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Simple Borders Creating National Complexities

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ABSTRACT

National borders are lines that separate one nation's physical area from another nation. These borders usually help out in distinct identification of the nation's location and prevent misunderstanding of the ownership of a piece of land or a distinct location. Most of the times, the airspace, land borders and coastlines are exploited by neighbours to create new crisis for capturing national boundaries. The extreme terrains present in the Indo Pakistan and Indo Bangladesh borders are dense sites of illegal activities like smuggling and, illegal drugs, weapons and human trafficking. The borders shared by India with Pakistan and Myanmar are hotspots of terrorism and cross border attacks for land capturing. The Indo Bangladesh borders has areas of high political sensitivity as there are many misunderstandings and problems related to ownership of a particular area. This paper discusses about the Indian border issues and existing solutions to solve these complexities and future solutions to resolve these issues.

Keywords— *Indian Boundary complexities, Land Borders, Coast Lines*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Indian subcontinent is a peninsula which has a total border length of 22500 kilometres. The land border of India is about 15000 kilometres and its coastlines are over 7500 kilometres. India shares its land borders with seven countries. All the land borders shared with the neighbouring countries are present in highly different terrains and extreme geographical conditions. The relation between India and other countries are different and the borders are very vast and are present in very extreme conditions. Previously, these aspects pushed India in a position to make the border areas very strong and powerful in order to tackle problems and crisis without difficulties. This led to the initiation and formation of nearly 25 recent solutions to protect borders and to uphold peace. The paper is organized as follows: Chapter 1 discusses with Facts, Complexities and Solutions of Indo Pakistan Border, Chapter 2 about the Indo China Border, Chapter 3 about the Indo Bangladesh Border, Chapter 4 about the Indo Nepal Border, Chapter 5 about the Indo Myanmar, Chapter 6 about the Indo Bhutan and Chapter 7 elaborates the Facts, Complexities and Solutions of Indian Coastlines followed by the Final Conclusion and Future works.

1.1 Indo Pakistan Border: Facts and Complexities

The length of the Indo Pakistan border is 3323 kilometres. The Indo Pakistan border is divided into three segments out of which the Line of Control (LOC), and the Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) are the zones of extreme terrorism and fights. There are certain terrorist groups along Jammu and Kashmir to disrupt Indian forces and to capture the nearby Indian areas. They attack only with the intent of destabilizing India and destruction of peace and territories. The LOC and AGPL work very hard identifying and tackling out terrorist attacks. Along with cross border terrorism and terrorist attacks, there is an illegal trade of fake Indian currencies and presence of Hawala networks and terrorist camps. Pakistan's terrorist groups often try spreading false propaganda to break the trust about India and its government. By these false propagandas, they try to even make the people migrate from these borders and other Indian regions. Apart from these main issues, there are also activities of money laundering and water sharing issues from the Indus river in these border areas.

1.2 Existing Solutions

Recently, following the Pathankot terrorist attacks, the Indian government has deployed the National Security Guards (NSG) which is a part of the Indian Special Forces Unit to tackle terrorist attacks and hijacks. They also help in training police officers and other paramilitary forces in tackling terrorist problems in Jammu and Kashmir.

2 INDO CHINA BORDER

2.1 Facts and Complexities

India shares 3488 kilometres of borderline with China. The complete boundary line is under dispute and crisis. Though there is a presence of the McMahon line which distinctly separates the territories between two countries, there are frequent problems arising

due the claim and capture of nearby pieces of land by China over India. China, has claimed over the area of Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh. The recent attacks in Ladakh created commotion and casualties along the border. The status of Ladakh being a Union Territory was also placed as an objection by China. Recently, multiple forces are piled up on both sides of the border creating greater chances of problems and crisis. Apart from these physical violence and issues, there are also other issues like smuggling of Chinese electronics and water sharing issues between China and India. The extreme conditions in these border areas provide difficulties in construction of quality infrastructure for anti-casualty measures and proper surveillance.

2.2 Existing Solutions

Recently, Indian government has focussed on construction of good infrastructure for time management of troop movement. India has collaborated with Japan to develop infrastructure in the North Eastern regions to contain Chinese land and territory abduction. Army infrastructure projects have been planned to be constructed along forest areas present along the borders. The Ministry of Defence has planned to provide financial and administrative powers to the Border Roads Organisation to build better and broader roads for easy and comfortable transportation. The creation of the Chief of Defence Staff for the Indian forces to coordinate the three-armed forces has proved to be vital for the betterment of Indian Defence.

3 INDO BANGLADESH BORDER

3.1 Facts and Complexities

The Indo Bangladesh border extends to over 4096 kilometres. The Indo Bangla border is based on the Bengal Border Commission. This border formation is highly permeable with many holes for transportation. There are existences of enclaves (pieces of land belonging to one country which is present in the territory of another country) and some inadequately marketed areas which cause intense and continuous conflicts between both the countries. The 1971's War for Independence pushed many Bangladeshi citizens to illegally migrate from their home country to India. The Rohingya crisis (religious persecution of Rohingya Muslims) added the number of illegal migrators or refugees in India. The border areas are sites of smuggling and trafficking. Various drugs, goods, cattle and weapons are illegally traded between both nations. The smuggling of cattle is said to be the most crucial as it is a major crime done across the Indo Bangladesh border. India's restriction on export of cattle to Bangladesh led to the movement of cattle from very far areas to these borders. Then the cattle moved across borders from India to Bangladesh.

Any physical threat to India from Bangladesh may take a huge impact due to the presence of northeast rebellion groups like United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and Naga Factions. Not only that, the poverty and social status of many citizens of Bangladesh along the borders have pushed them to undertake criminal and wicked activities in the border areas. Many other organised crimes and smuggling of fake currencies occur in these boundaries. Finally social issues like water sharing disputes from the Feni, Teesta and Barak rivers too exist between both the neighbouring nations.

3.2 Existing Solutions

Recently, the India Bangladesh Boundary Agreement of 1974 was revised in 2015 to physically transfer 51 Bangladeshi enclaves and 111 Indian enclaves to their respective home countries. It has also helped many citizens of both countries to either take their original citizenship or to obtain nationality in the country they reside despite their origin. The Indian government has established the Border Protection Grid (BPG) along the Indo Bangla border areas. A crime free stretch has been formed along the border security forces (BSF) posts at Gunarmath and Kalyani regions present along the West Bengal and Bangladesh boundary areas and the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) posts along regions of Putkhali and Daulatpur. The BSF and BGB have been raising awareness to people about the aim of peaceful international relation between both countries and prevention of crime along the borderlines. Many border surveillance devices like search lights, surveillance cameras, drones and thermal imaging devices have been installed in the Indo Bangla border for tight surveillance and prevention of potential crimes. Both the neighbouring countries have developed the Coordinated Border Management Plan to track crimes along the borders and to maintain peace.

4 INDO NEPAL BORDER

4.1 Facts and Complexities

India shares 1751 kilometres of boundary line with Nepal. The Sagauli Treaty of 1816 marks and rules the Indo Nepal border. India and Nepal share an open border as a sign of peace and trust from 1950. Both the countries' citizens share equal rights in residence, property of ownership, cross border movements and employment. The open borders have created great and strong friendship between both countries. These open borders, sometimes are used to forcefully acquire and abduct land on either side of the border area. Though both nations have a good relation, there are quite a few problems too. There are problems regarding the territories of Kalapani and Susta. Many terrorists and Naxal groups use these open borders for attacks and leading anti-national movements and programs to disrupt stability along the borderlines. The open borders have proven to be an escape route for criminals and accused of both countries. Many terrorist organisations have taken some parts of Nepal to set terrorist camps in order to operate against India and other nations in a very proximal distance.

4.2 Existing Solutions

The Shastra Seema Bal has a new intelligent section which ensures good and efficient monitoring and surveillance along the Indo Nepal and Indo Bhutan border lines. The Border District Coordination Committee was formed between two counties at a lower level to discuss and solve issues of common concern. The Indian government has planned to construct nearly 1400 kilometres of roads along the Indo Nepal border. The government has planned to aid Nepal to prevent human movement between both countries due to lack of employment. An emergency and medical trauma centre has been established in Kathmandu for treatment of people moving across borders in case of any medical emergency.

5 INDO MYANMAR BORDER

5.1 Facts and Complexities

The length of the Indo Myanmar border is 1643 kilometres. India also shares some part of boundary with Myanmar along the coast. The borderlines are properly distinguished, but there are some patches of areas which are always under dispute. The extreme land conditions present in the border areas make guarding and surveillance a very tedious task. These border areas have tribes who live close to each other irrespective of national boundaries. Though sometimes, there are quarrels between people of some tribes. People of both countries living near the border can freely move across these borders without restrictions. This freedom was given under the free movement regime between India and Myanmar. But this regime is often misused by rebels to smuggle arms and to receive training for their movements. The Golden Triangle is a region which connects regions of Thailand, Laos and Myanmar which is an area popular for drug trafficking. Since the Indo Myanmar border is quite close to the Golden Triangle, drug trafficking along the borders is quite common and frequent. The absence of physical border along the boundary of both nations have proved to be difficult to keep watch of trespassers and other activities. The north eastern borders along Myanmar are places of illegal transportation and smuggling of Chinese items, weapons and valuable products.

5.2 Existing Solutions

New integrated check posts (ICPs) are established to maintain good relations with other South Asian countries and to ensure legal and proper trade and commerce. A paramilitary force, called the Assam Rifles, has been deployed along the borderline to prevent smuggling and illegal activities.

6 INDO BHUTAN BORDER

6.1 Facts and Complexities

India shares 699 kilometres of boundary with Bhutan. The whole boundary is clearly marked and distinct with Bhutan except along the junction present between the Indo China border. The Indo Bhutan border is also an open boundary like the borders present between India and Nepal. Many rebellion groups like the Bodo, ULFA sneak into southern territories of Bhutan though the Bhutanese government has taken many measures to drive these organisations away. Many valuable forest products, liquor, alcohols and drugs like cannabis are smuggled through the Indo Bhutan borders. Many people and vehicles moving across borders induce many movements such as the Gorkhaland movement which asks for a separate state near the Indo Bhutan border for Nepali language speaking people. The open borders in the Indo Bhutan boundary allow many insurgents and rebels to hide into north eastern states without getting caught for punishment.

6.2 Existing Solutions

Both the nations have formed a mutual or bilateral mechanism which focusses and seeks to solve problems on border security and efficient territorial management. Both the nations' armies have planned to come together to prevent the settling of rebels in Bhutan and in the border areas. The Indian government has started to establish the new border posts along the borders present in Sikkim near the valleys of Doklam. The Union government has provided permission to build major border constructions in forest areas along the borders present between India along with Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar.

7 INDIAN COASTLINE

7.1 Facts and Complexities

India has a coastline length of about 5422 kilometres along the mainland and 2094 kilometres along the islands. The total coastline of India extends up to 7516 kilometres. The very long coastline of India brings many problems and issues. Many unknown and isolated shores are used for illegal trades and smuggling of weapons, ammunition, jewels and consumer goods and for human trafficking. Sometimes, even infiltration and exfiltration of terrorists and illegal elements also occur in these isolated shores. The unsettled maritime boundaries under vulnerability due to claims by both neighbouring nations hinder national coastline development and threaten the security of the nation. Apart from these crimes, there are chances of refugees pouring into India through the coasts. Not only that, but sometimes fishermen cross maritime boundaries taking up the resources of India and creating national issues and security threats. Among all these, the most dangerous of all are the piracy, maritime terrorism and armed thefts and crimes which occur at sea and coastlines. These hazards pose a major threat to people travelling on oceans and working at coasts.

Apart from all these threats, there are some problems existing in the coastlines of the Indian nation. Though there are many forces acting on the coastlines, there is no effective way for communication of information and data in case of emergencies. The presence of multiple authorities for the coastlines increases the time taken for taking a collective decision in case of emergencies in coastal areas. There are insufficient surveillance motor boats and man power to check coastal areas. This reduces the effectiveness of maritime security and defence. The existing coastal guards are well trained with coastal security, but they are not very well trained when it comes to counter terrorism. Not only that, the efficiency of the usage of existing surveillance and security systems are lacking in the current scenario.

7.2 Existing Solutions and Plans

The Customs Marine Organisation (CMO) was formed by recommendations based on the Nag Chaudhury Committee. The Nag Chaudhury Committee suggests the correct assets and technology required for the security of coastal areas. The committee also suggests the best measures to identify smuggling happening in marine areas. The Indian Coast Guard (ICG), was merged with the CMO to take care of all maritime defence and counter terrorism activities. The Marine Police Force was formed in 2005 to monitor activities and to provide security to territorial waters. There are three levels of security forces which look after the security and protection of coastlines and territorial waters. The Navy and the coast guards look after the sea areas in the end of the territorial waters. The coast guards look after the remaining parts of the territorial waters and use aeronautics for surveillance. The marine police look after the coastlines and the waters close to the shores. Recently the Central Marine Police Force (CMPF) to protect

territorial waters and the coastal areas. This force acts quite differently than other forces in terms of the technology they use and the limits up to which they can work in the maritime areas. The Coastal Security Scheme (CSS) works in provision of good and secure infrastructure along coastal areas. They mainly aim to facilitate surveillance and patrolling. The security of fisherman has been ensured by the coastal forces. Sometimes they are also followed and looked after to prevent any harassment and to fool proof the existing security systems of the coastal borders.

8 CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

Though these many solutions have been provided to solve each kind of border related problem, there are problems which still exist in the borders. There are some simple solutions which could be done to improve border security. The establishment and development of a specific satellite for geolocation and coordinate mapping of the borders of the nation could prove to be helpful in claiming lands which belong to India if abducted by other nations in future. The deployment of too many paramilitaries or security forces in the same area to secure the border should be altered in a way to optimise quickness of solving crisis and counter terrorism. The prevention of delayed decision making must be done in order to reduce life threatening risks. This can be done by having only one head or leader for the border forces alone. This could make the border forces act immediately and independently without delay. Construction of secret camps and check posts only for border forces could prove to be very efficient against the leakage of plans to enemies or rebels. The identification of Indian camps and check posts by enemy countries make Indian forces vulnerable to even simple attacks. Involvement of well-trained people apart from the army in border security forces could prove to be helpful in increasing man power. These employed people must be kept off record for better efficiency and stealth attacks. Records regarding the past and present trades could be given to border forces to help them identify legitimate and illegal trades. Increasing the number of drones in the border areas could help reduce the continuous working hours of soldiers and increase the efficiency of surveillance in terms of area and time duration. Human detection systems could be developed and placed in the check posts near border lines to check the criminal records of legal trespassers or migrators from the neighbouring countries to India. Improvements in technology and strategies are the key for betterment of border security and protection. The efficiency of border forces would in turn improve the defence and economy of a nation. As citizens of India, our contribution, either in terms of technological inventions or man power, is highly necessary for the development of the Indian nation. Patriotism is the key to unity. Thank you. Jai Hind.

9. REFERENCES

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