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Policing the “Chicken Neck”: The Emergent Challenges in the Siliguri Corridor

Dr Ranjita Chakraborty

Professor, Department of Political Science, University of North Bengal

E-mail - ranjitac.slg@gmail.com

Abstract

Unique geostrategic spatiality entails unique challenges to policing wherein the use of only conventional policing strategies and techniques is often inadequate or ineffective. Similar is the case of the Siliguri Corridor in North Bengal which is known as the “Chicken Neck” of India. The region is the only connecting link between the North-eastern states of India and the rest of the country. This corridor is very close to the four neighbouring states-Bangladesh in the east and Nepal, Bhutan and China in the north of the corridor. The opening up of boundaries and the increased stress on connectivity for economic growth, not just within the country but across the countries, has led to multiple vulnerabilities that pose territorial and human security threats. Issues like trafficking of humans and animals, smuggling, fake currency, drug trafficking and terror activities have created major challenges for the internal security agencies as well as defence forces. This paper explores these issues and suggests some alternative strategies in terms of changing the policing styles, from conventional to community policing, in the Siliguri Corridor, that would act as a complementary strategy and whose main objective would be to prevent crimes, create community partnerships, build a trust-based relationship between the community and the police, and to nurture an informed, sensitive and empowered police force.

Keywords

Chicken's Neck, Siliguri Corridor, Vulnerabilities, Trafficking, Smuggling, Terrorist Outfits, Policing, Community

INTRODUCTION

The boundary-making exercise that preceded and followed the Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 was a handiwork of the colonial masters who were oblivious to the factors ‘of community, ethnic linkages, livelihood, etc.’ (Menon, 2021). This exercise was carried out based on the dominant political rationale rather than on sound geopolitical rationale. The subsequent Indo-Pakistan and Indo-China wars forced further alterations in the territorial boundaries of the main South Asian countries. Both these factors have ended up creating cartographic anomalies on the Eastern and Western sides of South Asia,



Directorate of Research and Publications
Rashtriya Raksha University
(An Institution of National Importance)
Dehgam, Gandhinagar, Gujarat (INDIA) 382305
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