Reading Material and Notes on Security Challenges and Their Management in Border Areas

Jatin Gupta

Definition of Border Management

The concept of border management encompasses a wide array of responsibilities and activities undertaken by a country's various governmental agencies to ensure the security and well-being of its frontiers and to advance its national interests. At its core, border management involves the coordination and concerted efforts of political leaders, administrative bodies, diplomatic services, security forces, intelligence agencies, legal authorities, regulatory bodies, and economic institutions.

Effective border management requires a holistic approach that takes into account the political, security, economic, social, and environmental dimensions of border issues. It also necessitates close cooperation and information sharing among the various agencies involved, as well as ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure that border management measures are effective and responsive to changing circumstances.

Definition as per BM division of MHA

BM division of Ministry of Home affairs says that border management is securing country's borders against interests hostile to the country and putting in place the systems that are able to prohibit such elements while facilitating legitimate trade and commerce.

Challenges w.r.t Border Management

Some of the main problems currently affecting the management of our borders may be listed as follows:

- Several of our **maritime boundaries remain undefined,** while a significant portion of our land borders lack demarcation on the ground. The disputed and unsettled nature of our boundaries has caused tension and hindered effective policing.
- Furthermore, many of our **borders are artificial** and man-made rather than based on natural features such as rivers or watersheds. This characteristic makes them highly porous and easily crossable
- The **multiplicity of forces** deployed along the same borders has inevitably resulted in a lack of accountability, as well as challenges in command and control.
- **The repeated diversion**, on a large scale, of paramilitary forces from border guarding duties to internal security and counter-insurgency tasks has resulted in the neglect of borders.
- **Absence of established mechanisms** for sharing and coordinating intelligence at various levels, especially at the operational level, is a major flaw in effective border management..
- Inadequate attention to the **concerns of local people** in border areas and lack of involvement of the local community
- **Improper physical infrastructure** in border areas of the country making movement and mobilization of forces difficult.
- **Outward migration** from local communities has led to the emergence of ghost villages.
- Political instability in neighboring countries.
- A **deficiency in trust** between local communities and security organizations.

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Effects of Poor Border Management:
- Illegal migration from across our borders has continued unabated for over five decades. Demographic changes have been brought about in the border belts as a result of large-scale illegal migration. Such large-scale migration has obvious social, economic, political and security implications.
- Separatist movements aided by external powers
- Radicalisation of youth in the border areas
- Formation of ghost villages in border areas.
- Mobilization of armed forces in the border areas has been hampered severely due to poor infrastructure
- It has resulted in growing nexus between organized criminal groups and terror groups.
- It has resulted in free movements of terror groups and insurgents creating headaches for security agencies.
- Mobilization of the armed forces has been hampered severely due to poor infrastructure.
- The influx of fake Indian currency notes from the border areas has disastrous consequences for India's economic sovereignty

Role of technology in Border Management
Technology comes with its own set of advantages in terms of border management
1. It reduces the errors associated with human intervention
2. It can work 24/7 therefore addressing the issue of soldier fatigue
3. It has greater accessibility in unreachable areas.
4. Reduces the loss of human lives due to extreme climatic conditions.

Challenges in deployment of technology for border management
1. It is expensive and requires a lot of capital investment.
2. Deployment of technology alone is not enough, electricity, internet, etc are required for its effective functioning.
3. The data from CIBMS, has to be ultimately analyzed by human beings which requires extensive training.

CIBMS: Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System

CIBMS is an integration of a number of new gadgets and technologies to ensure electronic surveillance of borders. "an integration of humans and technology with the Command and Control centre at the heart of it."

Can CIBMS alone resolve the border issues?

"The Border Security Force (BSF) hopes that the new technological equipment would provide feeds to BSF personnel at the border outposts, where monitors would be installed. In case of a threat, quick reaction teams (QRT) will intervene and neutralise it. The BSF plans to put up a CIBMS in areas all along the Indo-Pak and India-Bangladesh border,"

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Ways To Overcome Challenges With Respect To Poor Land Border Management:

1. Active involvement of the local community through schemes such as vibrant village program so as to vein away the youth from the hostile elements.
2. Setting up village defense committees in order to aid the functioning of the security agencies.
3. Outsourcing of border infrastructure development work to private agencies considering the increasing burden on BRO
4. Continuous diplomatic engagement with the neighboring countries to strengthen the corporations of border security.
5. Deployment of technology to increase surveillance and prevention activities such as illegal immigration and infiltration in border areas.

Role Of Community In Border Management

- It would help enhance security and development of orders besides providing a sense of belonging to the people.
- Border communities hold vast amounts of intimate knowledge of the area, characteristics of the terrain, etc. In difficult areas like coasts, fishermen watch groups can be formed to fill in large gaps existing in the surveillance cover on a regular basis. They can act as guides to the Armed Forces.
- Community involvement in border management also helps in ensuring that security responses do not compromise human rights or inhibit unduly the free movement of goods and people.
- Improved interaction with local populations would allow gradual development of a new community-based policing approach to border management.
- Engaging communities is a form of citizen engagement that leads communities to contribute to their own protection while ensuring respect for the sovereignty of the State.

Challenges in engaging local communities in border management

- **Inadequate state capacity**: While ethnic homogeneity allows communities to engage across borders, State capacities to manage the process are notably weak.
- **Alienation of border communities**: India's border population in general quite often feels dissatisfied, and alienated and shows a hostile attitude towards border security forces.
- **Communication gap:** In many areas, border personnel have little communication with the local people to prevent connivance with smugglers and other criminals.
- **Border Fencing and Connected Problems:** The construction of the fencing has also generated many differences between the local villagers and border authorities. Access to the farmland across the fencing is regulated. Frequent frisking and timely gate opening are irritants to farmers.
- **Agitation approach**: Often, criminals with vested interests work against border personnel and exploit the situation to their advantage. The local population, because

of various reasons including hidden economic benefits and social pressure comes in support of such vested interests.

Measures to integrate local communities in border management

- Taking into account local characteristics: Frameworks based on local characteristics can be established to create a climate of trust between the authorities and the communities.
- Improving understanding of border community: The relationship between border authorities and border population should be viewed as a management function. This can be achieved by providing adequate security, improving basic amenities and living conditions and assisting in generating employment opportunities.
- Border authorities should also ensure strict adherence to the code of conduct, ethical standards of discipline and integrity and attempts at attitudinal changes.
- To replace the concept of 'border guarding' with 'border management at the ground level, the responsibility has to be shared by the Central as well as State Governments.
- The **report of the task force on border management (**2001) recommended accelerated development of infrastructure along the border, especially to wean the border population from illegal activities

Coastal Security and Border Management

Importance and some facts about India's coastal line

- India's 7,516-kilometre-long coastline
- Accounts for 90% of the country's trade
- 12 major and 200 minor ports

Some of the coastal security vulnerabilities:

1. **Maritime Terrorism:**
   a) **Attacks on commercial centres and ports:** Ports handling large volumes of traffic especially oil and other goods and having a large population centre in its vicinity are most valued targets for the terrorists.
   b) **Attacks on Ships:** Ships are soft targets for the terrorist groups as, except for their enormous size, they have practically no means of protection.
2. **Piracy and armed robbery** pose a major threat to sea navigation. Shallow waters of the **Sunderbans** have been witnessing acts of violence and armed robbery. Even the arabian sea waters are not safe
3. **Smuggling and trafficking:** Indian coasts have been susceptible to smuggling of items such as gold, electronic goods, narcotics, and arms.
4. **Infiltration, illegal migration and refugee influx:** Large scale refugee influxes over the decades have resulted in widespread **political turmoil** in the border states.
   For example **a)** The creek areas of **Gujarat** which has its geographical proximity to Pakistan and has complex terrain conducive for infiltration. **b)** Political turmoil, religious and political persecution, overwhelming poverty, and lack of opportunities in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh is an ideal situation for **illegal** migration of **Bangladeshi citizens** to India. **c)** The frequent straying of fishermen into neighbouring country waters has not

only **jeopardised the safety of the fishermen** but has also raised **national security** concerns.

Government Initiatives w.r.t Coastal Security Infrastructure

1. **National Committee for Strengthening Maritime and Coastal Security** headed by Cabinet Secretary coordinates all matters related to Maritime and Coastal Security
2. Creation of **fishermen watch groups**
3. Installation of **vessel traffic management systems** in major ports
4. Creating an **apex body for the management of maritime affairs**
5. It was created with the aim to strengthen infrastructure for patrolling and the surveillance of the coastal areas, particularly the shallow areas close to the coast.
6. **Coastal Security Architecture upgrade:** Post the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, the existing multilayered arrangements have been further strengthened. **A three-tier security grid** is installed with the **Indian Navy, the coast guard, and the marine police** jointly patrolling India's near-seas.
7. **Electronic Surveillance:** National Command Control Communication and Intelligence Network (NC3I) has been launched to provide near gapless surveillance of the entire coastline and prevent the intrusion of undetected vessels, the coastal surveillance network project.

Challenges in coastal security

- **Lack of coordination:** The involvement of different agencies and ministries at centre, state and local level invariably leads to coordination problems although several efforts have been made to create greater synergies between them like:
- **Lack of clarity** among various stakeholders about their roles in ensuring coastal security.
- Acute **shortage of manpower** in police stations, (only 25% of the sanction)
- **Poor Training:** Lack of a dedicated **training academy** for the ICG.
- **Discontent in fishermen communities** interferes with the effective functioning of the coastal security architecture as fishermen are considered the **'eyes and ears'** of the coastal security architecture and, therefore, an integral part of it.
- Difficult **terrain, seasonal weather patterns, administrative lapses,** etc. all contribute towards introducing gaps in surveillance and the monitoring mechanism.
- Delays in **land acquisition** and **support infrastructure,** such as barracks and staff quarters at several locations.
- Below par state-level **monitoring** mechanisms.

Way Forward

- **Surveillance and interagency coordination:** The central government must address the problems of coordination arising out of the interactions of multiple agencies and delayed responses.
- **Stronger involvement of coastal police**: Instead of setting up a coastal border security force with no legal powers, the authorities must move to strengthen and better integrate the coastal police into the littoral security architecture.
- **A legislative framework** should encompass comprehensive laws for the protection of

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India's maritime infrastructure, including the shipping and port sectors. Statutory duties of government departments and stakeholders must be clearly stated, along with minimum port security standards requiring compliance.

- **Strengthening of the Coast Guard**: The CG must be strengthened to play a leadership role in coastal security. **Ambiguities** from the Coast Guard Act need to be removed to ensure all security agencies are clear about the roles and responsibilities they are expected to perform.
- **National commercial maritime security policy document**: The government must promulgate a **National Commercial Maritime Security** Policy Document, to articulate its strategic vision for maritime security.
- **Coastal security exercises like sagar kavach and sea vigil** need to be conducted regularly, in order to generate awareness about threats emanating from the sea as well as to develop synergies among the concerned agencies