INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY ADVANCED SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND INNOVATION (IJMASRI)

RESEARCH ARTICLE

INDIA'S COAST REGION - THE EASIEST ROUTE FOR CONDUCTING ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES - AN UNDERSTANDING

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Abstract

Indian sea route are an easy target for smuggling and conducting of anti-national activities. Mumbai port which is the largest port in India has been a place for terrorism activities since a long time, the 26 attack which is regarded as the deadliest terrorist attack, India has ever experience, the terrorist had enter India through sea port , since 1960s the business of smuggling of gold , drugs and other luxury items is going on between Dubai to Mumbai to Gujarat. Smuggling of items like fuel, textile happening through different states. Illegal fishing is also very common, In fact after the lockdown, many states have brought in new rules and regulation in their fisheries culture /sector, even the government has introduced schemes and is investing a lot. There are many agencies and ministries at the local, state and center to coordinate among different committees and stakeholders and increase the manpower. The eastern and the western coast share their water border with several countries which support criminal activities in the region. Most of the illegal migrant enter India and leave India through these ports for instances cases of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. India needs to strengthen its coastal security across the country.

Keywords: Coastal security, sea roots, smuggling, drug trafficking, fisheries sector, 26/11 attack

Introduction

After the 26/11 attack in Mumbai by a terrorist group who entered Mumbai through coastal sea, the Indian government has strengthened its maritime and coastal security. India is surrounded by water on three sides and it has a vast coastline of 7516.6Km including islands territories to protect them, it lies in the crucial maritime route between

KRISHMA PUBLICATION

strait of Hormuz and Strait of Malacca There are 9 states in India that are situated near the coast which incorporates : Karnataka, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Kerala, West Bengal, Odisha and Kerala and 4 union territories : Puducherry, Lakshadweep, Daman & Diu and Andaman & Nicobar Islands .We have the Bay of Bengal in the Eastern Region, Indian Ocean in the Southern parts and Arabian sea on the west. Indian coasts are always vulnerable to maritime terrorism, smuggling and trafficking due of their proximity to political volatile gulf countries and economically depressed East African Countries.

The IOR is the busiest maritime trade route hence the Indian coast are witnessing a constant rise in range and number of vessels, regarding these vessels and their monitoring offers a big challenge to the security forces and law enforcement agencies, this makes them an ideal location for landing illegal arms , explosives , contraband by smugglers and infiltration by terrorist . India share its water borders with many external forces, especially in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Pakistan and more . India has a total of 66 coastal districts in mainland India and 3 in Andaman and Nicobar and 1 in Lakshadweep .The coastline border which shares their border with other countries are Kathiawad coast , Konkan Coast , Malabar coast ,Coromandal Coast , Andhra coast and Utkal Coast . India coastal line is one of the major area of conducting smuggling activities, it started during the 1960s and 1970s. Mumbai has the largest port in India and by sea Mumbai to the gulf countries the distance is only 2000 Km , early when trade use to pass only goods like gold and luxury items used to be smuggled , later when Pakistan joined the gulf countries , the region also become a point for drug trafficking . Mumbai ports are home to most of illegal activities, most of the terrorist groups enter India through port, In fact in the eastern zone, 90% of the illegal migrant enter India through ports we have the maximum number of illegal migrants in India coming from Bangladesh causes humongous problem in the region. The coastline police security differs from state to state, For instance, Tamil Nadu is very much considered about its coastline security and maintains a high police security in the region and invested adequately, where as in West Bengal, the state government doesn't give much priority to the coastline security . Coming to Maharashtra the preparedness of maritime security is average which has been the target of terrorism attack.

Research Methodology

For the purpose of this exploration, I have used a amalgamation of two of the archetypical social sciences research tools application–as they are authentic and brilliant method to assemble statistics from multiple appellant in an methodical and convenient way. Questions were asked to the parents and their children, survey, interviews –consisting of several interrogation which were dispersed among representative of each contender group.

Objective of the Research Paper

The main areas of exploration in this paper incorporates

1. A study on the coastal security of India.
2. Coastal security of India after 26/11 attack.
3. What are the challenges of the India Coastal guard?
4. What is the future of the Coastal security?
5. What are the initiatives taken by different states to handle coastal security?

Literature Review

The Physical Proximity of India's coasts to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Gulf countries adds to its vulnerability, India has been facing cross-border terrorism for decades .Dubai has become a place for smuggled and trafficked items, dhows plying from Dubai To Mumbai and Gujarat . They are involved in smuggling of heroine, chemicals gold and other items. Whereas we see an increasing in security forces across the land borders with use of technology and satellite, however when it come to our coast security the situation is poor , we don't have enough security forces, it was through dhows also known as wooden boat hat terrorist enter India who were part of the 26/11 attack in 2008. It is very difficult to identify these wooden boats, it is used taken by fishermen to catch fish and no security database about the owner,

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crew and movement of dhows is maintained and these boast are not registered . Indian coasts also have a number of strategic installations, numerous big and small towns which makes Indian coasts high value targets for the terrorist and unsettled maritime pose serious security challenges. Pakistan, Gujarat and Greeks has many issues, the area is very much misused for Infiltration, smuggling , Greeks has easy access to dhows, those Greek and the entire coastline with Pakistan becomes vulnerable for the beach of Indian security . The 26/11 exposed the fault-lines in the coastal security network and intelligence gathering and the lack of coordination among the country's security agencies. After 10 years, today Indian Navy is now a potent multi-dimensional safeguarding India's Interests in the seas, a layered maritime surveillance and security architecture is now in place, 4 radar stations have been linked to a control centre in Gurgaon and 38 more to monitor India's 7500 km coastline equipped with high resolution cameras that have a range of 10 nautical miles. The information Management and Analysis centre facilities intelligence-sharing between coast guard and navy, data about all vessels –ships, dhows, mechanised trawlers, fishing boats-operating near India's coasts are analysed around the neck, 44 marine police stations to patrol coastline using speedboats, amphibious boast.

Operation sagar Kavach will boost coordination between agencies. 1500 landing points for fishing boats are monitored regularly, all vessels of 300 tonnes pus must install automatic identification system transponders. Police are also acquiring hovercraft to reach inaccessible areas around the coast and get help from the fisher folk to provide alerts about suspicious activities at sea, these are some of the initiative taken to strengthen the coastal line security, and however these have differed from state to state. Some states have invested adequately in the coastline security, where as some states don't consider coastline as a threat to India.

Findings

The Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard and state Marine Police Act as a three tiered cover, along with other organization such as customs and Port Trusts, In the year 2009 , Indian Navy was given the responsibility for overall maritime security including offshore and coastal security. The Naval Commanders-in-chefs at Mumbai, Kochi, Visakhapatnam and Port Blair was designated as Cs-in-Coastal Defence. The Indian Coast Guard was given the responsible for coastal security in territorial waters including water to be patrolled by the state Marine Police .Coastal Police stations were created in every coastal state and Union territories to secure the sea borders and with the jurisdiction up to 12nm from the baseline. The state coastal Police Force work closely with ICG under the hub and spoke concept, the hub being IGC station and spokes being the coastal police station all these. We have the National Committee for Strengthening Maritime and coastal security, a national level forum and an apex review mechanism for maritime and coastal security in which all concerned ministries and government agencies are represented. At the state and District level committee have also been established. At the operational level joint Operation Centres (JOCs) of the navy and the Indian coast guard have been set up. Steering Committee for review of coastal security (SCRCS) – national level committee under the MHA where all coastal security and UTs member meet ,then we have the Coastal security committee which is set up at the level of coastal states and coastal districts , it is decentralised and works effectively at the loca level . Standard operating Procedures –SOPs are aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the coastal security, we also have the Coastal Security Scheme which is operating since 2005 with the aim to strengthen infrastructure of the Police Force of Coastal States/UTs for patrolling and surveillance.

After the 26/11 new agencies and committees have been formed by the government to strengthen coastal, offshore and maritime security. Capacity Augmentation of maritime security agencies for surveillance and patrol of the nation's maritime zones, enhanced technical surveillance of coastal and offshore areas, established a mechanism for inter-agency coordination, intensify regulation of activities in the maritime zones and integration of fishing and coastal communities.

Electronic Surveillance mechanism has been augmented by provisioning of radar chain called coastal Surveillance Network(CSN) incorporating chain of state sensors which support in developing Maritime Domain Awareness through interconnecting 51 Indian Navy and India Coast Guard stations , Vessel Traffic Management system radar in ports facilitate surveillance of port areas ,SOPs(State –wise standard Operating Procedures) for coordination among various agencies on coastal security issues have been formulated. National Command Control Communication and Intelligence (NC31) Network promoting greater intelligences and operational coordination. Sectoral security in fisheries, offshore , ports and shipping sectors were also adopted .

Indian Coast Guard, custom marine organization was amalgamate with the India coast guard and was invested with the responsibilities of which incorporates: Law enforcement in India's jurisdictional waters, Safety and protection of: artificial islands, offshore terminals, Installations and other structures and devices in any maritime zone, Fishermen and providing them assistance at sea while in distress Assisting the customs and other authorities in anti-smuggling operations.

In spite of so many initiative taken by the government, we see an increase in criminal and smuggling activities across different ports in India for instance Armed robbery in ports in Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh, Drug trafficking off Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, Illegal migration to Sri Lanka, Smuggling of gold , turmeric and Tendu leaves in Tamil Nadu, fuel in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, red sandalwood in Gujarat and Maharashtra , cigarettes in Maharashtra and Poaching of Sea Cucumbers from Lakshadweep and Minicoy Islands and Tamil Nadu.

Challenges

There is lack of coordination , the engagement of so many agencies , ministries at the local , state and central level along with several efforts by different organizations creates a mess leading to lack of coordination among different agencies , they are trying to create collaboration by formulating coordination committees, conduct of joint security exercise , formulation of standard operation, followed by there is lack of clarity , among the stakeholders in relation to their responsibility in the coastal security .

Poor training and infrastructure provisions for ICG and lack of manpower , Dissatisfaction among the fishermen community which comes in between the effective functioning of the coastal security architecture, fishermen are an integral part of it .Climate change ,weather patterns , poor administration and hard terrains adds to the problem by introducing gaps between the surveillance and monitoring mechanism , delays in land purchase and lack of infrastructure support , with and of staffs at several areas.

Future Perspective

, the Prime Minister launched the PRADHAN MANTRI MATSYA SAMPADA YOJANA (PMMSY) September, 2020. The PMMSY with a projected Rs 20,050 Crore (200.5 Billion) will be invested for this project over the next five year period and will be a part Atmanirbh Bharat and is considered as the highest in the fisheries sector till today.This yojana aims to promote Blue economy and Blue revolution through sustainable development and growth through fishery culture which also incorporates physical security and robust fisheries management

The project also aims to establish connection and connexion with other schemes, incorporating safety and security design in the fisheries zone like the MHA for fisheries Monitoring, the Department of Space for satellite-based communication devices such as transponders for the fisheries zone and Control and Surveillance (MCS) related activities

On 05 December 2019 the MoD, empowered members of the Coast Guard to address maritime crimes within the maritime zones of India The Coast Guard is considered to be one of the largest in the world and advancing its 'Vision 2025' of having a fleet of about 200 ships and 100 aircraft. Strengthening capacity development, the Coast Guard is collaborating with the Department of Telecommunication for allotment of dedicated

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satellite bandwidth to meet its operational requirements.

The seaward component of the COVID-19 lockdown was enforced by coastal States, in collaboration with other agencies, in Goa Kerala, Karnataka and Odisha During the time of Lockdown some migrants workers took the sea route to return home which was a violation of the lockdown situation. Community Interaction Programmes (CIPs), which are normally undertaken for intensified to spread awareness on safety and security, which was also leveraged by the SMP for organizing awareness campaigns on COVID-19 precautions

Coastal states have taken several measures to strengthen fisheries MCS during the COID-19. In July 2020, Gujarat amended the Gujarat Fisheries Act, 2003 through the Gujarat Ordinance No. 4 of 2020 for strengthening fisheries monitoring and enforcement. Karnataka Marine Police also launched the *Kadalu* app for monitoring movement of fishing boats and fishers, The Government of Goa is reportedly considering notifying privately-owned fish landing centres, all the states have taken initiated to improve their fishery department which is integral to coastal ports and also a major route for trade .

Conclusion

Coast security of India has emerged as an important matter of concern after the 26/11 attack , drastic changes have taken places and the Indian government with every passing year has made its maritime security and coast guard security strong, there have been agencies who are for strengthen the security , as sea routes are easy target for terrorist activities , smuggling and infiltration , most of the terrorist enter in India through sea routes , usually through wooden boats and it becomes a real difficult work to identify them . Smuggling of gold and luxury items followed by drug trafficking. There are around 66 coastal ports in mainland India, where the state government plays a significant role in the maintenance of safety and security in the region. Special facilities have been introduced for the fishermen and everyone has an identity card, we have coastal police guards surrounding all the ports, every state has a different port problem, and smuggling of most of the items are done through ports and less through land border, we also share water borders with many of the countries which can at times act as a threat to the internal security of India.

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