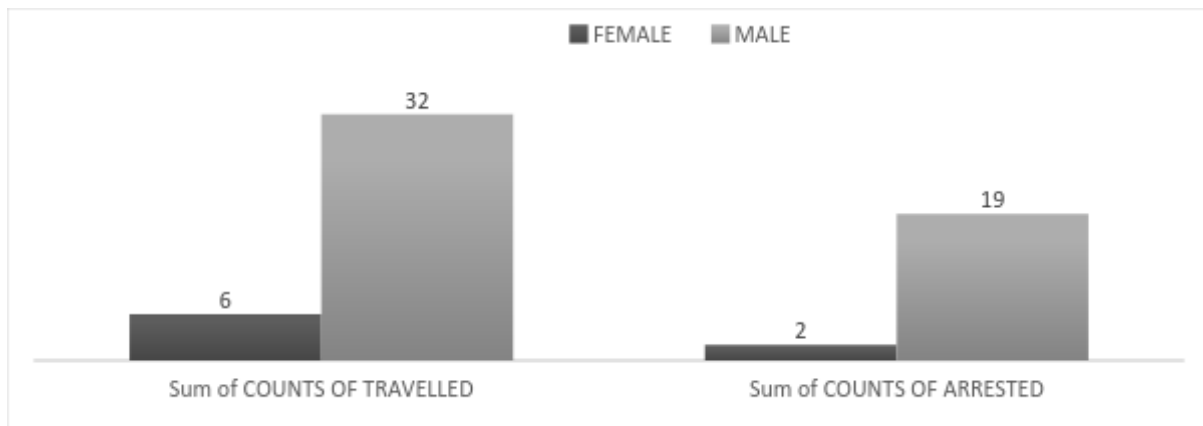
Figure 2: Gender-wise classification of Indian Foreign Fighters

According to "gender-wise" data classification of Indian foreign fighters, number of male foreign fighters is more than female participants. Among thirty-eight Indian foreign fighters, there are six females who travelled with their respective family and children. The ICCT's report on European foreign fighters shows that among men foreign fighters, 9.10% from Belgium, 11.76% from France, 20% from Germany[241] and relatively small but growing number of around 10% of female fighters are from the United Kingdom.[242] Analysing the European women fighters, around 15.78% of 38 Indian foreign fighters, are women; which is relatively higher than the percentage from Belgium and France. These Indian women travelled with their husbands to the IS-controlled region in Afghanistan. According to a report, Finland's Interior Ministry stated that their government is aware of women and children who travelled with male foreign fighters to IS.[243] As per the research, the motivational factors for European women to become jihadi is not different from the men; the oppressions of Muslim community, ideological and religious duty towards Islam, is one of their motivations.[244]

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[241] Edwin Bakker and Seran De Leede, "European Female Jihadists in Syria: Exploring an Under-Researched Topic", *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism- The Hague,* April 2015, Available from: https://www.icct.nl/download/file/ICCT-Bakker-de-Leede-European-Female-Jihadists-In-Syria-Exploring-An-Under-Researched-Topic-April2015.pdf

[242] Parvathi Menon, "Grooming women for jihad", *The Hindu,* 21 April 2016, Available from: http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/grooming-women-for-jihad/article7070826.ece

[243] Juha Saarinen, "The Clear Banner: Update on the Finnish Foreign Fighter Contingent", *Jihadology,* 18 October 2014, Available from: http://jihadology.net/2014/10/18/the-clear-banner-update-on-the-finnish-foreign-fighter-contingent/

[244] Edwin Bakker and Seran De Leede, "European Female Jihadists in Syria: Exploring an Under-Researched Topic", *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism- The Hague,* April 2015, Available from: https://www.icct.nl/download/file/ICCT-Bakker-de-Leede-European-Female-Jihadists-In-Syria-Exploring-An-Under-Researched-Topic-April2015.pdf

The phenomenon of 'jihadi brides' refers to the girls and women travelling abroad to join the IS. The role of these jihadi brides is often limited to that of wife, with an exception of tasks related to Sharia female police and nurses.[245] Several news headlines in the Indian press mentioned the term 'jihadi brides' in a different context. In news, the term 'Jihadi brides' either referred to the women fighters from the West[246] or to a 'dream'[247] sold out in IS propaganda to Indian youth. As reported by investigation agency, Indian foreign fighters are outlawed by 'Arab fighters' who get the priority of choosing women as a bride.[248] In 2016, several Indian news-media reported the 'missing' news[249] of approximately 17 people from an Indian state of Kerala, including five married couple, but the press did not refer to these women as 'jihadi brides'. The Indian news-media only reported the departure of these Indian women along with the information of their male partners who travelled as foreign fighters.

Education

The World Bank report, based on leaked data of IS which was obtained by the German intelligence agency, has revealed that all IS recruits (mainly foreign fighters) are well-educated and wealthy. This data is based on socio-economic details of 3,803 foreign fighters who joined IS between 2013 and 2014.[250] Turning to the IS's foreign fighters' education data, 69% of

[245] Lizzie Dearden, "IS jihadi brides encouraging girls to launch UK terror attacks", *The Times of India,* 14 August 2016, Available from: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/uk/IS-jihadi-brides-encouraging-girls-to-launch-UK-terror-attacks/articleshow/53695987.cms

[246] PTI, "British jihadi bride moves up in US' kill list: Report", *Daily News and Analysis,* 07 May 2017, Available from: http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report-british-jihadi-bride-moves-up-in-us-kill-list-report-2430194; AP, "Women in Islamic State: No exit for 'jihadi brides'", *Indian Express,* 22 June 2015, Available from: http://indianexpress.com/article/world/europe/women-in-islamic-state-no-exit-for-jihadi-brides/;

[247] Manan Kumar, "Sold dreams of jihadi brides, Indian youths end up as cannon fodder in Islamic State", *Daily News and Analysis,* 24 November 2015, Available from: http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-sold-dreams-of-jihadi-brides-indian-youths-end-up-as-cannon-fodder-in-islamic-state-2148277

[248] Ibid.

[249] Shaju Philip, "Kerala: At least 5 women in 15 missing from Middle East, feared to be with IS", *Indian Express,* 09 July 2016, Available from: http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/at-least-5-women-in-15-from-kerala-missing-from-middle-east-feared-to-be-with-IS-2902459/; ABP News Bureau, "22 missing Kerala youth traced to IS training camp in Afghanistan: Source", *ABP News,* 05 January 2017, Available from: http://www.abplive.in/india-news/22-missing-kerala-youth-traced-to-IS-training-camp-in-afghanistan-sources-475750; PTI, "22 Missing Keralites have reached IS' bastion in Afghanistan: NIA sources", *NDTV,* 14 September 2016, Available from: http://www.ndtv.com/kerala-news/22-missing-keralites-have-reached-ISs-bastion-in-afghanistan-nia-sources-1458610;

[250] Aamna Mohdin, "ISIL's foreign fighters are surprisingly well-educated, according to the World Bank", *Quartz,* 06 October 2016, Available from: https://qz.com/802276/the-foreign-fighters-of-ISislamic-state-are-surprisingly-well-educated-according-to-the-world-bank/

fighters had attained at least secondary level education, 15% were school drop-outs and <2% were illiterate or had no formal education.[251]
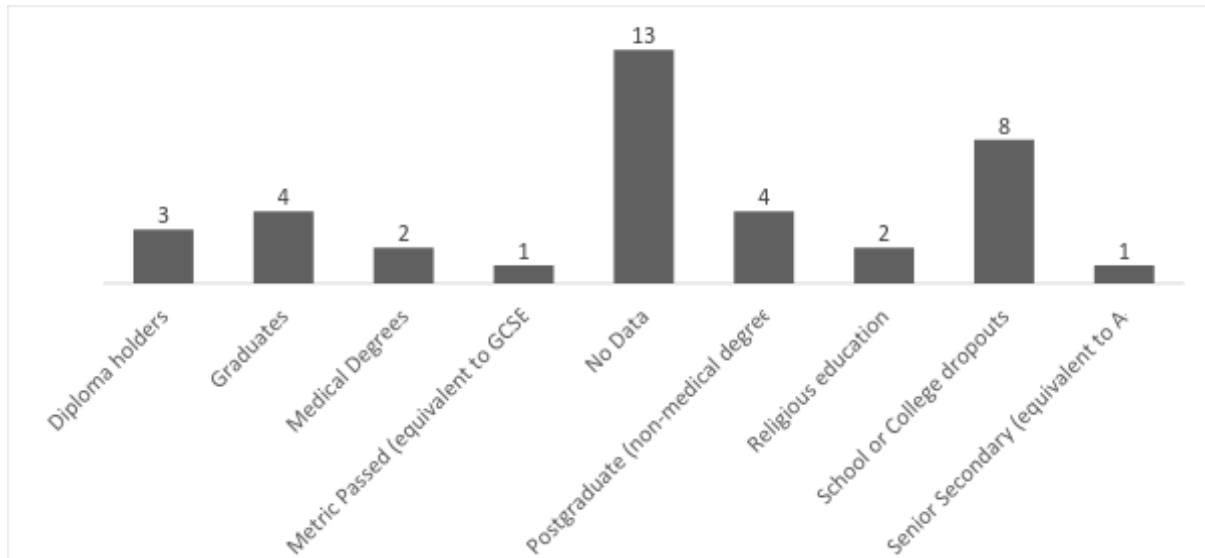

Figure 3: Education-wise classification of Indian foreign fighters who travelled to IS-controlled territory

According to the above data, 38 Indian foreign fighters who travelled to IS-controlled territories in Iraq, Syria or Afghanistan, have attained basic secondary level education, excluding the numbers with 'no information'. Only two individuals attained the Islamic education from religious institution or *madrasas*. If literacy rate among different states of India is considered as one of the basic factors to understand the connection between education and the counts of foreign fighters from their respective states, the results are quite surprising.

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[251] World Bank Middle East and North Africa Region- MENA Economic Monitor, *Economic and Social Inclusion to Prevent Violent Extremism* (Washington DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, October 2016), Available from: http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/409591474983005625/pdf/108525-REVISED-PUBLIC-FINAL-Fall-MEM-ONLINE.pdf
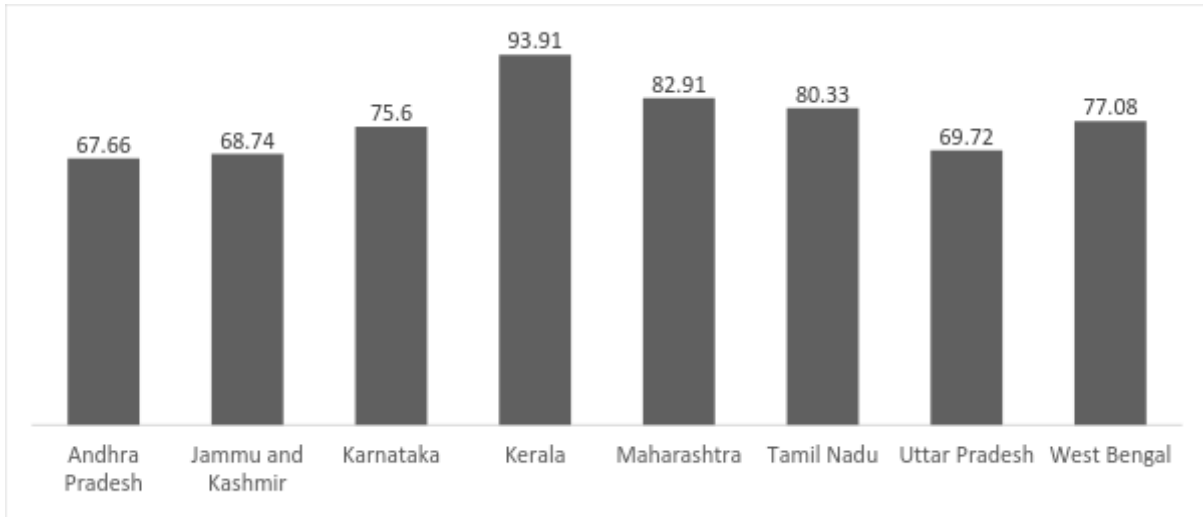
Figure 4: Region-wise 'provisional' literacy rate in India according to census data 2011

The above figure shows the literacy rate of eight states where the foreign fighters came from. According to India's Census in 2011,[252] among these eight states the state of Kerala scored the highest literacy rate of 93.91% followed by the state of Maharashtra whereas the state of Andhra Pradesh scored the lowest of 67.66%.
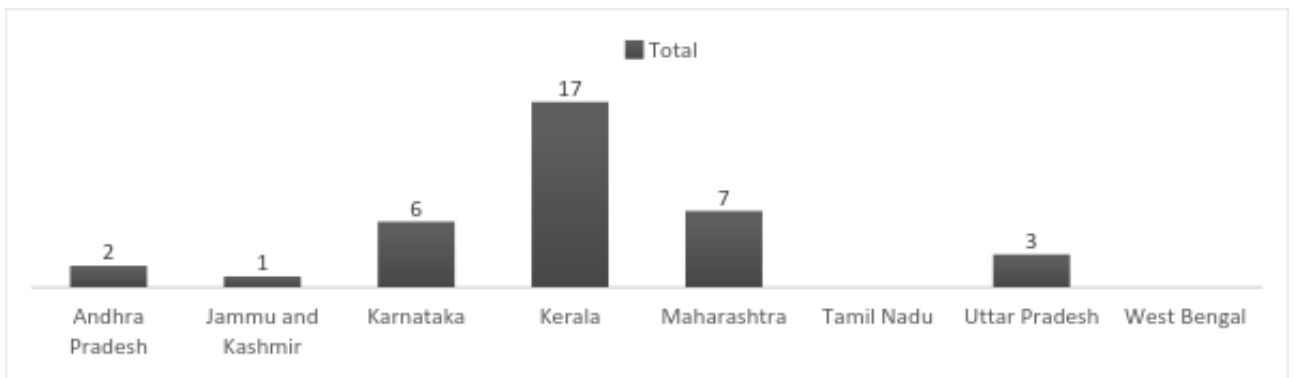

Figure 5: State-wise literacy rate (%) in 2011 and correlation between the counts of Indian foreign fighters[253]

In the context of Indian foreign fighters, the state of Kerala has the highest counts of individuals i.e. 17 who travelled to IS-controlled territories in Iraq, Syria or Afghanistan. The two Indian states, Kerala and Maharashtra scored top two places in terms of highest literacy rates and the highest counts of foreign fighters. The figures show that an increase in the count of Indian

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[252] Department of Economic Affairs- Ministry of Finance, *State-wise Literacy Rates (1951-2001)* (Ministry of Finance, 13 February 2014), Available from: https://data.gov.in/catalog/state-wise-literacy-rates
[253] Note: The state of Telangana was formed in 2014 and at the time of Census in 2011, it was a part of the state of Andhra Pradesh.

foreign fighters from a state has no relation with the state's literacy rate or level of education system. According to a news report regarding nation-wide arrests of 52 individuals in 2016, the NIA revealed that of those 52 individuals, 23 completed graduation and post-graduation,[254] 12 were diploma holders, and only 17 had attained school level (secondary and senior secondary) education.[255] It seems that well-networked and prosperous Southern states of India, such as Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana and Maharashtra, appeared more prone to the IS's propaganda than other States in India. The analysis of the education data of Indian foreign fighters in the context of respective states, proves that a low literacy rate is not responsible for the transformation of an individual into a jihadist.

Employment

In the crime-terror nexus, research shows that most of the European foreign fighters are part criminals ranging from petty criminals to local gangsters.[256] According to the data, out of 699 German foreign fighters, two-third (466) had police records and one-third (233) had criminal conviction prior to their travel to IS-controlled territories in Iraq or Syria. Similar patterns are found among French foreign fighters and law-enforcement officials from Norway and the Netherlands and claimed that at least 60% of their foreign fighters were previously involved in criminal offences.[257]
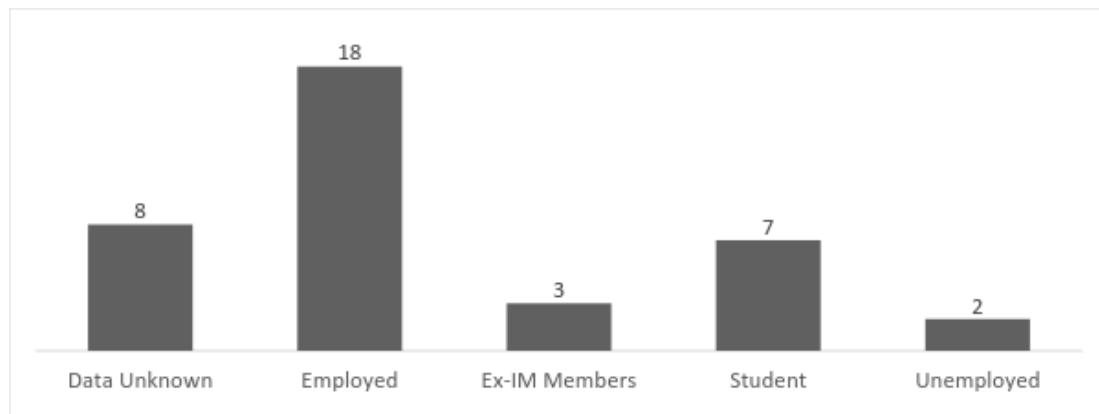
Figure 6: Employment-wise classification of Indian foreign fighters

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[254] Note: 20 graduates and 3 postgraduates.
[255] PT, "Converted Hindus, Engineer among 52 IS terrorists held by NIA", *Indian Express,* 19 January 2017, Available from: http://indianexpress.com/article/india/converted-hindus-engineers-among-52-IS-terrorists-held-by-nia/
[256] Rajan Basra, Peter R. Neumann, and Claudia Brunne, "Criminal Pasts, Terrorist Futures: European Jihadists and the New Crime-Terror Nexus", *The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence,* 2016, Available from: http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/ICSR-Report-Criminal-Pasts-Terrorist-Futures-European-Jihadists-and-the-New-Crime-Terror-Nexus.pdf
[257] Ibid.

Considering the phenomenon of crime-terror nexus in the context of Indian foreign fighters, only three Indian had past criminal records as they were former members of indigenous terror outfit—IM, rest of them had clean criminal record. In terms of employment, in 1980s an Egyptian sociologist, Saad Eddin Ibrahim claimed that a high percentage of Egyptian Islamists were engineers and doctors who came from financially well-off families.[258] This is similar to the contemporary phenomenon of Indian foreign fighters. Among 38 Indian foreign fighters, approximately 48% were employed whereas merely 5.26% were unemployed. Few of them were in medical and academic fields. According to a study, many foreign fighters in IS originated from countries with high level of economic development and political institutions.[259] Therefore, there is no correlation between employment levels and terrorism.
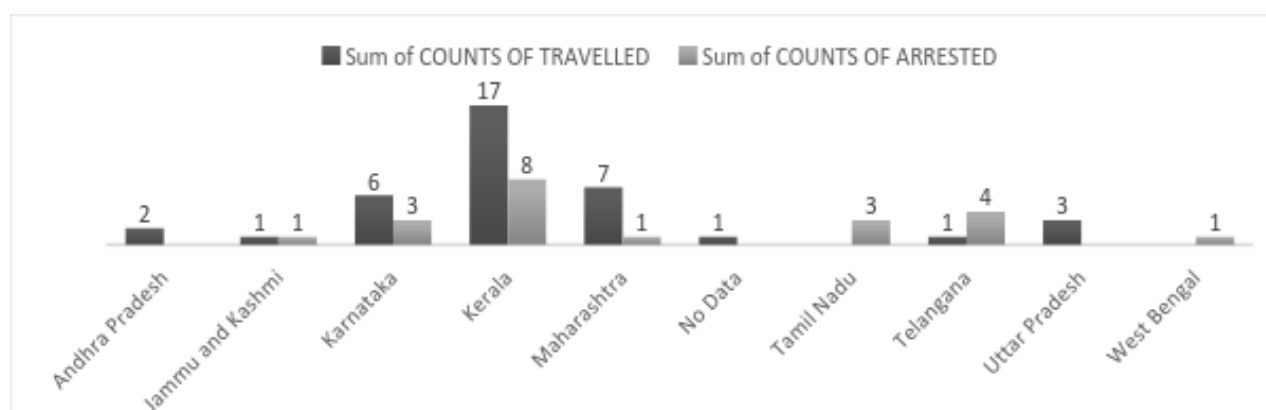
Region

Figure 7: Region-wise classification of Indian foreign fighters

The classification of region-wise data on foreign fighters and individuals who travelled got arrested either while trying to leave India or during nation-wide arrests conducted by NIA since 2015. Among the other eight states, the state of Kerala not only scored highest counts for foreign fighters who travelled but also the individuals who were arrested. Following Kerala, Maharashtra also has significant numbers of foreign fighters who travelled to IS controlled

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[258] Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups: Methodological Note and Preliminary Findings", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol 12 no. 4 (1980): 423-453. Available from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/163128

[259] Les Picker, "Where are IS' Foreign Fighters Coming From?", *The NBER Digest,* June 2016, Available from: http://www.nber.org/digest/jun16/w22190.html

regions. Among 38 individuals, one of the first Indian foreign fighter and a returnee—Areeb Majeed is from Kalyan city in the state of Maharashtra. His profile is discussed in later sections of this chapter. In these 38 foreign fighters, most of them belong to the Muslim community. The interesting point to consider is that according to the census of 2011, the population of Muslims in both states, Kerala and Maharashtra, considered as at significant level and at minority level respectively. In 2011 census, the Muslim population in state of Kerala was 26.56% of the total population of India, whereas the Muslim population in state of Maharashtra was 11.54%.[260] This describes that there is no direct relation between the numbers of foreign fighters and region-wise religious population.

Converts

In the phenomenon of foreign fighters, the case of converts to Islam is noteworthy. An example of a foiled terrorist plot in Catalonia in 2015, where six out of 11 arrested IS operatives were converts to Islam,[261] justifies the importance of converts in the case of foreign fighters. According to the ICCT's report, 6% to 23% of European foreign fighters are converts whereas a 2014 report by *The Soufan Group* claimed that at an average 6% of European foreign fighters are converts to Islam.[262] According to a study, three European Union member states, namely Belgium, France and Germany have an estimate 8.8%, 4.6% and 4.5% respectively of converts in their Muslim population,[263] whereas these three countries also contributed to 6% (Belgium), 23% (France) and 12% (Germany) converts respectively, in the total population of European foreign fighters.[264] As per the data of 38 Indian foreign fighters, only 5 Indians (two men and three women) reportedly converted to Islam from Christianity and Hinduism, which is around 13% of the total Indian foreign fighters; higher than the convert percentages from Belgium and Germany.

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[260] "Muslim Religion Census 2011", *Census 2011,* Available from:
http://www.census2011.co.in/data/religion/2-muslims.html
[261] AFP/The Locals, "11 arrested planning Catalonia attack", *The Local-ES,* 08 April 2015, Available from:
https://www.thelocal.es/20150408/spain-arrests-nine-over-alleged-IS-links
[262] Richard Barrett, "Foreign Fighters in Syria", *The Soufan Group,* June 2014. Available from:
http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/TSG-Foreign-Fighters-in-Syria.pdf
[263] Bart Schuurman, Peter Grol and Scott Flower, "Converts and Islamist Terrorism: An Introduction",
International Centre for Counter-Terrorism- The Hague, June 2016, Available from: https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/ICCT-Schuurman-Grol-Flower-Converts-June-2016.pdf
[264] Berenice Boutin, Gregory Chauzal, Jessica Dorsey, Marjolein Jegerings, Christophe Paulussen, Johanna Pohl, Alastair Reed and Sofia Zavagli, "The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union- Profiles, Threats & Policies", International Centre for Counter-Terrorism- The Hague, April 2016, Available from: https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ICCT-Report_Foreign-Fighters-Phenomenon-in-the-EU_1-April-2016_including-AnnexesLinks.pdf

In a news report, nearly 6,000 people converted to Islam in the state of Kerala between 2011 and 2015.[265] According to the same news report, two Islamic conversion centres in Kerala were mainly responsible for the conversion process but it is difficult to claim if these five converts from the Indian foreign fighters' contingent, were among those converted people. As per report, around half of the converted were women and 76% of these women were under the age of 35 years.[266] Out of 38 Indian foreign fighters, three women were converted to Islam and were below 35 years of age, there is a possibility that these women were among those converted people during 2011-2015.

Islamic State in Indian Cyberspace: A Long-Term Security Concern

> "The central and state agencies are monitoring the cyber space, which is being used to radicalise and recruit persons by IS, and the law enforcement agencies take action as per law."[267]

The above statement was made by the Indian Minister of State for Home Affairs Hansraj G. Ahir during a Parliamentary session in New Delhi, India. The phenomenon of cyberspace is anonymous and universally available to everyone. Social networking sites hosted anywhere in the world are monitored by the Indian law enforcement agencies in order to check and remove objectionable contents from the website in accordance with the provisions of Indian Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000.[268] In modern-day terrorism, Internet plays a supportive non-violent weapon for terrorist organisation. In cyberspace, a strong urge to propagate the ideology draws a line as one of the differences among IS and other terrorist organisations. The 'highly-active' online presence in the use of Internet technology for luring recruits, planning and coordinating attacks and spreading propaganda are counted as the main activities of IS in cyberspace. In India, the group has been spreading its virtual 'caliphate' and targeting the Muslim community, especially the youth of India to become a potential jihadist. In their propaganda videos, the IS has highlighted India as a target. The videos are subtitled in

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[265] P.K. Saikiran, "Nearly 6000 converted to Islam in Kerala in 5 years: Report", *The Times of India,* 15 July 2016, Available from: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/thiruvananthapuram/Nearly-6000-converted-to-Islam-in-Kerala-in-5-years-Report/articleshow/53220317.cms

[266] Ibid.

[267] Question No. 4357, *Persons Joining IS,* Questions Hour-Lok Sabha, 28 March 2017, Parliament of India, Available from: http://164.100.47.190/loksabhaquestions/annex/11/AU4357.pdf

[268] Question No. 4468, *Pornography on Social Media,* Questions Hour- Lok Sabha, 29 March 2017, Parliament of India, Available from: http://164.100.47.190/loksabhaquestions/annex/11/AU4468.pdf

India's regional languages such as Tamil,[269] Telugu[270] and other languages, calling Indian Muslims to join IS.[271] This depicts IS's well-planned social media presence in Indian cyberspace. In fact, Islamic State is not the only player to attract Indian Muslims towards its ideology but its rival group— al-Qaeda also marked its cyber presence through social media for recruitment purposes. In August 2016, al-Qaeda's affiliated media group—Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF) broadcasted on its Telegram Channel information about the launch of a 'special channel', titled 'GIMF Subcontinent', which focused on creation and dissemination of propaganda content in the context of the Indian Subcontinent.[272]

The GMIF group declared to disseminate the propaganda-oriented messages and visuals in India's national and regional languages such as Hindi,[273] Bengali,[274] Urdu,[275] Tamil[276] and Malayalam.[277] Reportedly, this is the first time when al-Qaeda had gone local to target the people from southern regions of Tamil Nadu and Kerala in an urge to spread its ideological propaganda of sharia law, the violent conflict in Syria and Afghanistan offering a membership to Indian Muslim youth by joining jihad.[278] The step of distributing the message in local languages by al-Qaeda can be seen as a counter-step against IS's propaganda targeting India. There are multiple layers of threat by IS in the context of India, and its growing presence on Internet especially the social media networks is a concern for India's intelligence and cyber authorities. After the Paris attacks in November 2015, India's Ministry of Home Affairs issued an advisory to its States and Union Territories (hereafter UTs) stating that the IS's success in

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[269] Note: Tamil language- official language in Indian state of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry (formerly known as Pondicherry).

[270] Note: Telugu language- official language in Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Puducherry (formerly known as Pondicherry).

[271] Kabir Taneja, "India's Blind Spot on IS", *The Diplomat,* 21 September 2014, Available from: http://thediplomat.com/2014/09/indias-blind-spot-on-IS/

[272] MEMRI, "Al-Qaeda-affiliated Media Company Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF) creates Telegram Channel for Jihadi content related to Indian Subcontinent", *Lab Projects- MEMRI Cyber & Jihad Lab,* 10 August 2016, Available from: http://cjlab.memri.org/lab-projects/tracking-jihadi-terrorist-use-of-social-media/al-qaeda-affiliated-media-company-global-islamic-media-front-gimf-creates-telegram-channel-for-jihadi-content-related-to-indian-subcontinent/

[273] Note: Hindi language- 'Mother-tongue' and National Language of India.

[274] Note: Bengali language- official language of Indian states- West Bengal, Tripura, Jharkhand, South Assam, and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

[275] Note: Urdu language- official language of Indian states- Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar, Delhi, Telengana, and Uttar Pradesh.

[276] Note: Tamil language- official language in Indian state of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry (formerly known as Pondicherry).

[277] Shweta Desai, "Al Qaeda goes local, uses Tamil and Malayalam for recruitment in South India", *Daily News and Analysis,* 27 August 2016, Available from: http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-al-qaeda-goes-local-uses-tamil-and-malayalam-for-recruitment-in-south-india-2249213

[278] Ibid.

recruiting youth through online activities and the possibility of affiliating with the terrorist groups operating in India have opened an enormous probability of IS-sponsored terrorist attacks on Indian soil.[279] In 2015, a strategic report prepared by the Internet And Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), regarding the impact of Internet and social media on Indian economy and society as a whole, it is stated that the country's Internet population base will cross 500 million in 2018, with an increase of rural Internet users alone from 60 million in June 2014 to 280 million in 2018, providing government's initiative of National Optic Fibre Network (NOFN).[280] Taking the estimate provided by IAMAI, the Internet audience in India is a 'ripe fruit' for terrorist organisations like IS.

The Indian intelligence agencies believe that *Yousuf al-Hindi* or Shafi Armar, as an ally of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and an appointed recruiter for IS's Indian module, reportedly recruited around 30 Indian Muslims and was in touch with another 600 to 700 potential members through different social media platforms mainly Facebook and WhatsApp.[281] On the condition of anonymity, a senior official from India's counterterrorism group revealed that although some social media accounts of jihadi groups announced Shafi Armar's death, but as per the intelligence information, Shafi is very much alive and is communicating with potential recruits— who are under the surveillance of Indian intelligence agencies for expressing jihadi inclinations.[282] According to news reports, till December 2015, around 150 Indians from Southern regions were under surveillance for their alleged sympathies towards IS, and 30 were arrested while seeking to join IS in the conflict zones of Iraq and Syria.[283] Such concerns of online radicalisation led the Ministry of Home Affairs to announce an establishment of a multi-agency 24x7 'Social Media Analysis Centre' to monitor online recruitments of terrorist organisations.[284]

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[279] Express News Service, "IS threat: About 150 Indians under watch", *The Indian Express,*19 November 2015, Available from: http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/is-threat-about-150-indians-under-watch/

[280] IAMAI. "11th Annual Report 2014-2015", *Internet And Mobile Association of India,* 2015, Available from: https://www.iamai.in/sites/default/files/annual_report/AnnualReport2014-15.pdf

[281] Shruti Pandalai, "IS in India: The Writing on the (Facebook) Wall", *The Diplomat.* 06 May 2016, Available from: http://thediplomat.com/2016/05/IS-in-india-the-writing-on-the-facebook-wall/

[282] Rajesh Ahuja, "Key Islamic State man Shafi Armar 'alive and recruiting' in India'", *Hindustan Times,* 16 May 2016, Available from: http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/key-islamic-state-man-shafi-armar-alive-and-recruiting-in-india/story-TiFx2QDhgOHPelJYn5PcsO.html

[283] Shruti Pandalai, "IS in India: The Writing on the (Facebook) Wall", *The Diplomat.* 06 May 2016, Available from: http://thediplomat.com/2016/05/IS-in-india-the-writing-on-the-facebook-wall/

[284] Ibid.

The nation-wide arrests of IS sympathisers in India since 2015 who were radicalised over the Internet, is a significant evidence of IS's foothold in India. In one of the many cases where Internet activities were involved, the National Investigation Agency filed charge sheets against three accused persons who created multiple email IDs, used multiple mobile numbers obtained from their associates in different countries, formed various online forums and groups on Facebook, WhatsApp, KiK, VKontakte, Viber and Skype, using the Internet and invited like-minded people from different parts of the world and thereby acted as a frontal group of the IS.[285] More than two dozens of IS's sympathisers arrested by the NIA confessed during their interrogation that they were indoctrinated by Shafi Armar.[286] As a part of *modus operandi* of Armar's online recruitment strategy, the potential recruit could join the Facebook page and immediately receive the personal message from Armar or *Yusuf.* Later, Armar would create a skype account for the recruit with several chat names in regional languages.[287] According to the news report, Armar preferred chatting with potential recruits about the atrocities on Indian Muslim community, over the social networking application- Trillian.[288] Showing cruelty in 'real' and 'virtual/cyber' world, clearly IS has mastered the art of serving terror and ideology in one platter. The success rate of IS's online activities can be easily guessed through a study conducted by the *Centre of Middle East Policy* at The Brookings Institution on IS propaganda on Twitter. The research group had collected roughly 50,000 Twitter accounts out of which an estimate of minimum of 30,000 Twitter accounts were accurately described as accounts belonging to IS's supporters or sympathisers.[289] These numbers may have increased by now as the study was conducted in March 2015. The Indian intelligence agencies believe that IS's

[285] National Investigation Agency, *Framing of Charge in Case RC-04/2016/NIA/DLI (Abu-Dhabi IS Case)* (India: National Investigation Agency, 21 February 2017), Available from: http://nia.gov.in/writereaddata/Portal/PressReleaseNew/393_1_PressRelease_21_02_2017.pdf

[286] Rajesh Ahuja, "Key Islamic State man Shafi Armar 'alive and recruiting' in India", *Hindustan Times.* 16 May 2016, Available from: http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/key-islamic-state-man-shafi-armar-alive-and-recruiting-in-india/story-TiFx2QDhgOHPelJYn5PcsO.html

[287] Manoj Gupta, "Revealed: How IS recruits and trains Indian youngsters for terror strikes", *News 18 India,* 01 February 2016, Available from: http://www.news18.com/news/india/revealed-how-IS-recruits-and-trains-indian-youngsters-for-terror-strikes-1197835.html

[288] Ibid.

[289] J.M. Berger and J. Morgan, "The IS Twitter Census- Defining and describing the population of IS supporters on Twitter", *Centre for Middle East Policy- The Brookings Institution,* March 2015, Available from: https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/IS_twitter_census_berger_morgan.pdf

social media propaganda is initiating competition among other terrorist organisations, especially the cross-border based jihadi groups, to impersonate IS's recruitment strategies.[290]

Islamic State's Indian-Cyber 'Game Players'

<u>Afsha Jabeen *aka* Nicky Joseph</u>

Afsha Jabeen is the first Indian woman convicted for her role as an 'online recruiter' for IS. She was based in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and with the cooperation between India and UAE at the intelligence level, she was deported to India and was arrested by law-enforcement officials at Hyderabad Airport (now in Telangana). Indian intelligence agencies were monitoring the activities of one of the suspects named Salman Mohiuddin, a US returnee chemical engineer and they arrested him in January 2015 at the Hyderabad airport. During the interrogation, Mohiuddin confessed that while surfing for Islamic religious texts, he and 'Nicky Joseph', a British national living in Dubai, opened several Facebook accounts to lure the Indian young Muslims for IS.[291] Born in Hyderabad, Afsha Jabeen, did her schooling in Indian Islahi Islamic School in Abu Dhabi till Higher Secondary in 1996. Later, she moved to India and studied Bachelor degree in Commerce (B. Com) from Shadan College, Hyderabad from 1996 to 1999. In 2000, she met Devendra Batra, a paying guest in Jabeen's house in Hyderabad and got married in August 2000 in accordance to Hindu and Muslim wedding traditions.

In her confessional statement to Intelligence officials, Jabeen strongly agreed on her support for the Islamic State and the methods she applied to motivate the Indian Muslim youth by sharing the propaganda video via Facebook page 'Islam vs Christianity Friendly Discussion' to promote Islam and thereafter she used the pseudonym 'Nicky Joseph'. As told by Jabeen, all the members of her Facebook group are 'very strong' online sympathisers of IS, especially a student from Kashmir and a man in Dubai, originally from Kerala, who were 'blind supporters of IS and highly radicalised'.[292] Like Moihuddin, she also claimed to be an administrator of four Facebook groups—'Revelations and Hadith' (in 2012)*, '*Daula Islamia' (in August 2014)*,*

[290] Shruti Pandalai, "IS in India: The Writing on the (Facebook) Wall", *The Diplomat,* 06 May 2016, Available from: http://thediplomat.com/2016/05/IS-in-india-the-writing-on-the-facebook-wall/

[291] "IS 'recruiter' Afsha Jabeen reveals how she tried to lure Indian Muslim youth", *Zee News*, 15 September 2015, Available from: http://zeenews.india.com/news/india/IS-recruiter-afsha-jabeen-reveals-how-she-tried-to-lure-indian-muslim-youth_1797558.html

[292] S. Chowdhury, "Named by 'IS recruiter' Afshan Jabeen, nine under scanner", *The Indian Express*, 18 October 2015, Available from: http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/named-by-is-recruiter-afshan-jabeen-nine-under-scanner/

'Moderators vs. Liberals' (in November 2014) and 'Daula News Room*' (*in November 2014*).

As reported, Afsha claimed that she used to follow the speeches and writings of Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Maulana Masood Azhar, UK-based Mohammed Mizanur Rahman alias Abu al-Bara and controversial preacher Anjem Choudary, American Muslim scholar and writer of Pakistani descent Yasir Qadhi, South African writer and public speaker of Indian descent Ahmed Deedat, Ghuraba al-Muhajir of Pakistan and Mumbai-based Islamic tele-evangelist Dr Zakir Naik.[293]

Mehdi Masroor Biswas

Mehdi Masroor Biswas, 24-year old electrical engineer by profession, is a resident of Bangalore, Karnataka, and one of the online sympathisers of IS arrested by the Indian Intelligence agency. Mehdi was running the most influential pro-IS Twitter handle—@*shamiwitness*. A native of West Bengal, Biswas moved to Bangalore with his family and was employed as an executive in a multinational company. Through his Twitter account @*shamiwitness*, Biswas was the one of the voices of IS on Twitter. His tweets were seen two million times each month, making him the most influential IS propagandist, with over 17,000 followers.[294] He has been involved in broadcasting the 'IS terror' and luring 'potential' recruits to fight for the so-called jihad.

According to the report by *The Times of India* in 2014, Biswas was under the impression that he would never get caught by the law-enforcement agencies and always introduced himself as a Libyan citizen living in the UK to his followers and never revealed his real identity and location on Twitter.[295] Being tech-savvy, Biswas masked his static IP address to prevent the immediate tracking of his location, but on the basis of Intelligence reports, police traced his mobile number and eventually arrested him from his house in Jalahalli, Bangalore. In an interview with UK's *Channel 4 News*, Mehdi M. Biswas admitted that he is impressed and

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[293] S. Chowdhury, "Named by 'IS recruiter' Afshan Jabeen, nine under scanner", *The Indian Express*, 18 October 2015, Available from: http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/named-by-is-recruiter-afshan-jabeen-nine-under-scanner/

[294] "Unmasked: the man behind top Islamic State Twitter account", *Channel 4 News*, 11 December 2014. Available from: www.channel4.com/news/unmasked-the-man-behind-top-islamic-state-twitter-account-shami-witness-mehdi

[295] Arun Dev, Madhusoodan M.K. and Chethan Kumar, "Mehdi Biswas, IS' voice on Twitter, arrested in Bengaluru", *The Times of India*, 14 December 2014, Available from: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Mehdi-Biswas-ISs-voice-on-Twitter-arrested-in-Bengaluru/articleshow/45509074.cms

sympathise with the ideology of IS. "If I had chance to leave everything and join them (IS) I might have….my family needs me here." Mehdi expressed to Channel 4 News.[296]

Muddabir Mushtaq Shaikh

In February 2016, Muddabir Mushtaq Shaikh, a 34-year old software engineer based in Mumbai, Maharashtra, was arrested along with several others in a crack-down by the NIA.[297] Muddabir M. Shaikh *aka* Abu Musab was given his name by Syria-based Indian IS handler, Shafi Armar *aka* Yousuf, a former member of IM who later affiliated with IS. Muddabir's job was to locate the potential recruits from India through Internet. The 'hunting' method includes a search for accounts of people who reacted positively on the propaganda of Islam and watched videos of radical speeches by Islamic clerics, after this primary probe individuals were traced, contacted and then encouraged to join IS.[298]

Being a computer professional, Mudabbir worked in various organisations. At his last job as a 'Product Development Manager' in *Sportz Interactive,* Mumbai— where he worked for five years, he was 'asked to leave' because of his poor performance and he left the company in 2012. When Mudabbir started freelance work from home, he started reading about IS over the Internet. During his interrogation, Mudabbir claimed that while searching on the Internet regarding the Caliphate, he came across the profile of Yousuf-al Hindi and they became friends on Facebook. Yousuf-al Hindi is none other than Shafi Armar, member of IS and a former member of IM.[299]

Conclusion

Foreign fighters are armed combatants who are radically motivated to leave their home country to get trained or fight on behalf of a violent extremist organisation in distant conflict zones. In general, the phenomenon of foreign fighters is difficult to quantitatively measure as

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[296] "Shami Witness unmasked: 'I will not resist arrest'", *Channel 4 News,* 12 December 2014, Available from: https://www.channel4.com/news/police-bangalore-islamic-state-twitter-shami-witness

[297] Ivan Mehta, "How IS Uses Social Media As A Hunting Ground For Recruits In India", *The Huffington Post,* 22 March 2016, Available from: http://www.huffingtonpost.in/2016/03/22/IS-uses-internet-to-rec_n_9519976.html

[298] Ibid.

[299] Rahul Tripathi, "Making of a jihadi: How Mudabbir Mushtaq Shaikh became Indian face of Islamic State", *The Economic Times,* 09 February 2016, Available from: http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/making-of-a-jihadi-how-mudabbir-mushtaq-shaikh-became-indian-face-of-islamic-state/articleshow/50909284.cms

much of the information is retained with the security agencies and inaccessible for research purposes. Likewise, European countries, the propaganda wave of IS' global Caliphate reached the Indian subcontinent too and some good numbers of individuals from Pakistan (330), Afghanistan (50), China (300) travelled to IS-controlled territories in Iraq and Syria. This wave hits Indian population too and merely 23 were reported to have travelled to join IS.[300] However, the author has managed to collect and maintain a dataset of 38 Indian foreign fighters from different states of India. Regarding the responsible factors behind mobilisation of Indians, unlike the foreign fighters from the European Union, Indian foreign fighters were not a migrated generation in India but born and bred from the Indian soil. During the process of radicalisation, the occurrence of different events in India such as the demolition of Babri *Masjid* in 1992, Gujarat riots in 2002, and Muzaffarnagar riots in 2014, as a sign of atrocities on the Indian Muslim community, might have influenced aspects of foreign fighter decision-making process.

As reported, the Indian Home Minister, Rajnath Singh has stated on several occasions that Islamic State is not an immediate threat to India and the cultural roots of Indian youth are strong enough against the process of radicalisation. The fewer counts of Indian foreign fighters in IS are not posing a serious threat. The threat of IS or al-Qaeda does not come from its main group but through the cooperation with like-minded ideological terrorist factions based in Pakistan, a country that is considered as a haven for terrorist groups. In 2015, IS and all its manifestations were listed under the 'banned terrorist organisation' under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. Since then, Indian intelligence agencies are maintaining a close watch to identify people engaged in anti-national activities, preaching to mislead the youth towards radicalisation. The vast availability of social-media has enabled terrorist organisations to reach out to global audience with their radical propaganda. Three Indians apprehended by Indian law-enforcement agencies were well-known supporters of IS's global Caliphate over cyberspace and allegedly engaged in online recruitment and other related activities. Since late 2015, India's National Investigation Agency, with the cooperation with other Indian intelligence agencies had busted many IS related modules and neutralised major terror attack plans. According to an official of National Investigation Agency, to deal with radicalisation and contain the threat of IS in India, various steps are being undertaken by the law-enforcement agencies, details of

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[300] Note: Official figure by The Soufan Group in their December 2015 assessment report on foreign fighters in Syria. Available from: http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate_FINAL3.pdf

which were not available in the interest of national security.[301] Though IS has not been able to attract many people from India but the establishment of IS-Khorasan module in 2014 remains a long-term security threat for India.

[301] Interview with an official of National Investigation Agency by the author, Delhi, India, 28 February 2017.

Chapter Four

The Threat to India from Returnee Islamic State Fighters

Introduction

The phenomenon of foreign fighters is not new. Foreign fighters have played roles in conflicts at different times. In June 2014, European Union's Counterterrorism Coordinator Gilles de Kerchove estimated that more than 2,000 Europeans are involved in conflicts in Syria.[302] the recent scale of foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria has surpassed the Afghan-Soviet conflict during 1980-1992, where the so-called Afghan jihad lured around 20,000 foreign fighters.[303] These fighters travelling to distant conflict zones and forming new networks and military-combat experiences. Such experience may pose a serious threat upon their return to their countries. Being equipped with cultural knowledge and fighting skills, these returnees are a challenge for law-enforcement agencies. The 2013 'Terrorism Situation and Trend (TE-SAT) Report' of Europol stated that returning fighters from Iraq or Syria have the potential to practise their battlefield experience, training for terrorist activities inside the European Union countries.[304] This statement was supported by the Europol's Director Rob Wainright in TE-SAT report 2014, that the returning fighters may evoke others to join the armed struggle and conduct violent activities within the borders of the European Union.[305] In past conflicts such as the Afghan-Soviet war, conflicts in Bosnia and Somalia, many foreign fighters killed during combat but there were numbers of fighters who returned to their countries including Europeans,

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[302] Adrian Croft, "ISIL may be directing attacks in Europe- EU official", *Reuters,* 19 June 2014, Available from: http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-iraq-security-kerchove-idUKKBN0EU1LQ20140619

[303] Thomas Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters", *International Security* Vol 35 no. 3 (2011): 53-94. Available from:
http://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/files/The_Rise_of_Muslim_Foreign_Fighters.pdf

[304] Europol, *TE: SAT 2013: EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report* (The Netherlands: European Police Office, 2013), Available from: https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/europol_te-sat2013_lr_0.pdf

[305] Europol, *TE: SAT 2014: EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report* (The Netherlands: European Police Office, 2014), Available from:
https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/europol_tsat14_web_1.pdf

with the sense of fulfilling their Islamic duty and to live normal lives with family.[306] In the case of Europe, of all jihadist terrorists who have been arrested and convicted for alleged terrorist activities between 2001-2009, about twelve percent were likely to travel abroad prior to their attacks, either for ideological, military training or combative participation in conflicts.[307] Supporting the statement about the threat pose by returnee foreign fighters, Thomas Hegghammer claimed that a 'veteran effect' makes a returnee more lethal operative.[308]

A returnee foreign fighter, if not arrested, likely to involved either in planning further attacks as a 'lone-wolf' actor or coordinate to radicalise and recruit potential fighters. There were few reported cases of returnee foreign fighters' involvement in executing an attack in Europe.[309] In 2014, a French returnee foreign fighter, Mehdi Nemmouche, attacked and killed four people in Jewish Museum in Brussels, Belgium. In same year, IS's French foreign fighter, Ibrahim Boudina, returned to France and was arrested while allegedly plotting an attack involving high-grade explosives.[310] On contrary, some returnee foreign fighters were disappointed with their experiences in conflict and would prefer to start a new life at home, including re-integration into the society. Denmark and Germany have adopted some liberal approaches of re-integrating the returning foreign fighters. For example, a German foreign fighter Kreshnik Berisha was returned home after disappointment and traumatised experience in the conflict zone. On the condition of a public confession and sharing the intelligence inputs of IS command structure, his prison sentence was reduced from 10 years to three years and nine months.[311] Therefore, it is challenging for the government agencies to determine that among all returnee foreign fighters

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[306] Edwin Bakker, Christoph Paulussen and Eva Entenmann, "Retuning Jihadist Foreign Fighters: Challenges Pertaining to Threat Assessment and Governance of this Pan-European Problem", *Security and Human Rights* Vol 25 (2014): 11-32. Available from:
https://www.shrmonitor.org/assets/uploads/2017/09/SHRS_025_01_Bakker_et_al.pdf
[307] Ibid.
[308] Thomas Hegghammer, "Should I stay, or Should I Go? Explaining Variation in Western Jihadists' Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting", *American Political Science Review,* February 2013, Available from:
http://hegghammer.com/_files/Hegghammer_-_Should_I_stay_or_should_I_go.pdf
[309] Edwin Bakker, Christoph Paulussen and Eva Entenmann, "Retuning Jihadist Foreign Fighters: Challenges Pertaining to Threat Assessment and Governance of this Pan-European Problem", *Security and Human Rights* Vol 25 (2014): 11-32. Available from:
https://www.shrmonitor.org/assets/uploads/2017/09/SHRS_025_01_Bakker_et_al.pdf
[310] Charles Lister, "Returning Foreign Fighters: Criminalization or Reintegration?", *Brookings Doha Center,* (Policy Briefing), August 2015, Available from: https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/En-Fighters-Web.pdf
[311] "Germany jails Islamic State jihadist Kreshnik Berisha", *BBC News,* 5 December 2014, Available from:
http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30344625

who is a potential threat to the national security or who is suitable to be a re-integrated in the society.[312]

Actual Threat to India: Home-Grown Jihadists or Returnee Foreign Fighters?

Post-Independence from the British Colonialism in 1947, India as a sovereign and secular state has faced insurgency and terrorist attacks by non-state actors, largely supported by state actors. Apart from bomb blasts in different cities, the most notable attacks were the Indian Parliament attack in 2001 and Mumbai attack in 2008. According to a report by the US State Department, India was ranked high among countries that faced terrorist attacks in 2015.[313] In 2014, a year in which IS's self-declared leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi called for a movement of Muslim community around the world to travelled to Iraq and join the IS. The mobilisation of Indian foreign fighters to join IS in Iraq or Syria, is minimal in comparison to the counts of foreign fighters from the European Union countries. According to the Soufan Group's assessment report in 2015 on foreign fighters in Syria, around 23 Indian youths travelled to IS-controlled territories in Iraq and Syria.[314] Whereas according to the database compiled by the author for this research, since 2014 till mid-2017, total 38 Indians have been travelled to IS-controlled zones in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan (allegedly IS base camp in Nangahar province of Afghanistan). As the numbers are very few in comparison to India's total population, the phenomenon of foreign fighters does not raise any serious concern regarding national security issues. But the possibility of vulnerability cannot be ignored if looking at the frequent infiltration activities by the cross-border terrorist groups, mainly based in either Pakistan or Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir (PoK). Regarding IS threat to India— in a press conference in May 2017, the Indian Minister of Home Affairs Rajnath Singh stated that despite of the second-largest Muslim population of the world, IS has failed to set foot in India. So far, more than 90 IS sympathisers have been arrested by law enforcement agencies, which shows success in

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[312] Edwin Bakker, Christoph Paulussen and Eva Entenmann, "Retuning Jihadist Foreign Fighters: Challenges Pertaining to Threat Assessment and Governance of this Pan-European Problem", *Security and Human Rights* Vol 25 (2014): 11-32. Available from: https://www.shrmonitor.org/assets/uploads/2017/09/SHRS_025_01_Bakker_et_al.pdf

[313] "Annex of Statistical Information: Country Reports on Terrorism in 2015", *National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism,* June 2016, Available from: https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/257738.pdf

[314] "Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq", *The Soufan Group,* December 2015, Available from: http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf

countering challenges posed by IS.[315] The Indian government has not confirmed any information on public platform regarding its own citizens travelled as foreign fighters. Few questions such as how many Indians have joined IS, how many have died or what are their status, are still unanswered. It can be understood that the sharing of sensitive information regarding Indian foreign fighters may have different results at the domestic security level, therefore most of the data is kept confidential and publicly undisclosed by the intelligence agencies.

In mid-May 2016, Indian media shows a first IS video featuring Indian jihadists riding a small boat and showing off their Kalashnikovs with the IS's black flag in the background. This video is a first of its kind which focuses on India and its propaganda of Indian foreign fighters in its ranks.[316] Unlike the case of European foreign fighters who are privileged with free travel through Schengen region[317] and may pose a threat of an attack upon their return; Indian foreign fighters do no enjoy such benefit of free travel and therefore, either has immediate and limited option— either to be killed during the fight or to return to India. Assuming the probability of Indian foreign fighters as returnees, out of 38 Indian foreign fighters listed in the database, 14 Indian foreign fighters are killed in the battlefield where as two Indian foreign fighters made return to India. As compare to European figures of foreign fighters killed, the percentage rate of India's foreign fighters is higher with 36.84 percent. Reportedly, only two Indian foreign fighters— Areeb Majeed and Subahani Haja Moideen returned to India in late-2014 and mid-2016 respectively and were arrested by the Indian law-enforcement officials. Considering the rate of 'dead' Indian foreign fighters, there are low chances of the return of remaining 22 Indian foreign fighters (including six women).

Terrorism in India and India's Stand on Counterterrorism

Measuring the impact of terrorism on India, the 2016 report of Global Terrorism Index rated India at 8th place after Iraq (1st), Afghanistan (2nd), Nigeria (3rd), Pakistan (4th), Syria (5th),

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[315] PTI, "Islamic State failed in India despite large Muslim population: Rajnath Singh", *Hindustan Times,* 03 June 2017, Available from: http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/islamic-state-failed-in-india-despite-large-muslim-population-rajnath-singh/story-yuQgDq9jvBzMoaV9tvjW8J.html

[316] PTI, "IS releases video showing Indian jihadists fighting in Syria", *India Today,* 20 May 2016, Available from: http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/IS-releases-video-showing-indian-jihadists-fighting-in-syria/1/673186.html

[317] Note: A region in Europe comprising of 26 countries that have eliminated the border controls with other Schengen member countries under the Schengen agreement.

Yemen (6th) and Somalia (7th). Whereas in 2015 report, India was placed at 6th place because of the highest numbers of terrorist attacks since 2000.[318] In India, the incidents of terrorism have varied from local political goals to stringent military operations. So far, there has been no reported terrorist attacks in which trans-national organisations such as Al-Qaeda or IS played a direct and active role. The political demands of the Sikh separate nation, Kashmir Separatist issues issue and North-East separation issues has been marked as the main terrorism issue until the wave of Islamic extremism that gave birth to India's only native Islamic terrorist group- Indian Mujahideen (IM). Although the indigenous group IM was dismantled with the arrest of its top leaders and there are no reported incidents post the notorious 2008 Mumbai attacks has appeared, therefore, it is difficult to assume if the splinter cells related to IM or other 'underground' indigenous Islamic extremist groups are in active mode to coordinate a terrorist attack on Indian soil.

1984-1990: The Khalistan Movement

In 1980s, the demand of separate 'Sikh country' or commonly known as '*Khalistan*' by Sikh separatists gave a boil inside the Indian politics and a rise to the 'Sikh Panjabi nationalist movement' in Indian state of Punjab. An orthodox religious leader— Jarnail Singh Bhinderwale who was once favourite of then-ruling party Indian National Congress to establish the political move in Punjab, turned to be a rebellion and formed a militancy group with the ideology of Khalistani separatists. The armed members of this group started violence against non-Sikh population in the state of Punjab and succeeded in radicalising the youth of Punjab to join the separatist movement. As the state of Punjab was turning into a hub of Sikh militancy, then-Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi took the decision and ordered a military action code named 'Operation Blue Star'— with an objective to eliminate the group leader Jarnail Singh Bhinderwale. As a result, in June 1984 military operation Jarnail Singh Bhinderwale was killed, along with there were many causalities of military personnel and civilians but the sacred Sikh place 'Shri Harmandir Sahib'- popularly known as the Golden Temple's various buildings were significantly damaged. Eventually, this operation deeply hurt the religious sentiments of Sikh community in whole country. As a revenge of 'Operation Blue Star', then-Indian Prime

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[318] "Global Terrorism Index Report", *Institute for Economics and Peace, 2016,* Available from: http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2016.2.pdf

Minister—Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her own two Sikh bodyguards.[319] Her death brought infamous 1984 Sikh riots in which thousands of Sikhs were killed in Delhi by Hindu mobs as a revenge of their favourite politician. After two years, the Golden temple was seized by the armed members of All India Sikhs Students Federation and *Damdami Taksal*- a religious group once headed by Jarnail Singh Bhinderwale, favouring the creation of a separate Sikh nation- the 'Khalistan'.[320] In early 1990s, the Indian security forces suppressed the insurgency in Punjab. The pro-Khalistan groups such as Dal Khalsa (International) is active outside India, propagating the ideology of Khalistan among the Sikh diaspora around the World.[321] Recently, after the silent but strategic gap of three decades, the pro-Khalistani separatist groups have placed controversial banners demanding the referendum and separation of the state Punjab from India. The hoardings with the clear message: "Azadi Hi Hal (*literally translated as:* Independence is the only solution), Punjab Independence, 2020 referendum" were spotted at different locations in the state of Punjab. The state government has not taken any action against this separatists' move.[322]

1990s- Ongoing: The Kashmir Conflict

The dispute over territory of Kashmir, which is a northern part of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, is a focal point of conflict between India and Pakistan over one-third of occupation by the Pakistan, popularly known as Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir or PoK. The dispute trailed back to 1947, an era of India's independence from the British rule and creation of Pakistan. Since the late 1980s, the Kashmir valley witnessed the uprising of local militant groups and separatists seeking independence of Kashmir from India and according to the security experts, these groups are financially and logistically supported by the Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI to wage a proxy war with India.[323] Though Islamic terrorism has no

[319] "Remembering Indira Gandhi on her 29th death anniversary", *Daily News and Analysis,* 31 October 2013, Available from: http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-remembering-indira-gandhi-on-her-29th-death-anniversary-1911491

[320] "Sikh Temple Sit-in is a challenge for Punjab", *The New York Times,* 02 February 1986, Available from: http://www.nytimes.com/1986/02/02/world/sikh-temple-sit-in-is-a-challenge-for-punjab.html

[321] Balbir Punj, "The Ghost of Khalistan", *The Sikh Times,* 16 June 2005, Available from: http://www.sikhtimes.com/news_061605a.html

[322] Manjeet Sehgal, "Azadi Di Gal: Separatist wave hits Punjab again, Khalistani groups put up posters for independence", *India Today,* 02 July 2017, Available from: http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/punjab-khalistan-groups-separatists-in-punjab-amarinder-singh/1/992599.html

[323] Eben Kaplan and Jayshree Bajoria, "Counterterrorism in India", *Council on Foreign Relations,* 27 November 2008, Available from: https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/counterterrorism-india

geographical boundaries but in the context of the Kashmir conflict, it is a good example. The militancy in Kashmir was started in 1990s by the Kashmiri youth but was later hijacked by the Pakistan/PoK-based terror groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), either directly or indirectly with the support from ISI.[324] In prolonged and ongoing militancy in Jammu and Kashmir, 13936 civilians and 5,043 security forces personnel have been killed.[325] After a regular Friday prayer in October 2014, some masked protesters were seen waving the flags of IS and Pakistan in Jama Masjid area in Srinagar, Kashmir. Since IS's announcement of the Caliphate in mid-2014, the Indian security forces have seen the flag of transnational terror outfit for fourth time in three months in the Kashmir Valley.[326] "The emergence of the IS flags merits concern and deserves the high attention of security agencies to prevent the youth of Kashmir from getting lured into IS.", said a senior-ranked Indian Army officer regarding the appearance of IS flags in the valley.[327]

2016: Unrest Over Killing of Militant Commander

The wave of terrorist violence in Jammu and Kashmir from 2013 to 2016 can be understood from the table given below:

Year	Incidents	Security Forces Personnel Killed	Civilians Killed	Terrorist Killed
2013	170	53	15	67
2014	222	47	28	110
2015	208	39	17	108
2016	322	82	15	150

Table 1: Trends of Terrorist Violence in Jammu and Kashmir from 2013 to 2016.[328]

As shown in Table 1, there is a significant increase in terrorist incidents and killings of security forces personnel in 2016. It might reflect the change in Pakistan's proxy-war strategy

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[324] Anand Mishra, "Indian Counterterrorism Policy: Muddled and Confused", *Governance Today, 03* June 2015, Available from: http://governancetoday.co.in/indian-counterterrorism-policy/
[325] Ministry of Home Affairs- Government of India, *Annual Report 2016-2017* (India: 2017), Available from: http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/EnglAnnualReport2016-17_17042017.pdf
[326] PTI, "Protesters again display IS flags in Kashmir Valley", *The Times of India,* 17 October 2014, Available from: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Protesters-again-display-IS-flags-in-Kashmir-valley/articleshow/44857740.cmss
[327] Ibid.
[328] PTI, "Protesters again display IS flags in Kashmir Valley", *The Times of India,* 17 October 2014, Available from: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Protesters-again-display-IS-flags-in-Kashmir-valley/articleshow/44857740.cmss

against India, where the ISI-supported terror groups, such as LeT, HM and JeM propagating the violence against Indian security forces through radicalisation over social media. In February 2016, clashes between Afzal Guru's sympathisers and security forces broke-out after the Friday prayers. Though the stone-pelting at security forces, the violent protesters raised the flags of Pakistan and IS, also displayed the banners saying, "Thank you JNU (Jawaharlal Nehru University)".[329] In response, the security forces fired tear-smoke canisters to disperse the protesters.[330] In July 2016, the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani, sparked the unrest in the Kashmir Valley. The 'anti-government' violent protest started in 10 districts of Kashmir Valley where violent protesters denied the implementation of curfew following the killing of Burhan Wani and started attacks on security forces and public properties.[331] In clashes with violent protesters, 96 security personnel were injured and 11 people died with over 200 people injured.[332] As often, Pakistani flags are waved by the violent protesters during the protest bur for the first time, Chinese flags were found during the raids at various locations, intelligence officials believe that to irritate the security forces, the violent protesters used Chinese flags.

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[329] Note: 'Thank you JNU' banners were about an event occurred on 09 February 2016, where some students of Delhi's Jawahar Lal Nehru University raised anti-India slogans in support of Afzal Guru, the convict of 2001 Indian Parliament attack.

[330] PTI, "Clashes in Srinagar as Pakistan, IS flags appear, 'Thank JNU' banners also shown", *News18,* 19 February 2016, Available from: http://www.news18.com/news/india/clashes-in-srinagar-as-pakistan-IS-flags-appear-thank-jnu-banners-also-shown-1205011.html

[331] Meenakshi Ganguly, "Key to ending Kashmir's cycles of violence: respecting rights, ensuring justice", *Human Rights Watch,* 13 July 2016, Available from: https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/07/13/key-ending-kashmirs-cycles-violence-respecting-rights-ensuring-justice

[332] Veer Arjun Singh, "Don't want to kill our own, say police on Kashmir clashes after Burhan Wani's killing", *NDTV,* 09 July 2016, Available from: http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/acted-with-restraint-say-police-on-kashmir-clashes-after-wanis-killing-1429694

Figure 9: Masked protestors waving flags of IS/ISJK (Islamic State-Jammu and Kashmir), Pakistan, LeT and poster of Hizb ul-Mujahideen (HM) commander, Burhan Wani; Source: Google Images

In February 2017, after a regular Friday prayer, the violent protesters again erupted the clashes, waving Pakistan, IS and Lashkar-e-Taiba flags. A group of masked violent protestors had initiate stone-pelting on police, paramilitary personnel in downtown Srinagar, chanting Pro-Pakistan and anti-India slogans.[333]

In his statement a day on 17 February 2017, Indian Army Chief General Bipin Rawat issue a strong warning saying that "stone-pelters interfering in security forces' anti-terror operations will be treated as 'over-ground' workers of terrorists and be fired upon."[334] During an investigation, Indian news media, *India Today* interviews five stone-pelters/violent protesters from the district of Baramulla because of their anonymity. The violent protesters confessed that an amount of INR 5,000 – 7,000 ($78-108) per month along with clothes and shoes, some of them received separate funds to make petrol bombs. Upon asking, the violent protesters refused to reveal the identity of their sponsors by saying that "we will die but won't reveal their names.

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[333] Fayaz Wani, "After Army chief's warning, Pakistani, IS flags waved in Srinagar", *The New India Express,* 18 February 2017, Available from: http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2017/feb/17/after-army-chiefs-warning-pakistani-IS-flags-waved-in-srinagar-1571708.html
[334] Rashme Sehgal, "Bipin Rawat's warning to Kashmir protesters: Govt is trying to find a military solution to a political problem, says Wajahat Habibullah", *First Post,* 18 February 2017, Available from: http://www.firstpost.com/india/bipin-rawats-warning-to-kashmir-protesters-govt-is-trying-to-find-a-military-solution-to-a-political-problem-says-wajahat-habibullah-3289690.html

It's a question of our bread and butter".[335] Even children are included in this protest based on getting paid, a good physique boy will earn around INR 7,000 ($108) whereas physically weak boy will get around INR 6,000 ($92).[336] In its report on Kashmir protests, the Intelligence Bureau stated that huge amount of money was sent by Pakistan's ISI via terrorists across the launchpads in PoK region and further the money was delivered to the separatists through 'touts' and 'hawala' channels.[337] To an estimate, around INR 800 crore was supplied to Kashmiri Separatist leaders including Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Asiya Andrabi to provoke the unrest in the valley.[338] On the basis of inputs from the Intelligence Bureau, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) initiated the preliminary inquiry against three separatist leaders, including Syed Ali Shah Geelani, for allegedly receiving funds from Hafiz Saeed (co-founder of Lashkar-e-Taiba) to carry-out seditious activities, including throwing stones on security forces, damaging public property, schools and other government establishments.[339] The matter is still under the investigation process.

In July 2017, like every year the 40 -day long annual pilgrimage of the Hindus - the *Amarnath Yatra* to the holy cave shrine of Amarnath in South Kashmir, commenced under the shadow of threats from terrorist groups in the valley. In June 2017, the Indian intelligence agencies shared an input on 'highly-likely' terrorist attack during the *Amarnath Yatra*, with the Army, Central Reserve Police Force, and senior rank officer in the state police. According to the report, "terrorist have been directed to eliminate 100 to 150 pilgrims and about 100 police officers and officials."[340] Due to the increased threat and violence in Kashmir, around 40,000 security forces personnel has mobilised by the government in the region to ensure the incident free pilgrimage.[341] But, on 10 July 2017, after few days of the alert, the militants openly fired on a bus and a security vehicle returning with first-batch of pilgrims from the shrine of *Amarnath,*

[335] Sushant Pathak and Jamshed Adil Khan, "Stone pelters on hire in Kashmir: India Today nails Valley's insidious villains", *India Today,* 29 March 2017, Available from: http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/jammu-and-kashmir-stone-pelters-hizbul-mujahideen-burhan-wani/1/915751.html

[336] Ibid.

[337] "Pakistan's ISI paid Kashmiri Separatists Rs 800 Crore to fuel unrest in Kashmir, says Intelligence Bureau report", *India Today,* 04 April 2017, Available from: http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/jammu-and-kashmir-india-inter-services-intelligence-pakistan-isi-separatists-kashmir-unrest/1/920049.html

[338] Ibid.

[339] Special Correspondent, "NIA questions three Kashmiri separatists", *The Hindu,* 29 May 2017, Available from: http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/nia-questions-three-kashmiri-separatists/article18619416.ece

[340] PTI, "Militants planning to target Amarnath yatra which begins tomorrow: Intel reports", *Hindustan Times,* 27 June 2017, Available from: http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/militants-planning-to-target-amarnath-yatra-which-begins-tomorrow-intel-reports/story-zCpp3dgtDm04nQ0w8kG0DO.html

[341] Ibid.

in Anantnag district of Kashmir. As per the reports, at least seven civilians are dead and several wounded, including security forces personnel in this terrorist attack.[342] Condemning the attack, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted that "India will never get bogged down by such cowardly attacks and the evil designs of hate."[343] It is unclear if there is communication gap or lack of utmost coordination among the security agencies and state law-enforcement bodies which results to the occurrence of a terrorist attack despite of high-level alerts.

Naxalites-Maoists Insurgents: A 'Local' Terror Group

Other than the threats from radical Islamic groups based in PoK and Pakistan, Naxals is the indigenous armed group that remains as serious security concern for India from the last 50 years. Naxalism derived its name from *Naxalbari,[344]* added a new dimension to the insurgency activities in India. Inspired from the Maoist ideology, the Naxalite movement started in 1967 as an armed struggle to re-distribute the land to the landless farmers in West Bengal. Naxals is a group of far-left communists from the Communist Party of India (Marxist). A small dispute between a sharecropper and landlord's men over a land dispute. When a police inspector approached the 'tribal' villagers of *Naxalbari* to investigate the matter, they shot arrows and killed the Inspector.[345] Upon the demand of the surrender of the guilty shooters, the reinforcement force was attacked with more arrows which results to massive clash between the 'tribal villagers' and police force.[346] Initially it was highly active in the state of West Bengal but later spread-out its activities to the southern and eastern states such as Chhattisgarh, Odisha,

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[342] Toufiq Rashid and Ravi Khajuria, "Seven pilgrims from Gujarat killed as militants fire on Amarnath yatris in Kashmir; PM Modi calls attack dastardly", *Hindustan Times,* 11 July 2017, Available from: http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/kashmir-militants-attack-police-party-bus-carrying-amarnath-pilgrims/story-MZ1bY8GqimqVTiisXi7lAJ.html
[343] Narendra Modi, Twitter post, 10 July 2017 (10:10 a.m.), Available from: https://twitter.com/narendramodi/status/884459796165820417
[344] Note: Naxalbari, a small village in Indian state of West Bengal.
[345] Dipak K. Gupta, "The Naxalites and the Maoist Movement in India: Birth, Demise, and Reincarnation", *Democracy and Security* Vol 3 no. 2 (06 August 2007): 157-188, Available from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17419160701374911
[346] Dipak K. Gupta, "The Naxalites and the Maoist Movement in India: Birth, Demise, and Reincarnation", *Democracy and Security* Vol 3 no. 2 (06 August 2007): 157-188, Available from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17419160701374911

Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.[347] The operative area of Naxals is mainly referred as 'Red Corridor'.[348]

The main cause behind the Naxal revolution was the failure of the then-Government of India in implementation of constitutional reforms in favour tribal population on their own land such as distribution of excess land to landless farmers and labourers.[349] The allocation of tribal areas and illegal alienation of villagers gave rise to the Naxalite movement, which is ongoing since 1967. The Naxal terrorism reached its peak point during 1970-1972, but quickly suppressed by the Indian armed forces. In 1975, the armed revolution of naxals was wiped-out not only from the state of West Bengal but from the adjoining regions too.[350] Though the naxals were out of the region but the continued exploitation of the 'tribal' villagers gave another base to the communist activists. In 2006, according to an estimate of an Indian intelligence official, the counts of naxals were 20,000 and over a quarter of India's 600 districts were under the influence of Naxal terrorism.[351] However, in another estimate, the Naxal counts were over 50,000 equipped with modern weapons and well-honed guerrilla strategy in 13 Indian states.[352] In 2009, Naxalites were active in approximately 180 districts of 10 States of India[353] but by the end of 2011, only 83 districts of nine Indian states were under the influence of Naxalite terrorism.[354] In his speech in 2010, then-Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said that "Naxalism remains the biggest internal security challenge and it is imperative to control Left-Wing extremism for the Country's growth".[355] In September 2011, then-Minister of Home Affairs P. Chidambaram expressed the concern of Naxal terrorism in his statement that, "while

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[347] Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, "The Naxalite Challenge", *Frontline* Vol 22 no. 21 (October 2005), Available from: http://www.frontline.in/static/html/fl2221/stories/20051021006700400.htm

[348] Avinash Chandra, "The Naxal Problem", *Indian Defence Review,* 08 July 2015, Available from: http://www.indiandefencereview.com/the-naxal-problem/

[349] E.N. Rammohan, "Unleash The Good Force: Implement land ceiling acts and enforce fifth and ninth schedule", *Outlook,* 16 July 2012, Available from: https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/unleash-the-good-force/281554

[350] Dipak K. Gupta, "The Naxalites and the Maoist Movement in India: Birth, Demise, and Reincarnation", *Democracy and Security* Vol 3 no. 2 (06 August 2007): 157-188, Available from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17419160701374911

[351] Somini Sengupta, "In India, Maoist Guerrillas Widen "People's War"", *The New York Times,* 13 April 2006, Availbale from: http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/13/world/asia/13maoists.html

[352] Ajay K. Mehra, "The thin edge of the Naxal wedge", *The Indian Express,* 13 April 2006, Available from: http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/the-thin-edge-of-the-naxal-wedge/2353/0

[353] Ashok Handoo, "Naxal problem needs a holistic approach", *The India Post,* 23 July 2009, Available from: http://www.theindiapost.com/articles/naxal-problem-needs-a-holistic-approach/

[354] Anjali Tyagi, Nigel Price, Nicholas R. Fellows and Mike Wells, *India Studies* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.28.

[355] PTI, "Naxalism biggest threat to internal security: Manmohan", *The Hindu,* 24 May 2010, Available from: http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/Naxalism-biggest-threat-to-internal-security-Manmohan/article16302952.ece

26 persons were killed in terrorist violence and 46 killed in insurgency (27 in Jammu and Kashmir), 297 persons were killed in Naxal violence, which is 10 times of those killed in terror incidents."[356] Since inception as an armed group, the notable Naxalite attack was on 06 April 2010, in which 75 Indian security forces (paramilitary and reserve police force) personnel were killed and 50 were wounded in a series of attack on security forces' convoy in *Dantewada* district of the Indian state of Chhattisgarh.[357] The recent attack claimed by Naxalites was on 24 April 2017 in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh. The ambush attack on Indian security forces killed 26 Indian security force personnel and six were severely injured.[358] According to an estimate, over 12,000 people (including Indian security forces personnel and civilians) have been killed by Naxals in past 20 years. Replying to an RTI inquiry, the Ministry of Home Affairs revealed that out of total 12,183 people killed, 9,471 were civilians and 2,712 were Central and State security force personnel.[359]

The political face of Naxals— the Communist Party of India (Maoist) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)— People's War, all its formations and front organisations are enlisted in India's 'list of banned organisations under Section 35 of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967.[360] According to the Ministry of Home Affair's 'Annual Report 2016-2017', in fight against Left-Wing extremism/Naxals, the Indian forces arrested 125 naxals and 333 naxals surrendered, with seizure of heavy ammunition and arms during the period April 2016-December 2016.[361] As per the tentative data in a report on 'Left-Wing Extremism/Naxals' up to June 2017, 445 incidents are recorded with 153 casualties (90 civilians and 63 security forces personnel), 839 Naxalites were arrested and 408 Naxalites surrendered.[362] The Ministry of Home Affairs has a separate division 'Left Wing Extremism' to deal with the issues related

[356] Rajiv Jayaram, "The naxal problem: onward and upward", *The Economic Times,* 10 April 2014, Available from: http://blogs.economictimes.indiatimes.com/et-commentary/the-naxal-problem-onward-and-upward/

[357] Soutik Biswas, "Scores of Indian soldiers killed in Maoist ambushes", *BBC News,* 06 April 2010, Available from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8604256.stm

[358] Rashmi Drolia, "25 jawans killed as Maoists attack CRPF team in Chattisgarh's Sukma", *The Times of India,* 24 April 2017, Available from: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/11-jawans-killed-in-encounter-with-maoists-in-chhattisgarhs-sukma/articleshow/58342994.cms

[359] "Over 12,000 killed in Naxal violence in past 20 years", *The Indian Express,* 12 March 2014, Available from: http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/over-12000-killed-in-naxal-violence-in-past-20-years/

[360] Ministry of Home Affairs: Government of India, *List of Banned Terrorist Organisations under section 35 of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967* (India, As on 30-March-2015), Available from: http://mha.nic.in/BO

[361] Ministry of Home Affairs- Government of India, *Annual Report 2016-2017* (India: 2017), Available from: http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/EnglAnnualReport2016-17_17042017.pdf

[362] "Table: Comparative important parameters of LWE violence during 2011 to 2017", *LWE Division: Ministry of Home Affairs- Government of India,* June 2017, Available from: http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/LWE_period_30062017.pdf

to Naxalite-Maoist insurgency. This division monitors the 'Left-Wing Extremism' situation and counter measures being taken by the affected states' administration. Further, along with aggressive military action against naxals, as a part of holistic approach to tackle 'Left-Wing Extremism'/Naxalites/Maoists threat, the government has applied an 'Action Plan' which focuses to address the security, development and governance deficit in 106 Left-Wing Extremism affected districts in seven states.[363] Regardless of Government's development initiatives, the Naxal insurgency is continuing to hold-back the essential developments for the future of Naxal-affected regions.

India's Counterterrorism Policy

According to some experts, India's response to a terrorist incident is a passive response which appears to be a short-term measure to counter the long-run problem.[364] In words of an Indian Army's Retired Major General Sheru Thapiyal, who works at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies based in New Delhi, "India lacks a coherent strategic response to terrorism; there is no doctrine, and most of our responses are kneejerk".[365] The terrorist groups does take an advantage of loopholes in India's counterterrorism policy's architecture which mostly stamp the minorities, particularly the strong Muslim community of India.[366] In past, for every attack, India's Central and State intelligence agencies relied on past experiences and linked the attacks with Pakistan/PoK based terror outfits, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad but neglected the alliance between Harkat ul-Jihad al-Islami (HuJI) and India's indigenous Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) which was a banned group of young Indian Muslim activists who deliberately and openly claimed al-Qaeda's Osama bin Laden as their idol.[367]

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[363] "Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) Division", *Ministry of Home Affairs- Government of India,* Available from: http://mha.nic.in/naxal_new

[364] Eben Kaplan and Jayshree Bajoria, "Counterterrorism in India", *Council on Foreign Relations,* 27 November 2008, Available from: https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/counterterrorism-india

[365] Sameer Reddy, "Backgrounder: Counterterrorism in India", *Newsweek,* 27 November 2008, Available from: http://www.newsweek.com/backgrounder-counterterrorism-india-84797

[366] John Wilson, "India's Intelligence Services Struggle with War on Terrorism", *Terrorism Monitor* Vol 6 no. 6 (24 March 2008), Available from: https://jamestown.org/program/indias-intelligence-services-struggle-with-war-on-terrorism/

[367] John Wilson, "India's Intelligence Services Struggle with War on Terrorism", *Terrorism Monitor* Vol 6 no. 6 (24 March 2008), Available from: https://jamestown.org/program/indias-intelligence-services-struggle-with-war-on-terrorism/

Law-Enforcement's Initiatives on Countering IS

The Indian state of Uttar Pradesh's Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) started a program named as *'Ghar-Wapsi'* or 'Home-Coming' to de-radicalised youth who were inspired from the ideology of IS.[368] According to a senior ranked Indian Police officer, Aseem Arun, "around 12 people across the state of Uttar Pradesh will be de-radicalised under the program." The unemployment situation in the state was one of the reasons of turning it into a breeding ground for radical-extremist ideology. Under the de-radicalisation process, the support from family, friends and religious leaders will play an essential role.[369] There are significant number of cases where the Maharashtra ATS dealt with youngsters getting radicalised online and joined IS. The first group of four youngsters, including Areeb Majeed, that belonged to urban areas of Maharashtra. To counter the radicalisation among Indian youth, the Indian State Maharashtra ATS aired a social awareness video about online radicalisation, which is a first-ever step taken by any Indian state police. The video shows a young aspiring student's parents talking about their son's success in studies and dedication to work on computer during the extended hours, but later the video shows that the aspiring student was watching a tutorial on Internet about making bombs. The officials of ATS shows up to parents and tells them about their son's online extremist activities. The video ends with a message given by an Indian celebrity, urging parents and friends to become responsible and keep alert about their children and friend's online activities.[370] According to the news report, some of the Indian foreign fighters in IS came from urban areas, including Mumbai, Maharashtra, therefore to establish a link with the radicalisation and terror group IS, the video shows the same aspiring engineer transferring funds to 'Syria'.[371]

During mid-2016, most of the Indian foreign fighters travelled from the Indian state of Kerala, a state with higher literacy rate in comparison to other states of the country. A campaign initiated by the Kerala Police named as 'Operation Pigeon' focuses on the de-radicalisation of

[368] Shashank Shekhar, "Uttar Pradesh anti-terror squad plans 'home-coming' program to de-radicalise youths from IS ideology to Indian nationalism", *Mail Online India,* 26 April 2017, Available from: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-4449452/Uttar-Pradesh-anti-terror-squad-plans-home-coming-program.html

[369] Ibid.

[370] Mustafa Shaikh, "To Check IS radicalization online, Maharashtra ATS comes up with a video", *India Today,* 21 June 2017, Available from: http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/maharashtra-ats-video-to-check-IS-online-radicalisation/1/983771.html

[371] Mustafa Shaikh, "To Check IS radicalization online, Maharashtra ATS comes up with a video", *India Today,* 21 June 2017, Available from: http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/maharashtra-ats-video-to-check-IS-online-radicalisation/1/983771.html

Indian youths who were contacted by the IS handlers as a primary step of IS's recruitment drive.[372] As a part of this campaign, various agencies mined the social media for extremist content and prepared the list of 350 'vulnerable' youths. According to B.S. Mohammed Yasin, a senior-rank police official and Head of State intelligence has said that apart from the orthodox religious routine, the age (all of them are in twenties), and their high academic background (many are pursuing engineering and medicine) is a common factor among these 350 Indian youths.[373] As a first step, the officials approached community elders and parents and organised the collective counselling sessions, handled by specially-trained officials of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the Intelligence Bureau (IB). According to the senior official, this campaign shows success in the first phase as many youths tend to believe that 'the route was not easy as it was shown to them by their handlers' and the campaign received complete support from the leaders of the community and parents.[374] The support of community leaders and parents of the 'vulnerable' youths indicates their wish to actively participate in such campaigns that refreshes their mind and stop them to join the radical-extremist groups.

Indian Foreign Fighters under Indian Jurisdiction

In context to the mobilisation of Indian nationals to travel to conflict zones, to join foreign terrorist, or other violent extremist organisations, the Government of India does not pass any specific rule of law. But as the notification on this matter, the Government of India recognises that the Islamic State is involved in radicalisation and recruitment of Indian youth, and their radicalisation is a matter of serious concern for the nation regarding its likely impact when such youth return to India.[375] Apart from the Indian Penal Code of 1860, the only dominant regulation is the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act [UA(P)A] of 1967 that deals with terrorism-related matters. The UA(P) Act penalises the terrorist activities and related activities such as funding, membership, and support to the designated or banned terrorist organisations under the proscribed list in the 'First Schedule' of the said act. The list of banned

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[372] TNN, "Kerala: Operation Pigeon saves 350 youths from IS", *The Times of India,* 30 June 2017, Available from: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kochi/kerala-operation-pigeon-saves-350-youths-from-IS/articleshow/59376792.cms
[373] Ibid.
[374] Ibid.
[375] Ministry of Home Affairs, *The Gazette of India: Extraordinary: Part II-Sec. 3(ii)* (India: Regd. No. D.L.-33004/99, 2015), Available from: http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/NotiIS_260815.pdf

organisations can be found at the website of Ministry of Home Affairs.[376] To deal with the matters relating to proscribed organisations and contemporary situation of the Indian foreign fighters in IS, the collective sections of the Indian Penal Code 1860 and the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act 1967 are applicable. One of the two returnees, Areeb Majeed was arrested by the National Investigation Agency at Mumbai International Airport and in their 'First Information Report' (FIR), he was charged under Section 16 (committing a terrorist act), Section 18 (conspiracy of terrorist act- including organising training camps and recruitment) and Section 20 (membership of terrorist gang or organisation) of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act 1967[377] and Section 125 (waging war against any Asiatic Power in alliance with the Government of India) of the Indian Penal Code 1860.[378]

Islamic State's Dead Indian Foreign Fighters

According to the complied database by the author, out of 38 Indian foreign fighters travelled, 14 are reportedly dead while fighting for IS in Iraq and Syria. This sums to 36.84% of Indian foreign fighters killed in IS-controlled regions. Unlike reported in Indian news-media, the National Investigation Agency was not confirmed about some of the deaths, such as Mohammad 'Bada' Sajid[379], Abdul Khadir Sultan Armar[380], and Bestin Vincent *aka* Yahiya[381], and enlisted them as absconder in their 'Most Wanted' list, with an assumption of their return to India in future. In 2016, a report by ICCT on 'European foreign fighters' tells that out of total 4,294 foreign fighters, 14% of foreign fighters are reported as 'confirmed dead' in conflict zones of Iraq and Syria.[382] In comparison with EU data, the percentage of dead foreign fighters from India is almost double to percentage of 'dead' European foreign fighters.

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[376] Ministry of Home Affairs: Government of India, List of Banned Terrorist Organisations under section 35 of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (India, As on 30-March-2015), Available from: http://mha.nic.in/BO
[377] The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967, *Ministry of Home Affairs- Government of India,* Available from: http://mha.nic.in/hindi/sites/upload_files/mhahindi/files/pdf/UAPA-1967.pdf
[378] The Indian Penal Code 1860, *Ministry of Home Affairs- Government of India,* Available from: http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/pdf/IPC1860.pdf
[379] National Investigation Agency, *Case No. RC-06/2012/NIA-DLI: Mohd. Sajid* (India: National Investigation Agency), Available from: http://nia.gov.in/writereaddata/Portal/CasesPdfDoc/RC-06-2012-NIA-DLI-1.pdf
[380] Ibid.
[381] National Investigation Agency, *Case No. RC-03/2016/NIA/KOC: Bexen Vincent* (India: National Investigation Agency), Available from: http://nia.gov.in/case-detail.htm?138
[382] Berenice Boutin, Gregory Chauzal, Jessica Dorsey, Marjolein Jegerings, Christophe Paulussen, Johanna Pohl, Alastair Reed and Sofia Zavagli, "The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union- Profiles, Threats & Policies", *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism- The Hague,* April 2016, Available from: https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ICCT-Report_Foreign-Fighters-Phenomenon-in-the-EU_1-April-2016_including-AnnexesLinks.pdf

In the same report, by 2015 'dead' foreign fighters' data from four EU nations—Belgium contributes the highest counts with 13.56% of 516 Belgian foreign fighters, followed by Germany- 13.15% of 760 German foreign fighters, United Kingdom- 9.21% of 760 British foreign fighters and France- 8.05% of 1700 French foreign fighters.[383] Comparing with the data from these four European nations, India's rate of dead foreign fighters is much higher, 36.84%. Recently, the Brookings Institute claimed in its article that 11 Indian foreign fighters have been confirmed killed: six in Syria, three in Afghanistan, one during an encounter in India, and remaining one in either Iraq or Syria.[384] In late 2015, many Indian news-media reported the information about first six Indian foreign fighters of IS were killed in Iraq or Syria who were identified as— Athif Waseem Mohammed from Telangana, Mohammad Umar Subfan, Fair Masood, Abdul Kadir Sultan Armar from Karnataka, Saheem Farooque Tanki from Maharashtra and Mohammad 'Bada' Sajid from Uttar Pradesh.[385] Apart from the news reports, there are no official confirmations from Indian authorities on the death of these Indian foreign fighters. Out of these six Indian fighters, Abdul Armar and Mohammad Sajid, were former members of IM. Both are enlisted as absconders in the 'most wanted' list of India's National Investigation Agency.[386] Interestingly both, Armar and Sajid, are not charged to be a member of IS but for the series of bomb blasts in various cities of India which was claimed by their group— Indian Mujahideen.[387] After the arrests of many members and nearly dismantle of Indian Mujahideen group, Armar formed a separate group, Ansar-ul Tawhid Fi Bilad al-Hind (AuT) and showed greater potential in recruitment drive for IS. Abdul Armar's passion towards

[383] Berenice Boutin, Gregory Chauzal, Jessica Dorsey, Marjolein Jegerings, Christophe Paulussen, Johanna Pohl, Alastair Reed and Sofia Zavagli, "The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union- Profiles, Threats & Policies", *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism- The Hague,* April 2016, p. 4, Available from: https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ICCT-Report_Foreign-Fighters-Phenomenon-in-the-EU_1-April-2016_including-AnnexesLinks.pdf

[384] Dhruva Jaishankar, "Assessing the Islamic State threat to India: It is a serious but manageable challenge", *Brookings Institute,* 08 May 2017, Available from: https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/assessing-the-islamic-state-threat-to-india-it-is-a-serious-but-manageable-challenge/

[385] Shobhna K. Nair, "Three out of six Indians in IS from Karnataka, all dead", *BangaloreMirror,* 23 November 2015, Available from: http://bangaloremirror.indiatimes.com/news/india/three-out-of-six-indians-in-IS-from-karnataka-all-dead/articleshow/49894686.cms; IBT, "6 Indians IS terrorists, including 2 from Bengaluru, killed in Syria", *International Business Times,* 23 November 2015, Available from: http://www.ibtimes.co.in/6-indian-IS-terrorists-including-2-bengaluru-killed-syria-656235; PTI, "After 6 out of 23 die fighting, IS says Indians not good enough", *Daily News & Analysis,* 23 November 2015, Available from: http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-IS-does-not-think-indians-are-good-enough-fighters-2148165

[386] National Investigation Agency, *Activities of Indian Mujahideen: Case No. RC-06/2012/NIA/DLI* (India: National Investigation Agency), Available from: http://nia.gov.in/case-detail.htm?38

[387] National Investigation Agency, *Supplementary Chargesheet* (India: National Investigation Agency), Available from: http://nia.gov.in/writereaddata/Portal/CasesPdfDoc/SCS_2__22-09-2014_-RC-06-2012-DLI-1.pdf

Islamic jihad impressed IS's chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. In a video posted by IS's media branch al-Isabah, al-Baghdadi declared Sultan Armar as 'Emir' of AuT group.[388] In March 2015, various twitter accounts associated with IS payed homage to Sultan Armar whose alias name was 'Abu Abdullah al-Hindi', adding he had died fighting in the battle for Korbane in Syria; but the Indian authorities claimed that his death news is more-or-less confirmed.[389]

The most common factors among the other four dead Indian foreign fighters, were having a financially well-off and good educational background. Athif Mohammad, Faiz Masood and Saheem Tanki, were acquired English-medium schools and colleges. Athif Mohammad graduated with a degree in Computer Science and pursued post-graduation in engineering at University of Greenwich, UK before travelling to Syria and joining IS. His closed relatives remembered Faiz Masood as a kind person who turned to a religious fanatic. The family members last heard from him on September 2013, before he left for a 'business trip' to Qatar. Indian authorities do not have any reports of his death, but it was reported in news media.[390] Reportedly, among these six dead Indian foreign fighters, Saheem Farooque Tanki was the only fighter to be die in a suicide mission in Syria. He was the part of first group of four Indian foreign fighters from Maharashtra that travelled to IS-controlled territory. Around mid-January 2015, his image inscribing his last wish: "Tell my mother to come on correct creed so we can meet in *Jannat*";[391] was tweeted by IS supporters from Syria.

Islamic State's Indian Returnees

A probability of a terrorist attack conducted by a returnee foreign fighter, cannot be ruled out. Foreign fighters may intend to fight in the conflict zones, but upon their return they pose a significant threat to the national security. According to a report, 30% of 'returnees' foreign fighters are from nine member States of European Union which accounts to 94% of

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[388] V. Nanjappa, "IS Indian recruitments: who is Karnataka's Abdul Khadir Sultan Armar alias Sultan?", *OneIndia,* 18 December 2014, Available from: http://www.oneindia.com/feature/IS-indian-recruitments-who-is-karnataka-s-abdul-khadir-sultan-armar-alias-sultan-1594946.html

[389] T. A. Johnson, "Hiding behind silence, holding on to occasional video chats", *The Indian Express*, 28 August 2015, Available from: http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/hiding-behind-silence-holding-on-to-occasional-video-chats/

[390] Bala Chauhan, "IB sleuths probing Bengaluru boy Faiz Masood's radicalisation", *Deccan Chronicle,* 10 January 2016, Available from: http://www.deccanchronicle.com/150618/nation-current-affairs/article/ib-sleuths-probing-bengaluru-boy-faiz-masoods-radicalisation

[391] "Shocking photos on pro-IS forums show Thane youth Saheem Tanki before he went on 'suicide bombing' mission in Iraq", *India Today,* 19 January 2015, Available from: http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/IS-thane-saheem-tanki-suicide-mission-iraq-syria-nia-aareef-majid-amaan-tandel/1/414032.html

total population of foreign fighters from the European Union.[392] Comparatively to the percentages of European Union's four member states, the United Kingdom reaches on top with 46%, followed by Germany with 33%, Belgium with 25% and France with 14.47% of returnee rates,[393] whereas only 5% of Indian foreign fighters returned home and sooner or later were apprehended by the Indian security agencies. In the compiled dataset of 38 Indian foreign fighters, only two individuals—Areeb Majeed and Subahani Haja Moideen, reportedly returned to India after spending few months in IS-controlled territory in Iraq and Syria.

In comparison to the home-grown extremists, foreign fighters returned to their own countries are well-equipped with operational expertise, extensive weapon training and tactics. The returnees are more familiar with the target location and no previous criminal record or an affiliation with any extremist organisation expands their ability to dodge the law-enforcement agencies and this could be a reason behind fewer returnees were acknowledged.

First Returnee— Areeb Ejaz Majeed

Areeb Ejaz Majeed— a resident of Kalyan, district Thane of the Indian state of Maharashtra, is one of the two returnees 'foreign fighter' came back to India and got arrested by the Indian intelligence officials at the airport. With a background of an affluent family, Areeb is 22-years-old civil engineering diploma student and son of a Doctor father. According to Intelligence reports, he travelled to Iraq on a religious pilgrimage and then broke away from the group and further travelled to Mosul to join the IS. Being brainwashed with religious but radicalised thoughts, according to Areeb's relatives he donated his 'western' clothes such as denims, avoided using his cell phone for a month and he tried to stop his sister, who is a doctor, to work and watch films. In his letter to family, before leaving for Iraq, he cursed his family members for 'sinning', living luxurious lives and not praying. He was motivated after watching the violent videos of Palestine-Israel conflicts.

In late August 2014, he was reported dead and 'glorified' in a tweet from another jihad group, Ansar ul-Tawhid (AuT). This news was covered by various news media around the world.[394]

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[392] Berenice Boutin, Gregory Chauzal, Jessica Dorsey, Marjolein Jegerings, Christophe Paulussen, Johanna Pohl, Alastair Reed and Sofia Zavagli, "The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union- Profiles, Threats & Policies", International Centre for Counter-Terrorism- The Hague, April 2016, Available from: https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ICCT-Report_Foreign-Fighters-Phenomenon-in-the-EU_1-April-2016_including-AnnexesLinks.pdf
[393] Ibid.
[394] Mail Today Bureau, "Mumbai Student who joined Islamic State killed in Syria", *Mail Online India*, 28 August 2014, Available from: www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-2736191/Mumbai-student-joined-Islamic-State-killed-Syria.html

In late November, Areeb made a surprise return to India and got arrested. During interrogation with Indian Intelligence officials, he revealed that IS has lethal plans for India and he was disillusioned by menial work he was assigned in the conflict zone rather being allowed to join adventurous jihad he dreamt of. He also claimed that social media has played an important role in his radicalisation process. He was radicalised through Internet chat rooms and jihadi forums, particularly violent videos of Israel-Palestine conflict. As reported, he was injured by a bullet while working on a construction site for IS and recovered from injury in a week. IS gave him USD 2,000 and dropped him on Turkey border to go home. Areeb Majeed was charged under Section 125 (waging war against the state) of the Indian Penal Code and Sections 16 and 18 of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) from the charges framed in the First Information Report filed by the NIA. However, Areeb's lawyers filed an application for bail stating a reason that when Areeb Majeed travelled in 2014, IS was not a banned terrorist organisation in the India's list of 'Proscribed Terrorist Organisations'. However, NIA argued that at that point of time IS was banned by the United Nations Security Council in August 2014, which was binding on all member states, including India. In May 2017, Areeb Majeed's bail application was rejected for third time by the Mumbai Civil and Session court.[395] Earlier in February 2017, the special NIA court dropped charges under Section 20 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 against Areeb Majeed claiming that the terror outfit IS was banned in February 2015 which was post to Areeb's arrest in November 2014.[396] Therefore, he shall not be charged for being a member of IS.

Second Returnee— Subahani Haja Moideen aka Abu Meer

On 05 October 2016, approximately after two years of the arrest of Areeb Majeed, India's National Investigation Agency arrested Subahani Haja Moideen aka *Abu Meer,* a salesman at gold jewellery shop in District Tirunelveli in the state of Tamil Nadu. According to the reports, Moideen (31 years-old) claimed to his involvement in IS-Iraq, received training in Sharia law and combat for IS while he was in Mosul city of Iraq. He told the officials that on 08 April 2015, he left home to fight for IS and told his family that he is going to do *Umrah*

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[395] Special Correspondent, "Areeb Majeed seeks bail for a third time", *The Hindu,* 24 May 2017, Available from: http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/areeb-majeed-seeks-bail-for-a-third-time/article18555952.ece

[396] Shahab Ansari, "IS man case: NIA court drops section 20 of UAPA", *The Asian Age,* 09 February 2017, Available from: http://www.asianage.com/metros/mumbai/090217/IS-man-case-nia-court-drops-section-20-of-uapa.html

(pilgrimage).[397] As guided by his handlers, after taking flight from Chennai (India), on visitor visa he travelled to Iraq via Istanbul (Turkey).

Life in IS: An Experience of Subahani H. Moideen

As told by Moideen to his interrogators, after reaching Istanbul, he crossed-over along with other individuals from Pakistan and Afghanistan to IS-occupied territory in Iraq where he was trained in the batch of 30-35 fighters and the training conditions were harsh where the trainees were kept in small room and received training from morning till evening. After the training, he was deployed to fight and get paid $100 (US Dollars) per month. After few days, when he could not tolerate the barbarism and misery conditions, Moideen decided to flee but got caught and ended up in 'IS jail'. He conveyed his decision to quit and was imprisoned for forty days. During his imprisonment, he was subjected to extreme torture. According to a press release,[398] along with other fighters he was produced before 'IS judge', following which he was again sent back to imprisonment at city of Raqqa in Syria.

Subahani's Escape Route to India

After 40 days of imprisonment, he was allowed to leave IS territory and returned to Turkey with five other foreign fighters. According to NIA's press release, he crossed over to Turkey from where he communicated with his family through the Consulate General of India, Istanbul. With the assistance from the Consulate General of India, Istanbul, the Turkish police issued a clearance certificate following which he was issued an 'Emergency Certificate' by the Consulate General of India in Istanbul. Upon Moideen's mysterious escape from Turkey, the author interview Shweta Desai who is a Delhi-based journalist and interviewed Moideen in a police custody after he was arrested. Shweta Desai told the author that Moideen made a false statement at the Consulate General of India in Istanbul that he travelled to Turkey on a tourist visa and had lost his Indian passport. Believing this fictional story, the Consulate General of India in Istanbul issued an 'Emergency Certificate' and scheduled his travel to India.[399] On 22

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[397] National Investigation Agency, *one foreign terrorist fighter, arrested for associating with IS terrorist conspiracy. Case no. RC-05/2016/NIA/KOC (IS Omar Al Hindi Module* (India: National Investigation Agency, 06 October 2016), Available from:
http://nia.gov.in/writereaddata/Portal/PressReleaseNew/352_1_PressRelease_06_10_2016_1.pdf

[398] National Investigation Agency, *one foreign terrorist fighter, arrested for associating with IS terrorist conspiracy. Case no. RC-05/2016/NIA/KOC (IS Omar Al Hindi Module* (India: National Investigation Agency, 06 October 2016), Available from:
http://nia.gov.in/writereaddata/Portal/PressReleaseNew/352_1_PressRelease_06_10_2016_1.pdf

[399] Shweta Desai interviewed by the author, New Delhi, India, on 07 December 2016.

September 2015, Moideen returned to Mumbai, Maharashtra and went to his ancestral place in Kadyanallur, Tirunelveli district in Tamil Nadu. He managed to get a job as a salesman in a Jewellery shop.[400] Once he got settled, he again got in touch with the South Indian module of IS handlers over the Internet and was planning to collect explosives and chemicals. He also travelled to Chennai, Coimbatore and different places to meet other contacts in the alleged conspiracy with the guidance of his IS handlers in South India, as reported in the press release by the National Investigation Agency.[401] On 05 October 2016, Moideen was arrested by the officials of NIA from Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu and later produced in the special NIA court at Ernakulum, Tamil Nadu.[402] No further information is available on public domain regarding his police or judicial custody.

Conclusion

India—a secular-democratic country in Indian Subcontinent, is a home of approximately 170 million Muslims, which makes it the Second-largest Muslim population nation in the World. In context to India, the nature of terrorism has evolved with time and evolution of technology. The emergence of a radical extremist organisation-IS in the Middle-Eastern region could only lure some counts of Indian Muslims to have joined as a foreign fighter. On a positive note, this could evident India's strength of diversity and secular democracy. But most of these Indian foreign fighters were well-educated and employed, which does raise a question about their motivation behind travelling and joining the terror outfit. The mobilisation of these Indian youths highlights the vulnerability of self-radicalisation and successful recruitment over the Internet. With the evolution of technology, the tactics employed by the terrorist groups also change dramatically. The recruitment and radicalisation over the virtual network has become so easy that India has become one of the favourite recruitment beds for transnational groups such as al-Qaeda and IS, which seek the educated recruits to spread the agenda through social media. Countering terrorism is no longer limited to the geographical boundaries but expanded through-out to the cyberspace. The recent initiatives on de-radicalisation process taken by two Indian states, Maharashtra Police and Kerala Police, are

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[400] National Investigation Agency, *one foreign terrorist fighter, arrested for associating with IS terrorist conspiracy. Case no. RC-05/2016/NIA/KOC (IS Omar Al Hindi Module* (India: National Investigation Agency, 06 October 2016), Available from:
http://nia.gov.in/writereaddata/Portal/PressReleaseNew/352_1_PressRelease_06_10_2016_1.pdf
[401] Ibid.
[402] Ibid.

first of its kind of steps to address the issue of radicalisation and Islamic extremism. The involvement of community leaders, parents, and youth will ease the process and highlight the gaps in communication and misunderstanding between the administration and community. Such programs shall be adopted at the large scale by every state in India to fill the vulnerability of radicalisation among Indian youth.

So far, India has not played an active role in US and allies-led war on IS but if India joins the global war against IS at larger stake then it might face the risk of becoming a target of attacks by IS inspired modules within India.

Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter is in continuation of research on the Indian foreign fighters in the Islamic State. As summarised in the previous chapter and based on the dataset compiled by the author, total 38 Indian foreign fighters travelled to Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan to fight for IS. Out of these 14 foreign fighters are reportedly dead, two returned to India and were arrested by India's counterterrorism agency. Those two returnees namely, Areeb Ejaz Majeed and Subahani Haja Moideen are going through judicial trials as per India's anti-terrorism laws. Since 2016, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) that deals with the cases related to Islamic State in India, has arrested many people who were allegedly involved with IS activities in India. According to reports, most of these suspects are young, well-educated and computer savvy. Almost 80 percent of these alleged IS sympathisers went to school.[403] The emergence of IS sympathisers is a serious concern for the Indian law enforcement agencies, though none of these individuals have been successful in executing any act of terrorism on Indian soil. In the course, of this dissertation various assessments were carried out based on existing information. This chapter will arrive at certain conclusions ratified by existing data to analyse threat perception of IS in India. In this regard, it will consider two main categories of *modus operandi* to arrive at a concrete theory. These are as follows: (i) IS inspired 'Lone-Wolf' attacks in India, and (ii) the possibility of nexus between IS and other jihadi groups.

How Serious is the Islamic State's Threat to India?

So far, India has not witnessed a terrorist attack which is directly inspired or conducted by IS. In 2016, IS released a 22-minute video showcasing the Indian foreign fighters flashing their guns and warning India to avenge the atrocities on Islam, referring to the events of 1992 *Babri Masjid* (Babri Mosque) demolition and 2002 Gujarat Riots.[404] This is the first-ever video

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[403] Tanima Biswas, "20 Engineers Arrested For IS Links Last Year, Anti-Terror Agency Reveals", *NDTV,* 19 January 2017, Available from: http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/20-engineers-arrested-for-IS-links-last-year-anti-terror-agency-reveals-1650580

[404] Arunima, "These are the Indians in IS Terror Video", *CNN-News18,* 24 May 2016, Available from: http://www.news18.com/news/india/these-are-the-indians-in-IS-terror-video-1247045.html

featuring Indian jihadists who mentioned their terror intentions against India and other South Asian countries. One of the jihadist in the video warns, "We will return, but with sword in hand, to slice your throats, to avenge the *Babri Masjid* (Babri Mosque), and killings of Muslims in Kashmir, in Gujarat, and in Muzaffarnagar."[405] According to a news report, among this group of jihadists, two jihadists, namely Mohammad Sajid and Abu Rashid, were ex-members of India's home-grown terror outfit, Indian Mujahideen (IM) and fled to Pakistan during the breakdown of the outfit in 2008.[406] In an interview published in the April 2016 issue of *Dabiq*— the IS's official magazine, Shaykh Abu Ibrahim al-Hanif stated that an establishment of strong jihadi base in Bengal will facilitate the guerrilla attacks inside India, which will assist the existing local Mujahideen groups.[407] In March 2017, a press release from India's Ministry of Home Affairs revealed that 75 individuals have been arrested so far, for their alleged links with IS.[408] These arrested IS sympathisers are the result of recruitment and radicalisation through social media platforms, which is an internal threat for India to deal with. In December 2014, the arrest of Bangalore based IT savvy, Mehdi Masroor Biswas aka 'Shami Witness' (@*shamiwitness*) in Twitter world, revealed the presence of IS in Indian cyberspace. Mehdi Biswas was the most influential IS online sympathiser from India. He personally communicated with English-speaking members of IS and had interactions with one of the perpetrators of the July 2016 terrorist attack in Dhaka, Bangladesh.[409] In March 2017, the Anti-Terrorism Squad of Uttar Pradesh killed a terror suspect Saifullah who was believed to be the member of IS's Khorasan module.[410]

Until now, the clear threat to India was from the Pakistan-supported jihadist groups, which believed to have support from local jihadi modules based in India but since 2014, with the emergence of Al-Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and IS's vision of Khorasan region, there is a reasonable security threat which is lurking its wings to spread. When compared, the political and cultural attributes of India are different to those of Iraq and Syria. But in recent

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[405] ANI, "IS video shows Indian 'Jihadists' vowing revenge for Babri Mosque demolition", *Business Standard,* 21 May 2016, Available from: http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/IS-video-shows-indian-jihadists-vowing-revenge-for-babri-mosque-demolition-116052100234_1.html

[406] Vijaita Singh, "Three Indians in Islamic State recruitment video", *The Hindu,* 12 September 2016, Available from: http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/three-indians-in-islamic-state-recruitment-video/article8627333.ece

[407] 'Dabiq', *Clarion Project,* Issue 14, Available from: https://clarionproject.org/docs/Dabiq-Issue-14.pdf

[408] Press Information Bureau, "Suspects associated with Islamic State", *Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India,* 15 March 2017, Available from: http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=159234

[409] Natalie Tecimer, "India and the Fight Against Islamic State", *The Diplomat,* 14 June 2017, Available from: http://thediplomat.com/2017/06/india-and-the-fight-against-islamic-state/

[410] Ibid.

years, the IS has managed to penetrate the mind of the Indian youth to some extent towards the phenomenon of jihadism. This resulted in the positive response of a few Indian Muslims to the call of IS and their subsequent travel to the conflict zone as foreign fighters. To the present date, the foreign fighters' assessment report by the Soufan Group in 2015 which claimed 23 Indian foreign fighters in IS,[411] whereas according to a news report, more than 60 Indians have joined IS since 2014 and some of them have been killed in the conflict.[412] The footprints of IS has been discovered in Southern states of India, mainly Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Telangana where the IS sympathisers illustrated the presence of IS in India. This sums up to the theory that India could face a terrorist attack that might be directly or indirectly inspired and launched by IS, through either handful Indian foreign fighters upon their return or via local jihadi sleeper cells who sympathise with IS.

Lone-Wolf Attacks: A Threat Posed by Returnees

In early 2017, the downfall of IS, mainly its finances were dropped, media operations were no longer in motion and many of IS's high-ranking fighters were either killed or captured.[413] The biggest question in focus would be the future of its foreign fighters. What IS's foreign fighters will do next? Would they travel to different countries and may join other ongoing conflicts, or would they return to their respective countries or would they remain in the conflict zones of Iraq or Syria likewise few Arab fighters who stayed in Afghanistan post-Afghan-Soviet war? In general, the returnees may pose a serious threat as they are privileged with extensive combat training and tactics. Also, with no previous criminal backgrounds, returnees could easily skip the observance of law-enforcement agencies. The top four European nations contribute to the higher rate of returnee foreign fighters, the United Kingdom has 46%, Germany has 33%, Belgium has 25% and France has 14% returnees,[414] whereas with only two

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[411] The Soufan Group, "Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq", *The Soufan Group,* December 2015, Available from: http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf

[412] "60 Indians have joined IS and most of them are fighting in Raqqa, accused tells NIA", *Indiatimes News.* 05 November 2016, Available from: http://www.indiatimes.com/news/india/top-IS-operative-arrested-by-nia-reveals-how-the-terror-group-trins-foreign-fighters-264891.html

[413] Tim Lister, "Islamic State 2.0: As the caliphate crumbles, IS evolves", *CNN,* 03 July 2017, Available from: http://edition.cnn.com/2017/03/22/europe/IS-2-0/index.html

[414] Berenice Boutin, Gregory Chauzal, Jessica Dorsey, Marjolein Jegerings, Christophe Paulussen, Johanna Pohl, Alastair Reed and Sofia Zavagli, "The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union: Profiles, Threats and Policies", *ICCT-International Centre for Counter-Terrorism*, April 2016, Available from:

returnees out of 38 Indian foreign fighters, India stands with only 5% in the table. Considering the total count of Indian foreign fighters and vigilance of Indian law-enforcement agencies, the chances of threat posed by the Indian foreign fighters upon their return to India are few and far between. If returnees are not a serious concern, then we may look at the other probabilities through which IS may inspire terrorist attacks on Indian soil.

To What Extent India is Vulnerable to Lone-Wolves?

The phenomenon of lone-wolf attackers is not new. Referring to the era of Colonial India, the phenomenon of lone-wolf attacks is not new. Dated back to 1920s, on 23 December 1926, Qazi Abdur Rasheed assassinated a Hindu named Swami Shraddhanand, also known as Munshi Ram. Swami Shraddhanand was a former British-India police employee who quit his job for a saintly life. Swami Shraddhanand was involved in publishing literature against Islam and the founder of Islam. As another example of lone-wolf, a similar attack of the France's 'Charlie Hebdo' took place in April 1929 in the city of Lahore (now in Pakistan), when one of the publishers based in Lahore, *Rajpal* Publisher, was undeterred and published another book against Islam, it was named '*Rangeela Rasool*' (The 'Colourful' Prophet) in Hindi language.[415] This book was a mockery on the life of the Prophet Mohammad that led to strong protest from the Muslim community in British-India.[416] On 19 April 1929, Ilmuddin, an ordinary youth and much like a lone-wolf attacker of present time, entered the office of 'Rajpal Publishers' and stabbed Rajpal with his dagger. Rajpal died on the spot and Ilmuddin was sentenced to death and hanged; later hundreds of thousands of Muslims attended his Ilmuddin's funeral.[417]

Considering the recent events of lone-wolf attacks, Gabriel Weimann defined Lone-Wolf terrorists as individuals or a small group of individuals, who are not members of any terrorist organisation. They act without any cooperation with cell or group, targeting the civilians—to achieve explicitly political or ideological goals.[418] It is a fastest-growing form of terrorism,

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https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ICCT-Report_Foreign-Fighters-Phenomenon-in-the-EU_1-April-2016_including-AnnexesLinks.pdf

[415] Tufail Ahmad, "*Jihadist Threat to India*" (India: Infolimner, 2016), p. 319.

[416] Siddharth Narrain, "*Sentiments, Politics, Censorship: The State of Hurt*" (India: Sage Publications, 2015), p. 46.

[417] Tufail Ahmad, "*Jihadist Threat to India*" (India: Infolimner 2016), p. 324.

[418] Gabriel Weimann, "Virtual Packs of Lone Wolves", *The Wilson Center*, 25 February 2014, Available from: https://medium.com/its-a-medium-world/virtual-packs-of-lone-wolves-17b12f8c455a

where individuals involved were radicalised, recruited, trained on social media platforms.[419] The series of lone-wolf attacks sets another example of a threat which grows internally in a nation. The 2014 Sydney hostage crisis or the Boston bombings, multiple incidents of stabbing in London and the vehicle rampage killing dozens on the busy street of Barcelona, Spain are among the prominent incidents of lone-wolf attacks. The past records of lone-wolf attackers revealed that such attackers are either faced psychological problems or acted under the influence of closed sects.[420] To reach the expansion of their extremism propaganda, Al-Qaeda and IS trying all possible ways to outreach and lure Indian Muslim men towards jihadi extremism via social media access. In 2016, IS released a propaganda video in which few Indians waving Kalashnikovs and urged Indian Muslims to "leave their country and join the jihad in Syria against the *Kuffars* (infidels)".[421]

Islamic State + Other Jihadi Groups: A Fatal Axis

Diversity in culture and religions in India binds together the citizens of this nation in one thread of unity. Regardless of this strength, India meets the challenges posed by the domestic and cross-border terrorist groups since five decades. Time-to-time, the security of India is threatened by the various home-grown such as Naxalites, Maoists, Sikh militant groups and Islamic militant groups, mainly operated in the Indian state of Kashmir which is supported by other jihadi groups based in Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir (PoK) region. Cross-border terrorist groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), Hizb-ul Mujahideen (HM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) have been main perpetrators behind most of the terrorist attacks on Indian soils. Many times, these terrorist attacks were carried out with the support of India's indigenous terrorist organisation, Indian Mujahideen or IM. Reportedly, Indian Mujahideen had strong affiliations with Pakistan's ISI supported cross-border terror groups, including LeT and Harkat-ul Jihad Islami (HuJI).[422] Likewise most of the anti-India Islamic terrorist groups, the motive

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[419] Gabriel Weimann, "New Terrorism and New Media", *Washington, DC: Commons Lab of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars,* 2014, Available from: http://tsas.ca/wp-content/uploads/224069893-New-Terrorism-and-New-Media.pdf

[420] Vivek Chadha, "Lone Wolf Attacks: An Assessment in the Indian Context", *Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses,* 10 December 2015, Available from: https://idsa.in/policybrief/lone-wolf-attacks_vchaddha_101215

[421] PTI, "IS releases video showing 'Indian jihadists' fighting in Syria", *Live Mint,* 20 October 2017, Available from: http://www.livemint.com/Politics/ZlMlpU9mjKxJGGdyTOJHcJ/IS-releases-video-showing-Indian-jihadists-fighting-in-S.html

[422] Carol Christine Fair, "Students Islamic Movement of India and the Indian Mujahideen: An Assessment", *Asia Policy*, Number 9, January 2010, pp 101-119, Available from:

of IM was to carry-out terrorist attacks on Indian soil and actions against non-Muslims in furtherance to the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate in India and across South-Asia.[423]

One of the objectives of Islamic State is to establish the Caliphate in the Indian Subcontinent through its regional branch- IS-Khorasan, for which the possibility of a nexus between IS and other active jihadi extremist groups is rare but cannot be ruled out. As the IS's access to India is limited due to natural topography, it may intend to use the logistics and manpower of other jihadi groups active in Pakistan and Bangladesh. As the cross-border jihadi groups which are based in PoK, are pre-occupied in the conflict of Kashmir, therefore to lure the Indian Muslims towards so-called Jihad, Islamic State is using various means of social-media. Influenced with their ideology, the first indication of IS's presence in India appeared in May 2014 when four Indian youth travelled to Syria to fight for IS. Since then, the Indian law-enforcement agencies unveiled several modules within India that supports the ideology and sympathises with IS. According to a report, in 2016 NIA arrested 112 suspects, out of which 64 arrests were related to jihadi terror network. In 12 cases related to IS, 52 individuals were arrested and 35 were reported abscond.[424] The data highlights a low but a significant spread of IS's ideology.

As mentioned earlier, cross-border terror groups have been the main culprits behind Islamic terrorism on Indian soil. Routine attempts of infiltrations by cross-border militants are contained by the Indian armed forces personnel. Notably, Pakistan's ISI which provides the logistic and financial support to these terror groups mainly, LeT.[425] In pursuit of Kashmir, these cross-border terror groups are nothing but an essential components of Pakistan's foreign policy against India.[426] In mid-2017, The United States' Director of National Intelligence Daniel Coats, stated that Pakistan has failed to curb the militant and terrorist groups active in Pakistan and "these groups will present a sustained threat to the US' interest in the region and continue

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236715835_Students_Islamic_Movement_of_India_and_the_Indian_Mujahideen_An_Assessment

[423] US Department of State, "Terrorist Designations of the Indian Mujahideen", *Bureau of Counterterrorism and countering violent extremism*, 15 September 2011, Available from: https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/266633.htm

[424] News Nations Bureau, "NIA report card: NIA arrests 112 people in 2016, 64 for jihadi terror", *News Nations,* 19 January 2017, Available from: http://www.newsnation.in/india-news/nia-report-card-52-arrested-for-links-with-IS-in-india-within-last-year-article-158297.html

[425] PTI, "ISI supports terror groups active in J&K", *The Times of India,* 23 August 2006, Available from: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/ISI-supports-terror-groups-active-in-JK/articleshow/1919605.cms

[426] Carol Christine Fair, "Is Pakistan in IS' Crosshairs?", *A Political and Literary Forum,* 16 October 2014, Available from: http://www.christinefair.net/pubs/20141016_Fair_BostonReview.pdf

to plan and conduct terrorist attacks in India and Afghanistan".[427] During a Senate Armed Services Committee in early-October of 2017, US Marine Corps General Joseph Dunford said that he believed Pakistan's ISI Directorate has connections with terrorist groups.[428] Responding to the links between ISI and militant groups, Pakistan Army's Director General of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Major General Asif Ghafoor said that there is a difference between having links and supporting the militant groups. Every intelligence agency has links which could be positive.[429] Clarifying the stand of Pakistan's link with Haqqani Network and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Pakistan's Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif remarked that terror networks such as Haqqani Network, Hafeez Saeed's *Jamaat-ud Dawa*, and LeT were favourites of US around 20 years to 30 years back; "they were being dined and wined in the White House and now US say, go to hell Pakistanis because you are nurturing these people."[430] Such blame-game between two states will surely open up doors of opportunities to a third non-state actors such as IS. LeT is one of the most active jihadi group that follows Wahhabi ideology and financially backed by Saudi money and sheltered by Pakistan's ISI.[431] So far, LeT's operations are limited against India and 'false' theory of India's occupancy on Kashmir. Al-Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) which is a faction of jihadist groups, aims to fight against the governments of South Asian countries and establishing an Islamic State (not to confuse with IS). AQIS and LeT might have common target- India, but no affiliation has emerged between these two groups. Whereas, LeT and IS follows common ideology of *Ahle-Hadith* or Salafism but differ in their goals, as former aiming on the issue of Kashmir and latter focuses on the establishment of Islamic State in Indian Subcontinent. However, with lack of evidences to prove but on the basis of assumption, the possibility of merger between these two Islamist extremist groups is not on surface so far.

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[427] PTI, "Pak-Based Terror Groups Plan to Attack India, Afghan: US Spymaster", *The Quint,* 12 May 2017, Available from: https://www.thequint.com/news/world/pakistan-based-terror-groups-plan-to-attack-india-afghan

[428] Idrees Ali and Phil Steward, "Mattis says will try to work with Pakistan 'one more time'", *Reuters,* 03 October 2017, Available from: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-pakistan-military/mattis-says-will-try-to-work-with-pakistan-one-more-time-idUSKCN1C825S

[429] "ISPR discusses security, civil-military relations and regional policy in wide-ranging press conference", *DAWN,* 05 October 2017, Available from: https://www.dawn.com/news/1361884/ispr-discusses-security-civil-military-relations-and-regional-policy-in-wide-ranging-press-conference

[430] APP, "Don't blame Pakistan, Haqqanis were your 'darlings' at one time: Asif tells US", *DAWN,* 27 September 2017, Available from: https://www.dawn.com/news/1360368

[431] Husain Haqqani, "The Ideologies of South Asian Jihadi Groups", *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology-Hudson Institute,* 19 May 2005, Available from: https://www.hudson.org/research/9867-the-ideologies-of-south-asian-jihadi-groups

Conclusion

In 2014, the emergence of AQIS and announcement of IS's vision to expand its *Wilayat* (territory) covering the Indian Subcontinent by 2020— highlights the ideological rivalry and race of recruiting jihadis to propagate their respective goals. The appointment of Asim Umar, an Indian born in the State of Uttar Pradesh, as an *Emir* of AQIS shows the group's vision to lure Indian Muslim men to join-in. In 2014, the mobilisation of four Indian Muslim youth from the state of Maharashtra, raised the concern and emergence of IS's ideology among Indian Muslim. The video interview posted by the media-wing of IS showed Indian mujahids (mostly ex-members of indigenous IM) waving-off AK-47 and warning Indian government and Hindus to avenge the Indian government and Hindus for the atrocities on the Muslim community in India. The mobilisation of Indian Muslim men and few women evident the penetration of IS among Indian Muslim youth, but at very low level if compared with other South Asian nations, where foreign fighter counts are higher.

Since the cross-border jihadi groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Hizb-ul Mujahideen (HM), are protected and financed by Pakistan's ISI with the primary motive of jihad against India, the affiliation of these groups with Islamic State is a rare possibility. If such affiliation emerged, these groups will lose the shelter given by Pakistan's ISI and further in that situation, these groups might face Pakistan's military aggression as a part of 'War on Terror'. On the other side, though IS born-out as a faction of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, but it differs in the strategic and operational view-point. Where, Al-Qaeda believes in developing a global terror network via allotting its 'franchisee' to various low-level jihadi groups, IS seeks in controlling and administering its own occupied territory, with a vision of territorial expansion. Therefore, taking these assumptions in account, the merger between IS and al-Qaeda or IS and other jihadi groups seems a 'fictional story' till date, but invites a prospect for further research on the same.