

## Motivation of the Terrorists: A Case Study

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** A violent act of terrorist group produces wide spread fear among common people and obtains worldwide recognition by attracting the attention of the media. They harass the government, affect the country's economy and influence government decisions to satisfy their vengeance. Terrorist's activities aim towards destruction. The allocated resources by the government sectors to the task of preventing terrorism are not completely fruitful due to lack of foundation in understanding the terrorist's behavior. **Methods:** A terror attack in the present study is a series of bomb blast that took place at Mumbai on 11th July 2006. These attacks have posed the question of security for its citizens. 30 terrorist participated in the bomb blast were brought by Anti terror Squad of Mumbai for subjecting to the scientific techniques of Narco analysis, Polygraph and Brain Mapping tests collectively called deception detection tests. Application of these scientific techniques to evaluate criminal evidence has advanced the criminal justice system throughout the country. When criminals erase all the evidences of their involvement scientific and highly sophisticated scientific methods are required to trace the involvement of criminals. **Results and conclusions:** Behavior of a terrorist varies depending on their individual intelligence, education, finance and their affiliation to organization. Factors such as perceived injustice, religion, identity, belongingness and autonomy are seen as psychological motivation for an individual in joining and staying with the terrorist groups. Joining a terrorist group gives them a sense of revolutionary heroism and self-importance that they previously lacked as individuals. Understanding varied terrorist motivations and behaviors at the individual level can provide insight to the causes of particular behaviors and helps in framing. This study is an effort to help Government to improve counterterrorist methods and policies by understanding their motivational behavior.

**Keywords:** *Forensic Science, Forensic Psychology, Bomb blast, Brain mapping, Narco analysis, Detection of deception*

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**T**errorism is a threat at the global level. Terrorism or the Terrorist refers to the killing of innocent people by a group to create feeling of panic among the common people of the nation. The act of terror is not new in Indian scenario. New Delhi, Mumbai, Gurgaon, Varanasi, Bangalore are some of the places in India which were often chosen by the terrorist. The attackers often select the most crowded places like the Market, Hotels and Commuters in the train. The Mumbai attack during July 11th 2006 had shocked the public and also affected the Indian economy. Various studies have been undertaken to measure the magnitude of these terror attacks on the people and its major impacts on tourism industries, hotel industry, medical and aviation industry.

Terrorists commit act of a terror without showing any sympathy for the victims. The theories of Fathali Moghaddam show a staircase metaphor indicating irrational justifications employed by the terrorist and the increasing stages of radicalization in each successive step. McCauley and Moskaleiko had explained the pyramid of radicalization with the apex of the pyramid showing the terror act and sloping of pyramid indicating diminishing number of people entering into the radical mindset. These theories had explained behavior of the individual terrorist but they lack the broader social perspective which could explain why and how a person becomes terrorist and what motivates him to show violent attitude/behavior and why feelings of radicalization arises. The fact that lack of proper understanding of terrorists psychology has created a void in many levels such as policy-level decisions to respond to terrorism; How the state should react to the terrorism needs to be understood first for implementing the appropriate policy decisions. The present study has focused on the different types of individual's motivation and its effect on radicalization of the terrorist. By understanding the different individual motivations, counterterrorist methods and policies can be improved.

### **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The present study examines the motivational behavior of terrorist in one such unanticipated event serial train blast at Mumbai, a terror attacks on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2006 wherein the bombs were planted in pressure cookers. Series of 7 bombs ripped through the commuters for a period of 11 minutes in the crowded train's killing 189 people and injuring 899. The bombs were on trains plying from the Western line of the Suburban Railway network.

The suspect terrorists involved in the above train blast had taken care to erase all the evidences of their involvement and some terrorist had even managed to escape from the country after the incident. There were no clues available for the Anti Terror Squad (ATS) of Mumbai and the pressure to identify the culprits and solve the case were mounting from all the sides. In such situations, when no clues are available scientific and highly sophisticated methods Narco analysis and Brain mapping techniques were adopted to trace the criminals and to establish their involvements in crime. As C.B. Hanscom, university of Minnesota states that it is missionary and duty of the state to promote the drug technique of Narco analysis in the crime investigation. Manu Saxena of Allahabad High Court in her article Investigation and Law says that the help of scientific techniques of Polygraph, Brain mapping

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and Narco analysis are required to strengthen the collection of evidence and protect legal rights of the suspects. Since most of the crimes are taking shape in the mind of a person and execution of the crimes are stored as experiential knowledge. Scientific techniques of Brain mapping and Narco analysis are the apt mechanism to identify such information hidden in the minds of person as an experiential knowledge and helps in extracting these evidences from brain relating to such crimes.

In this study 30 male individuals suspected to be involved in the serial train blast at Mumbai suburban train on July 11th, 2006 were brought for Forensic Science Laboratory, Karnataka by Anti terror squad (ATS), Mumbai for subjecting the suspect terrorist to scientific techniques of Brain mapping and Narco analysis after obtaining the permission from the jurisdictional court. All subjects were healthy, had no cognitive deficits and were not addicted to any psychotropic substance at the time of testing. Questionnaire relating to Mini Mental Status Examination (MMSE) was administered during the preliminary interaction stage to assure that subject do not present any impairment in their physical and mental health. The personal details of the subjects were collected. The written informed consent was obtained by the suspects during the preliminary testing stage. After obtaining the fitness certificate by the cardiologist of the local Government hospital suspects were subjected for the Narco analysis testing at the OT of the Government Hospital. The approval by the ethical committee of the Government Hospital was obtained before the procedure was initiated at the Government hospital in Bangalore. 1 gram of pentathol sodium was diluted using distilled water and injected slowly along with 10% of dextrose. BIS monitor were attached to suspects to record level of consciousness during the procedure. Questions asked were related to the individual participation in the terrorist activity, identification of their intentions in committing the act, their financial status and supporters associated to the terrorist activities, identifying their leaders and their role in the terrorist organization. Questions related to their addiction, types of terrorist training, their level of education, type and level of motivation were asked. Questions were repeated during the state of trance to reduce the ambiguities. The revelations during the state of trance were video recorded and provided to the court and to the investigating agency. The information collected in this study was further verified by interacting with the family, relatives, friends, religious head of that area. All the physiological parameters were monitored continuously during the entire procedure.

The information so revealed in Narco analysis was further cross checked by subjecting the suspected terrorists to the brain mapping test. P 300 potential of the Event related brain potentials (ERP) from 32 sites were recorded using discrete electrodes. 32 electrodes from 32 regions of brain as per 10-12 international system. A high pass filter of 0.016 Hz and a low pass filter of 60 Hz were used for recording. Horizontal and vertical Electrooculograms (EOGs) were recorded from above and below the left eye. The tests were carried out in 2 modes auditory and visual mode. The target words / photographs were combined with neutral words/photographs and presented in 1:4 ratios. Target words were selected based on the revelation in the narco analysis. P300 signal generated from 32 regions of the brains were statistically analyzed using Matlab and significant p300 potential more than 2 stand

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deviations (SD) were selected and analyzed using built in algorithm. The revelations of the narco analysis were checked for experiential knowledge by using Brain mapping method to establish their involvement in the crime. The procedure was followed as per the guidelines issued by Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The revelations of information's by the suspected terrorists during the scientific test, information collected from family, friend, religion head and during preliminary interaction were analyzed for understanding the factors represented in Table-1 and Table -2.

*Table 1. Shows demographic details of terrorist*

No of Terror Suspects	Age	Education	SE Status	Association with Terrorist Organization	Undergone Training	Addictions if any
2	26	Student (engineering)	Middle	3yrs	2 yrs	Nil
1	21	Student B.A (incomplete)	Middle	2yrs	2 yrs	Watching TV for long Hours
5	24	school Drop out	Lower	5yrs	3yrs	smoke occasional
1	23	Student (Diploma)	Middle	2yrs	Nearly 1 year	Smoke
1	19	9 <sup>th</sup> fail	Lower	1yr	1yr	Watching TV for long hours
5	22	School drop out	Middle	2yr	2yr	Watching TV for long hours
5	18	10 <sup>th</sup> fail	Middle	1Yr	1yr	Watching TV for long hours
2	20	8 <sup>th</sup> fail	Middle	5yrs	4yrs	Watching TV for long hours
6	23	No formal Schooling Able to read	Lower	5 yrs	3 yrs	Watching TV for long Hours
2	25	Islamic studies	Middle	1 yr	1 yr	Nil

### *Age*

It has been found from the Table-1 that the age range is between 18-26 and 18, 22, 23 and 24 years of suspects contribute 50% of the group and the rest contribute to other 50%. These suspects were in transition from adolescent to early adulthood and were uncertain about them. With the newly acquired autonomy not clear about their skills, unable to take proper decision, unable to manage their life in a proper way they had become susceptible to such social influences of the organized group. The results obtained are similar to the finding by Russell and Miller, Taylor (1988). In their study they characterize terrorists in their early twenties as irresponsible, indecisive and expressed that there is a considerable variation from group to

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group. Walter Laqueur had reported that boys aged 14 to 15 are used for dangerous missions by Arab and Iranian groups. In the present study suspected terrorist falls within the age group reported in the available literature. This age group was targeted by the terrorist organization because in this age group they are less likely to ask questions to their leaders, they follow the instructions given and are less likely to attract attention of the public while accomplishment of the target. Thus they are easily inducted to the organized terrorist group.

### *Education*

Western terrorists found in many literatures are either uneducated or illiterate compared to terrorists in general who have more than average education. In present study, more than 50% suspects were found to be school drop outs, no formal education was reported and remaining % were student of engineering and diploma students failed in High school but all of them were literates were able to read and write. Majority of the terrorist groups according to Russell and Miller had some form of university training. Leadership positions are normally given for educated people at the cell level or at national level. Leaders were found to be professionals such as doctors, lawyers, engineers, professors and government employees. The suspect terrorist in the present study were students, school dropouts had little education or no formal education but joined a terrorist group out of poverty and some were desirous of action-packed adventure. Some suspect terrorist reported that they had a desire to use their special skills, such as bomb-making.

### *Socio-Economic Status*

In the present study more than two-thirds of the terrorist's suspects were from lower middle-class back grounds and only 3 of them were from lower back ground. Findings of the present study is similar to the finding of Russell and Miller [6] wherein more number of terrorist are from middle-class back ground and found that some of them are even from lower-class backgrounds. Islamic fundamentalist terrorist organizations are from middle-class families. In the present study financial problems, failures in educational achievement, low earning potential were found to be the major factors to join the terrorist group. Some terror recruits were signed up to Rs. 50,000 and their families are offered Rs.5 lakh if they die. Terrorists in the developing world were found drawn from the lower sections of society.

### *Associations with the terrorist organization*

Some of the terrorists in this study reported that they are engaged in some form of profession like electrical works, cycle repair, car mechanic and other odd jobs. Investigating agency has found that these terrorist have been continuing their legitimate profession by remaining anonymous and waiting for the instructions to carry out a mission. In the present study, all of the above suspects were "sleeping commandos". They had engaged in some profession to hide their identity. These sleeping commandos are passive members. They were found to be leading normal lives, attending to regular jobs. But after the working hours they were trained for the specific missions. They were interacting with each other in fake name and hence they were unaware of each others' real identities. The instructions were given in coded form through anonymous source. After the completion of their assigned tasks, they had to resumed

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to their normal living. Thus all of the above suspects from table -1 had association with the terrorist organizations and were trained for the specific missions for various periods ranging from 6 months to 4 years before they were assigned for the mainstream of mission. Thus the terrorist occupations varied widely. The unemployed and students are attracted more towards terrorism. In the present study it was reported by the suspects that full membership is reported to be gradual process after attending the training program from the terrorist organization. It was found in this study that the membership was obtained with the help of a brother, relative or other family member or friend who is either themselves terrorist or has terrorist contacts in the terrorist organization.

### *Addictions*

From the table 1 above it is seen that most of the suspects watch the TV for a long hours and reported that they have the feeling of isolated from society and prefer to be lonely while in actions. They were found to enjoy the violence related programs and never reported a sense of guilt nor regard violent actions as criminal. Through media the methods adopted by terrorist, demands made to the Government and goals of terrorists are quickly made known to these potential terrorists. Thus the media was inspiring them to imitate, promote and maintain the terrorism. Other than smoking and preference to smoke was shown by the suspected terrorists in the present study.

Understanding what motivates a person to fight is critical in dealing with terrorism. Every terrorist is highly motivated and well trained. Policy makers need to understand private reasons that would tell us why they took up arms. By understanding the motivation it would be easy to understand the terrorist mind set to know why an individual becomes a terrorist. The purpose of this study is to focus attention on the different types of individual's motivation and how it differs from another in joining and maintaining in the terrorist organization. This study is an effort to help the Government to improve policies and develop counter terrorist methods.

**Table -2 showing different Individual motivation:**

Sl.No.	Motivations
1.	Perception as victims of social Injustice
2.	Religion
3.	Identities
4.	Belongingness
5.	Political repression
6.	Heroism
7.	Autonomy

### *Perception as victims of social injustice*

With reference to the Table 2 showing different Individual Motivation Perception of Injustice in the present study is recognized by the terrorists as a major factor for justifying terrorism. According to Hacker injustice is the basic motivation for terrorism. From the entire sample of the present study a desire to take revenge against the society was the common

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response obtained. Some of the terror suspect in this study has even reported that they were addicted to smoking and to maintain addiction they had stolen money from their brothers and relatives. Fed by their miserable life, they joined the terrorist outfit by perceiving them self as a victim of social injustice. Their belief is that political, economic, religious and social factors are responsible for their unhappiness. They perceive that these factors as responsible for their injustice. The present findings are similar to the findings by Crenshaw, that major motivation behind terrorism is perception of social injustice due to poverty.

### ***Religion***

It is believed that terrorism is a manifestation of religious fanaticism. To provide moral explanations to justify their inhumane actions they use religion as an instrument. The entire suspected terrorist in the present study as referred to table -2 expressed religions as the major motives for terrorism. Some of the suspected terrorists reported that they met LeT member who convinced their parents to join the Daura-e-Aama course convincing them as Islamic studies but ended up with killing others. Religion in the present study is a definite dose of misrepresented Islamist fervor that is being used to influence these youth. Their ideological motivations are used for recruiting, to fight and to justify their actions. A study by Dr Anneli Botha at the Institute for Security studies (ISS) concluded that to join al Shabab 87% of respondents gave religion as the main reason. According to the religious sages in the Qur'an there is no indication of the terrorism. The religion is used by the terrorist in this study to justify terrorism, religion as a major instrument for their action to decide their goals in terrorism. According to Magnus Ranstorp Culture and the social behavior supports terrorism. To motivate terrorism religion and culture together affect their set of beliefs and values. Due lack of a proper understanding of religious education during their formative years made these subjects vulnerable to Terrorist Organization appeal.

### ***Identity***

Identity refers to psychological identity. Once developed during formative years identity provides sense of self to identify one's basic values, attitudes, and beliefs. In the present study from table -2 the entire sample of the suspected terrorist had developed negative identity and this unsatisfied negative identity is one of the major motivational factors in joining the terrorism. Negative identity develops easily when family and community rejects their role and regards it as undesirable. This rejection, they reported have attracted them towards the terrorist organizations. In search of personal meaning, they identify themselves with the "terrorist". When underlying sense of identity is flawed according to Johnson and Feldman (1992) membership in a terrorist organization provides a sense of identity. Joining and belonging to terrorist organization (Post, 1987) becomes principal motivation to maintain their psychosocial identity. The psychologist Jeanne N. Knutson (1981) suggests that a negative identity is consciously assumed by the political terrorist.

### ***Belongingness***

Luckabaugh and colleagues (1997) suggest that for the potential terrorists "the psychological motivation is the need for belonging." In many prospective terrorists the sense of belonging, connectedness is required to exist Hacker,F.J. (1976). The individuals in the present study had undergone the experience of family rejection, society rejection, rejection by relatives and

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friends etc, thus they thought belonging to the organization gives them a new meaning for their existence. Terrorist group becomes new family for such people according to Post (1984). The present study 80% of suspect terrorist has expressed their need to belong to a group. Belonging they believe identifies them in society, defines their role and helps in interaction with society. The terrorist group becomes their family and the leaders are substitute for their parents. Thus a key motivation for membership in a terrorist group is the sense of belonging.

### *Political activity*

Terrorist in the study reported a sense of frustration towards the society. Around 50 percent of them reported political repression as their motivational factors in joining the terrorist activity. As the personal pathway model suggests these terrorists were risky population who has damaged self-esteem. Their political activities were contradicting to their family's beliefs and lack social action.

### *Heroism*

In the present study around 40% of the Individual have reported to had desire and motivation to become hero. They believed to possess special skills and leadership quality to distinguish them from others in the group. They reported to have the skills to repair electrical gadgets, motors, prepare bombs, use variety of weapons, drive the vehicles, familiar with the communications equipment and their physical environment. Post argues that "individuals become terrorists in order to join terrorist groups and commit acts of terrorism." In the present study terrorist expressed that joining a terrorist group gives them a sense of "revolutionary heroism", they felt action-oriented and perceived to have gained self-importance that they lacked previously. Thomas Strentz (1981:89) identifies them as a sociopath or psychopath action-oriented individual.

### *Autonomy*

With newly acquired freedom, suspect terrorists reported to have started aggressing against themselves and against others. Around 40 % of the above suspected terrorist from table -2 said that they were motivated to distance them from the family and social net work. During such transitional life they were influenced by the organized group with leader's action oriented messages becoming more appealing. In asserting their autonomy they have tried out rebellion behavior without thinking consequences of their actions.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Prevention of crime is the state interest. National strategy is to understand the level of threat to find out the way it should be dealt. The urgent need is to fight against terrorism. Terrorist has many motivations depending on the need of the individual or the cells. In the present study a simple comparison of common characteristics with different motivations have been indicated but detailed study is required. By looking into the terrorist, it is concluded that their behavior varies depending on their ideological commitment, their level of intelligence, educational achievement, finance condition and organizational reach. The prevailing characteristic of the subjects in the present study indicates lack of total understanding of their own faith and needs reeducation of their religious belief. Reeducation can motivate them to

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change their belief and attitude helps them to emerge out as a changed person. Thus motivation initiates, guides and maintains a goal oriented behavior of the terrorists. In the present study it was found that there were different motivating factors and no homogeneity was seen in motivation that leads to radicalization. There are revenge seekers waiting for an outlet for their frustration, status seekers looking for recognition, identity seekers for a group to belong to and thrill seekers for adventure. The motivation factors cannot be generalized some terrorists were self-motivated and some by the organization but all were found working towards common objective of the terrorist organization.

The young men in this study displayed the factors of belongingness, identity, autonomy and heroism to get attracted to a terrorist organization. Their desire is to establish their role in society by getting affiliated with the terrorist organization. From the present study, it can be concluded that injustice, religion, identity, belonging, political activity, heroism and autonomy can be seen as real causes of psychological motivation for individual joining and staying with the terrorist groups. This study is an effort to help the Government to improve counterterrorist methods and Policies by making attempt to clarify each Individual's motivations and to explain how individuals view the world. The principal contribution of this study is a prevention-and-communications strategy targeting the specific mental framework and psychological needs of each type of seeker. Designing appropriate methods to counsel them and proper guidance can reduce the number of youths who are highly susceptible to radicalization.

The revelations in the Narco analysis led to the identification of the terrorist and recovery of the material evidences in the above blasts case. Of the 13 terrorists who faced trial, one was acquitted, 12 men were convicted by the designated court. The convictions were for conspiracy and committing offences against the country in an organized manner. The crime had attracted a maximum punishment of death for 5 terrorist and life imprisonment for the remaining 7 terrorist.

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### ***Conflict of Interest***

There is no conflict of interest.

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