Defence & Security · GS - III

How has the use of social media and digital communication platforms transformed the recruitment and operational methods of terrorist organisations? Examine the challenges for India's internal security.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Online radicalisation, sleeper cells, encrypted communication, cross-border terrorism, intelligence gathering, cyber surveillance, UAPA, international cooperation

Model Answer

The expansion of digital communication has created new opportunities for terrorist organisations to spread extremist propaganda, recruit vulnerable individuals and coordinate activities across national borders.

Unlike traditional recruitment networks, online platforms allow radicalisation to occur through decentralised and often concealed communication channels.

Major internal security challenges include:

1. **Online radicalisation:** Extremist organisations use social media, encrypted messaging and propaganda material to influence individuals.
2. **Sleeper-cell networks:** Digitally recruited individuals may operate independently, making their identification difficult for security agencies.
3. **Cross-border links:** Foreign handlers can use digital platforms to maintain contact with local recruits and facilitate clandestine activities.

4. **Information concealment:** Encryption, anonymous accounts and rapidly changing digital identities complicate intelligence investigations.
5. **Transnational coordination:** Terrorist networks can exchange information, propaganda and operational instructions across jurisdictions.

India requires a coordinated response involving intelligence agencies, specialised police units and cyber-security institutions.

Effective measures include technology-assisted intelligence analysis, lawful digital surveillance, financial investigation, international intelligence sharing and timely prosecution under laws such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

At the same time, counter-radicalisation programmes, community engagement and digital literacy can address the social dimensions of extremist recruitment. Investigations must also follow due process and protect fundamental rights.

Therefore, India's counter-terrorism strategy must combine technological capabilities, institutional coordination and preventive social interventions to address the changing nature of terrorism.

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