



Vivekananda International Foundation

# **Internal Security Budget 2019-20:**

*Ad-hocism to Systematic Coherence*

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## About the Author



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# Internal Security Budget 2019-20: Ad-hocism to Systematic Coherence

## Introduction

India of 21<sup>st</sup> century is on a surge at regional as well as global level. Its rise at both these levels into a power to reckon with now and in the future is rapid and consistent. In order to maintain this trend, there is need to negate certain prominent factors restraining its growth story. Security-governance is considered as one of the essential pre-requisites for this story to maintain its upward trajectory. Ensuring peace, safety and security of its people and properties and upholding the rule of law, therefore, becomes one of the most important responsibilities of the state.

This is not an easy task for any government, particularly one in our region. India lives in a fragile and turbulent neighbourhood with pronounced vulnerability to external threats. Simultaneously, it has innumerable internal fault-lines such as communal discords, ethnic and caste-based societal divides, economic disparities, just to name a few, which are factors that contribute to internal vulnerabilities.

These concerns, though not new, have grown multi-folds since the 1990s, which is when India's quest for economic growth also started in right earnest. It has led to the creation of many pre-dispositions. In the past instrumentalities, resources originating from the 20<sup>th</sup> century had its impact on internal security, but largely these threats were home grown. However with widespread use of technology, whence states are losing their borders, external forces tap the domestic fault lines and have the character of an internal security problem.<sup>1</sup> This fact was reiterated by the Kargil Committee Report (KRC) which unequivocally accepted the fact that external component or threats have acquired significant place in internal security of India.<sup>2</sup> While dealing with such challenges, India has paid a very heavy price in terms of loss of lives as well as property and non-quantifiable ill-effects on its national will. In the past, such reactive approach towards its security has portrayed India a '*Soft*' country.<sup>3</sup>

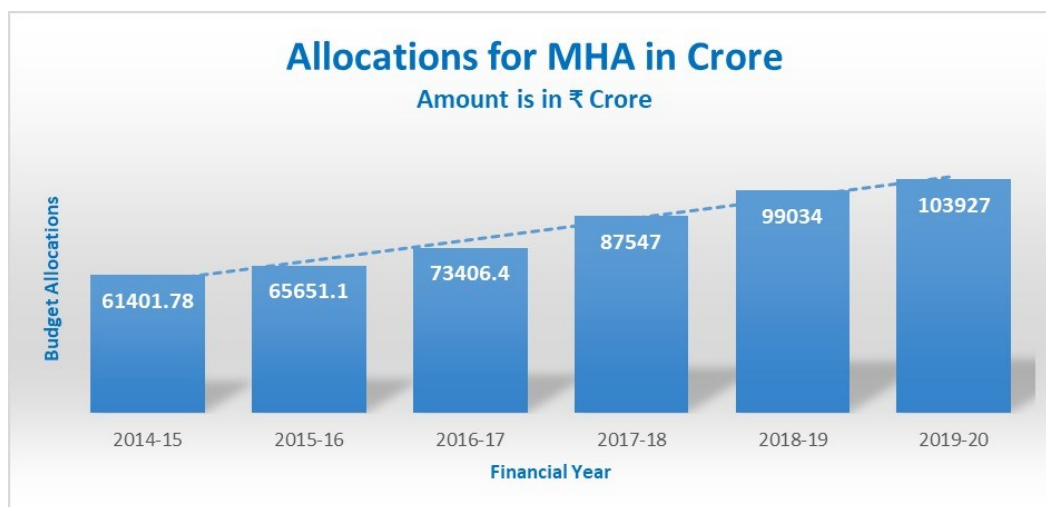
These challenges and the reactive mechanism to deal with the challenges makes internal security a complex phenomenon in India's comprehensive national security. Thus, it is important for India to address these vulnerabilities from a position of knowledge dominance. In this backdrop, this article analyses the recent trend in budgetary allocations and its utility while addressing the evolving internal security threat matrix of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Investments on Internal Security

Establishment of robust security architecture does not happen overnight nor does it come cheap. It certainly requires very heavy investments in both capital and current account budgetary support. In case of India, especially for the internal aspect of security,

huge investments are required both in the States as well at the Central levels. To an extent, this had been happening in the past but the pace and quantum was perhaps not in tune with the rapidly growing challenges.

One must place here an observation for consideration that post-implementation of the KRC Report in the year 2000 by the Ministry of Home Affairs, a steady rise in budgetary allocations has been recorded, and which has continued till date in the *Interim* budgetary allocations of 2019-20 as well. This trend is reflected in the graph below:-



Evaluation of last six years' budgetary allocations made towards Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), reveals that the rise in the budget allocations has been at a steady pace, ranging between 10-12 percent from ₹ 61,401.78 cr in 2014-15, to ₹1, 03,927 cr allocated in the recent budget for the year 2019-20, where, for the first time, the MHA budget has crossed the one lakh cr mark. Apart from the impact of the KRC recommendations, a steady rise of budget allocation can be seen even in the aftermath of the Mumbai terror attack of November 2008.

The major portion of the MHA's budget goes to the police, which is a crucial element of the internal security of India. Allocation under the head Police constitutes nearly 70 – 80 percent of the budget of MHA.<sup>4</sup> The police forces includes the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), border infrastructure, intelligence, and many other elements like special infrastructure etc.

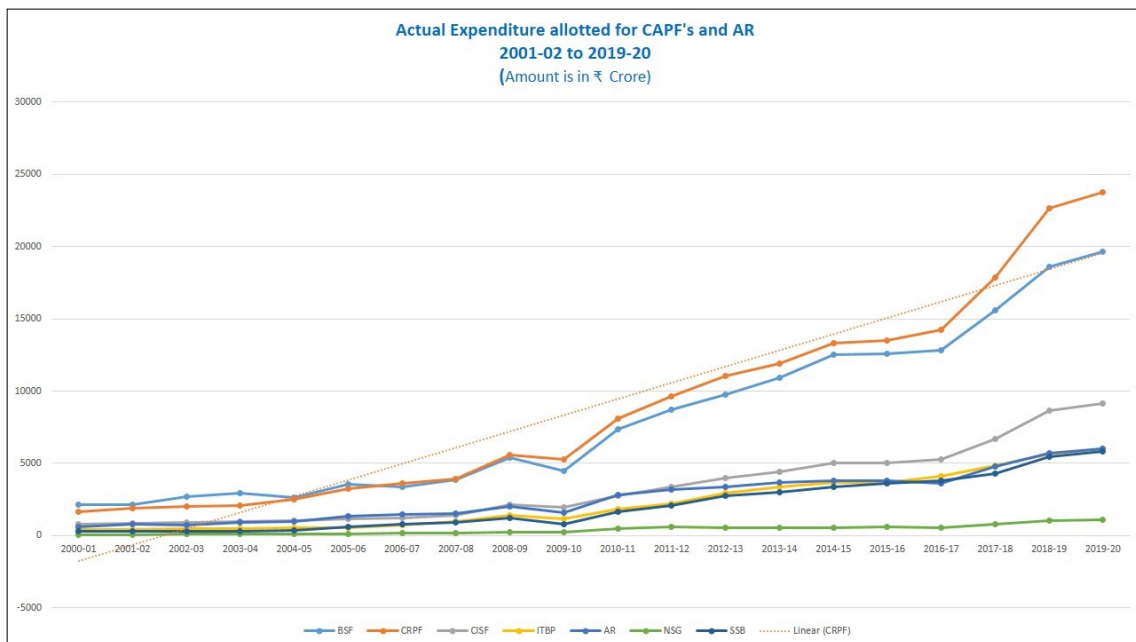
While pursuing the policy of pushing for higher induction of funds, core emphasis of the Government has been to build a capable police force at Central as well as State levels by adequately equipping the police forces to effectively deal with India's evolving threat profile in a concentrated and sustained manner.

## Budget for the CAPF



(Image Source - <https://www.indianfolk.com/modernization-police-force-answer-indias-woes/>)

A closer look at the actual allocations clearly brings out the growing role in maintenance of internal security expected to be played by the CAPF. This can be seen in the graphical and tabular representations below:-



(Source – Ministry of Home Affairs)

Actual Expenditure on CAPF (All Figures in ₹ Crore)								
Year	BSF	CRPF	CISF	ITBP	AR	NSG	SSB	Total
2000-01	2157.78	1653.25	802.30	416.06	635.32	70.23	322.28	6057.22
2001-02	2399.02	1894.42	860.55	417.08	776.25	82.79	327.03	6757.14
2002-03	2668.41	2032.37	936.65	470.25	711.20	95.90	325.77	6169.31
2003-04	2970.24	2087.78	982.19	468.32	929.15	113.81	315.92	7867.41
2004-05	2635.76	2516.96	1061.24	552.72	1005.64	128.00	381.84	8282.16
2005-06	3560.45	3228.03	1134.07	576.25	1314.17	140.28	581.97	10535.22
2006-07	3398.85	3642.40	1225.59	707.99	1478.29	151.19	779.92	11384.23
2007-08	3879.00	3911.69	1376.23	1000.73	1541.81	163.90	943.70	12817.06
2008-09	5398.50	5557.82	2169.28	1433.24	2016.27	210.52	1241.63	18027.26
2009-10	4472.66	5262.33	1978.88	1134.05	1599.02	231.70	801.31	15479.95
2010-11	7366.87	8128.10	2780.44	1862.35	2814.79	491.77	1630.36	25074.68
2011-12	8741.67	9662.89	3382.72	2208.09	3207.91	578.59	2073.08	29854.95
2012-13	9772.55	11040.13	3967.95	2917.85	3359.83	541.77	2765.16	34365.24
2013-14	10904.74	11903.70	4401.49	3346.94	3651.21	536.70	2979.16	37723.94
2014-15	12515.40	13308.95	5037.52	3686.84	3802.23	573.46	3399.64	42288.04
2015-16	12597.42	13475.23	5045.52	3669.35	3804.59	581.49	3606.26	42779.86
2016-17	12816.13	14249.04	5262.22	4112.91	3640.74	566.56	3808.74	44456.35
2017-18	15569.11	17868.53	6686.25	4824.31	4801.84	816.10	4320.67	54886.81
2018-19	18585.96	22646.63	8634.83	5621.55	5675.37	1028.08	5475.39	67779.75
2019-20	19647.59	23742.04	9154.86	6018.51	6001.47	1119.67	5817.21	71618.70

(Source – Ministry of Home Affairs)

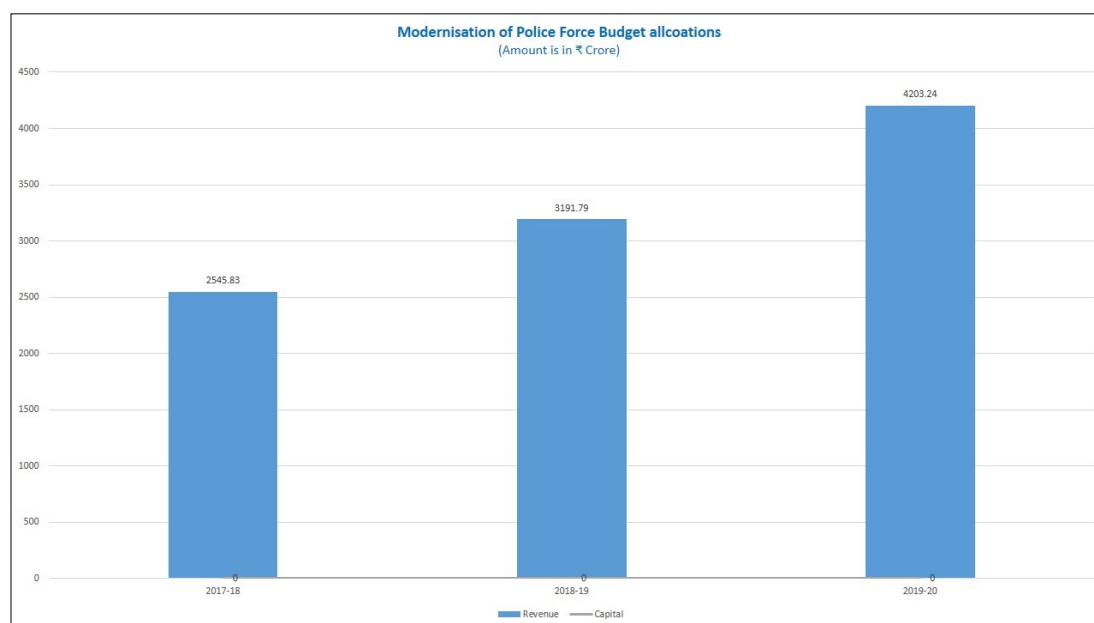
As can be further seen, amongst all the CAPF's, the oldest force, i.e. the Central reserve Police Force (CRPF), has been consistently received higher budget allocation. This is quite in keeping with the exponentially rising demand on the CRPF to deal with the most intense challenges to internal security over a wide spectrum ranging from Left Wing

Extremism (LWE) affected states, counter-terrorist operations in Jammu and Kashmir and North East States, besides assistance to the state governments in law and order duties.

After the CRPF, major budgetary support has been provided to the Border Security Force (BSF) for its role in physical safeguarding of the highly volatile borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh. This is followed by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) which has now been exclusively charged with providing security to the critical infrastructures in the country.

### Support for Police Modernisation in States

Along with the CAPF's, the MHA budget carries substantial provisions for capacity building of the state police forces by assisting them through various policy initiatives. One of the most important initiatives has been the Modernisation of Police Forces (MPF) scheme which was launched way back in 1969-70 and still continues to form the backbone initiative.<sup>5</sup> Allocation of funds under this scheme over the last three budgets is tabulated below:-



(Source – Ministry of Home Affairs, GoI<sup>6</sup>)

The MPF scheme was further extended for three years period from 2017-18 to 2019-20 on September 27, 2017. The scheme has a total outlay of ₹ 25, 061cr out of which centrally assisted outlay would be ₹ 18,636 cr and rest of the expenditure is to be made by the state administration.<sup>7</sup>

For effectively dealing with the prominent internal security challenge of LWE, the Central Government has released ₹ 90,042 cr from year 2015-2018. For Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS) project, ₹ 1450.60 cr has been released.



Similarly, the State of Jammu and Kashmir has been allotted with an amount of ₹ 2458 cr, and ₹ 1125 cr have been released for then North Eastern states. The states have utilised these funds for procurement of advanced weapons, capacity building of training facilities, improved communication network, computerisation of police offices, etc..<sup>8</sup>

### **Encouraging Digitisation**

One of the prominent areas of modernisation of police forces is digitisation of its operations by integrating it digitally to transform the capacity development. In this direction, the Central Government has implemented the CCTNS to strengthen the operational efficiency of the police forces. The core objective of the CCTNS project is inter-linking of all police stations in the country for sharing of crime and criminal data in an electronic-ecosystem by collecting data from police stations in State Data Centres (SDC) and further aggregating that data to the National Data Centre (NDC). The impact of CCTNS initiative is further enhanced with the integration of data with other pillars of the criminal justice system namely, Prisons, Prosecution, Forensics and Finger Prints. This collective new system is called the Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS).



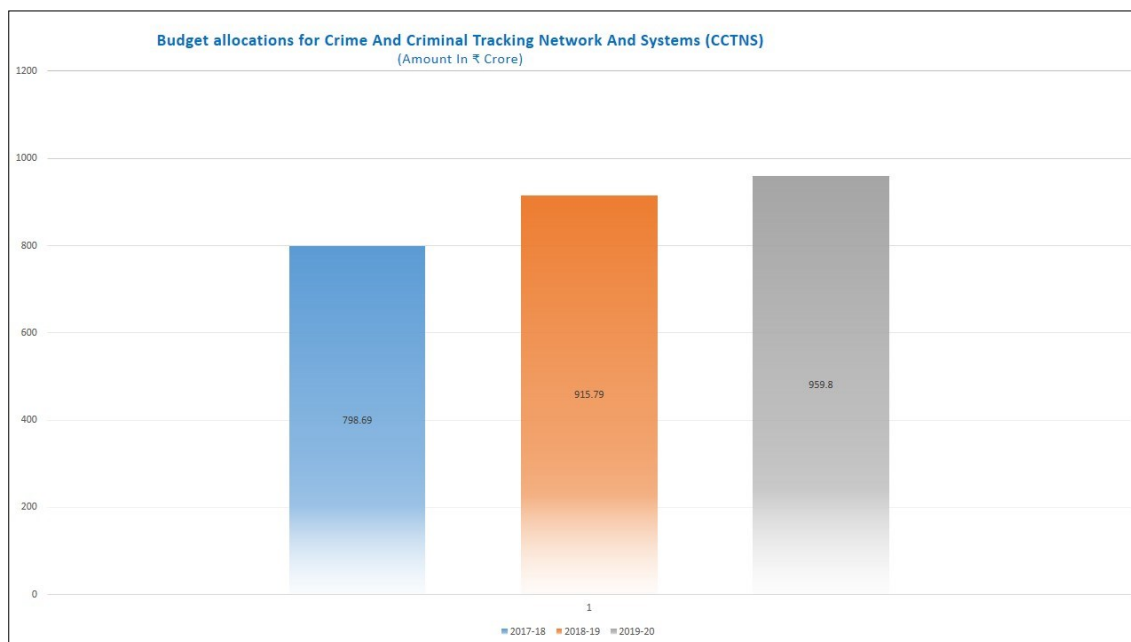
(Image Source - <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/police-chiefs-sound-alarm-in-wake-of-cuts-to-modernisation-budget/>)

The CCTNS project is executed by all states and Union Territories. At present, 15023 police Stations out of 15705 are enabled with CCTNS Core Application Software (CCTNS-CAS) and are in the process of updating their crime and criminal data records to their respective SDCs and further to the NDC.

Till November 30, 2018, 14,724 police stations out of 15705 stations are entering all (100 percent ) First Information Reports (FIR) on CCTNS Software. In the year 2018, total 2.25 cr FIRs have been registered on CCTNS Software and 3.9 cr legacy records have been

digitised. Amongst these, 12,153 police stations have been provided national-level access to crime and criminal data of CCTNS through Digital Police Portal (M. P. Government of India 2019). One of the crucial elements for this commendable transformation of CCTNS is the Secured Data Connectivity made available in 14363 Police stations across India. The operation and maintenance phase of the CCTNS project is valid up to March 2022.<sup>9</sup>

However, similar to most of the other project the CCTNS, only revenue budget is allotted, with no provision of capital expenditure. The budgetary details are as below:-



(Source – Ministry of Home Affairs<sup>10</sup>)

## Other Initiatives aimed at Modernisation

**Automated Fingerprint Identification System.** The MHA has further invited Indian enterprises to initiate the long-awaited project – National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS). It will be fashioned on the lines of the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS) of the FBI, USA.<sup>11</sup> NAFIS is expected to work as an integrated repository of fingerprint records of criminals. It will enhance the ability of state police as well as central agencies to discern crime patterns, analyse modus of operandi and assist concerned agencies or state police to proactively prevent and detect crimes.

**Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C).** Along with CCTNS, the Government of India also provides assistance to the States and the Union Territories to develop their capabilities to effectively deal with cyber crimes. It provides financial support through various schemes and timely issuing advisories. In this direction, MHA has recently established the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) on October 5, 2018. For its

establishments budget provision of ₹ 100 cr has been made towards the revenue expenses against the estimated cost of ₹ 415.86 cr.<sup>12</sup>

### **Empowered Intelligence as an assurance of Peace**

Along with these, proactive policing is sought to be given effective boost through sharpened intelligence capabilities. Credible intelligence is a prime necessity for any state to not only know its adversary but also remain updated about friends and allies. Timely intelligence input will enable the state with intentions and capabilities of friends as well as adversaries and avoid surprises. In core multi-dimensional scenario of today, the core functioning of intelligence remains the same, i.e. collection, analysis, counter-intelligence and covert actions.<sup>13</sup> A brief analysis of intelligence related budget allocations would be in order in this regard.

In a rapidly evolving threat profile there still is endless scope for long due up-gradation of India's intelligence network. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs, while taking stock of border management and internal security, in its report submitted to the Government in April 2017 underscored the urgent need for capacity building of the intelligence network in the country. It based its observation in the aftermath of the Pathankot (2016), Uri, Pampore, Baramulla, Nagrota (2017) attacks, Maoist attack at Sukma in March and April 2017, the grenade blasts at Amritsar in 2018 etc. The report underscored certain deficiencies that restrained police and law enforcing agencies to act upbeat. It recommended that MHA should take the necessary proactive course of action to identify the loopholes in the intelligence setup in the homeland as well as in the border areas.

### **Setting up of NATGRID and NTRO**

Kargil crisis and the 26/11 Mumbai carnage, encouraged the authorities to empower and enhance in-house research and development capabilities supported by high powered expert human resource. In this backdrop, National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) was established on December 01, 2009. It was created with a mandate to connect various intelligence and law enforcing agencies and various data providing centres and with an objective to strengthen counter-terrorism mechanism of the country. Similarly, the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) was earlier established in 2004. However, after the Mumbai carnage, to effectively deal with counter-terror activities, the Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) was established in 2009.<sup>14</sup> This entity was to facilitate effective coordination between intelligence and security agencies at the Centre and State levels. The MAC has been strengthened and re-structured to enable it to function on a 24X7 basis for real time collation and sharing of intelligence with other intelligence agencies and states. This ensures seamless flow of information between State and Central Agencies.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home affairs in its recent report observed that most of the intelligence inputs on terror related issued originated from the central agencies and just a handful of states. This was due to inadequate appreciation at the state level of their capacity and role in generating actionable intelligence by the Special Branches of the States. This makes them weak in handling specialised security threats like terrorism and insurgency of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The report also pointed out the weakness in the intelligence gathering capacity of the states.<sup>15</sup>

In terms of budgeting, it is disheartening to see that that despite necessary allocations the NATGRID project is still at a nascent stage. It is believed that swift implementation of the project will improve the capability of law enforcing agencies to deal with the threat profile of India ardently. MHA should take this up as a challenge and ensure speedy utilisation of funds and expeditious completion of the NATGRID project in a time bound manner.<sup>16</sup>

### **Need for Unified Coordinating Agency?**

As has been discussed above, there are a number of agencies like the National Investigation Agency (NIA), Intelligence Bureau (IB), MAC, NSG and some establishments in the pipeline like NATGRID, that are collectively capable to effectively handle the existing and emerging challenges of national security. However, there is no single unified authority to coordinate the activities and operations of all these agencies to ensure the quickest possible response in times of crisis like the Mumbai terror attack of 2008.<sup>17</sup> The rising threat of terror attacks, cases of extremist radicalisation and the growing menace of left-wing extremism strongly underscore the need for strengthening the intelligence agencies with high-end technologies and integrate it for their proactive dispensation. These agencies are doing their own bit but there is no common intelligence collative mechanism like a common pool of intelligence which would provide operational intelligence to police and law enforcing agencies and special forces.<sup>18</sup> It is important for the policy makers to ensure that the inputs provided by these and other agencies, are put for best utilisation.

### **Underutilisation of Budget**

The recent analysis of the report of the Parliamentary Committee on Border Security: Capacity Building and Institutions, points out poor utilisation of budgetary allocations since 2010 till 2016. In most of the cases, not even half of the allotted funds were utilised. Hence, the Centre must take the capacity building and integration of intelligence a priority task. By doing so it will truly stand by its constitutional commitment as defined in Article 355.<sup>i</sup> In fact, the problem of underutilisation of budgetary allocations years on end, is an issue that should engage government's attention at both the national and the states. This aspect will get further elucidated in the discussions in the ensuing paragraphs.

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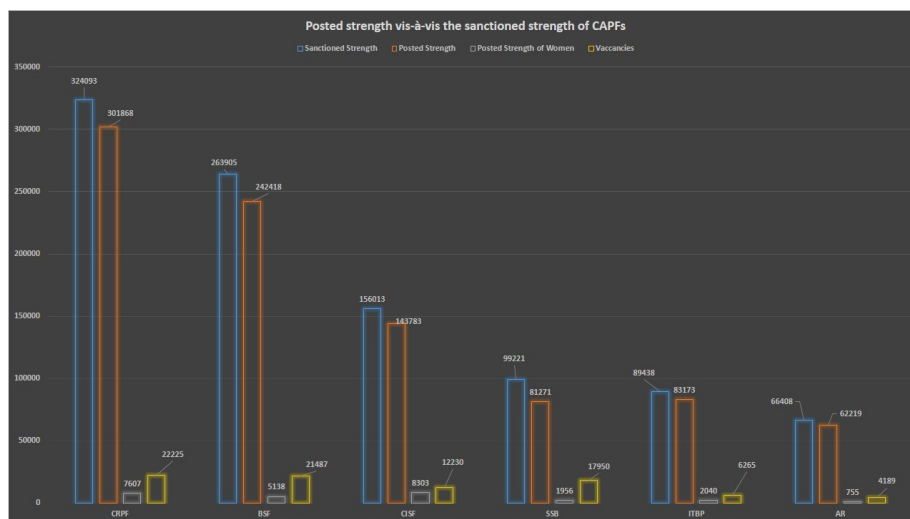
i. Article 355 states - Duty of the Union to protect States against external aggression and internal disturbance It shall be the duty of the Union to protect every State against external aggression and internal disturbance and to ensure that the government of every State is carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.

Majority of budget allocations for the CAPF is under revenue expenditure, which leaves limited funds for capital expenditure which is crucial for building up capabilities and strengthening operational infrastructure. This fact was highlighted in the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs in its report tabled on January 2019 on the functioning of CAPF and NSG. The report highlighted the need for internal reforms in various CAPF and in NSG to strengthen their institutional capabilities. It was also highlighted that timely procurement of critical necessities of CAPF like hand held thermal imagers, range of portable surveillance equipment, etc. were hampered due to shortage of capital outlay of budget.<sup>19</sup> Capital outlay will not only adds numeric capabilities of CAPF but revive their operational tempo in the form reserve battalions. This is most essential need of the hour for most of the CAPF which are stretched out to the limits due to long periods of operational deployments in different parts of India.

Continuing with its recommendations in the field of financial governance, creation of training infrastructure like sniper range and dedicated air wing for NSG were also mentioned. The committee further drew immediate attention of the government towards the welfare activities like medical infrastructure, housing etc. which were deficient. CRPF, despite its largest share in the budget allocations, relies fully on the state for logistics and operational support. This adversely affects the morale of the CAPF personnel and their performance in the most challenging terrains like LWE affected region, counter-insurgency operations in J&K and North East or counter-terror operations in J&K and other states. Staffing is one of the most challenging policy reform suggested by the committee for NSG which is 100 percent deputation based organisation. The limited duration of deputation was mentioned as an area of concern by the committee.<sup>20</sup>

### Man-power Shortages

As per the MHA data, on November 30, 2018, the posted strength vis-à-vis the sanctioned strength of the CAPF and Assam Rifles is as below:-



(Source: Government of India 2018)

From the above it is clear that majority of the CAPF (like CRPF, BSF and SSB) carry high vacancy of nearly 20,000 plus personnel along with rest of the CAPF where the vacancies is close to 5000. This means these CAPF are running short of their reserve forces and resource are stretched out due to diverse operational deployments. Most of the CAPF and Assam Rifles have started recruiting women personnel with encouraging response. CISF has been effectively utilising its women personnel in operational deployments. BSF also has deployed women personnel at border posts and for patrolling as well. Similar to that of CRPF, where women personnel are deployed from LWE region to various United Nations Peace Keeping Forces.

The notification for recruitment to 54,953 posts for constables (General Duty) has been issued by the Staff Selecting Commission (SSC) and notification for 1073 vacancies of Sub-Inspectors is reported by SSC.<sup>21</sup> All these need to be expedited in a planned manner to qualitative transform the forces to effectively handle the security threat profile of the 21 century.

As far as the state's civil and armed police resources are concerned, the situation is no better, both at the working and supervisory levels as can be seen in the tables below:-

<b>State wise Strength of IPS Officers as on March 03, 2018</b>				
<b>Sr No</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Sanctioned Strength</b>	<b>In Position</b>	<b>Post Vacant</b>
1	Andhra Pradesh	144	120	24
2	Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram, Union Territories (AGMUT)	295	255	40
3	Assam-Meghalaya	188	157	31
4	Bihar	231	189	42
5	Chhattisgarh	103	95	8
6	Gujarat	195	171	24
7	Himachal Pradesh	94	74	20
8	Jammu and Kashmir	147	89	58
9	Jharkhand	149	117	32
10	Karnataka	215	149	66
11	Kerala	172	129	43
12	Madhya Pradesh	305	265	40
13	Maharashtra	302	253	49

Sr No	State	Sanctioned Strength	In Position	Post Vacant
14	Manipur	89	65	24
15	Nagaland	70	54	16
16	Odisha	188	117	71
17	Punjab	172	147	25
18	Rajasthan	215	192	23
19	Sikkim	32	29	3
20	Tamil Nadu	263	221	42
21	Telangana	139	97	42
22	Tripura	65	51	14
23	Uttar Pradesh	517	424	93
24	Uttarakhand	69	60	9
25	West Bengal	347	278	69
26	Total	4706	3798	908

(Source – Ministry of Home Affairs, 2018)

To say the least, the existence of such high level of shortages of senior supervisory officers in almost all the major provinces does not inspire confidence in the ability and capacity of the state police administration to maintain the rule of law. It also directly impacts the availability of senior and middle level Indian Police Service (IPS) officers at the Centre to man positions in the Central Police Organisations (CPOs) including IB, CBI and others which form intrinsic part of the overall national security architecture. Obviously, the onus for mitigating the problems in this area lies primarily with the cadre controlling authority, namely MHA.

The Table below presents a similar scenario in respect of the State civil police and their Armed Reserves which constitute the first responders in any L&O and more serious security situation as soon as it develops on the ground.

**Shortage of Police Forces (Civil+Armed) as on April 04, 2018**

**Tabled in Lok Sabha by MHA**

Sr No	State	Vacancy
1	Andhra Pradesh	11596
2	Arunachal Pradesh,	1548
3	Assam	10208
4	Bihar	34484
5	Chhattisgarh	10704
6	Goa	1295
7	Gujarat	30795
8	Haryana	18079
9	Himachal Pradesh	865
10	Jammu and Kashmir	6606
11	Jharkhand	25927
12	Karnataka	23910
13	Kerala	1309
14	Madhya Pradesh	17260
15	Maharashtra	14749
16	Manipur	7559
17	Meghalaya	2975
18	Mizoram	2294
19	Nagaland	- 1558 (surplus)
20	Odisha	9730
21	Punjab	7186
22	Rajasthan	14951
23	Sikkim	726
24	Tamil Nadu	7805
25	Telangana	16044
26	Tripura	3557
27	Uttar Pradesh	214335
28	Uttarakhand	1139
29	West Bengal	38580
30	A&N Islands	543
31	Chandigarh	809
32	D & N Haveli	16
33	Delhi	1438
34	Daman & Diu	116
35	Lakshadweep	158
36	Puducherry	499
<b>All India Total</b>		538,237

(Source – Ministry of Home Affairs, 2018)



The above data paints a rather pathetic picture, particularly in the states that are highly prone to frequent break down in law and order situation, incidence of organised crimes, border management, internal disturbances etc. Given the fact that the per thousand ratio of policeman to population in the country is already well below the UN recommended level, there is urgent need for the State governments and the Centre to launch a coordinated drive to address the basic issue of manpower shortages at all levels on priority.

## **Conclusions**

As is well known, under the Constitution, the primary responsibility for maintaining public order, enforcing the rule of law and providing security to lives and properties of the citizen, rests with the state police forces with the support of CAPF, whenever required. In the field of security governance, states are the first responders in circumstances. It is incumbent on the states therefore, to create and maintain a strong and efficient security mechanism. There is, therefore, a requirement for the States to shoulder their part of the responsibilities to strengthen the overall security architecture of the country. A pro-active approach on their part will not only bridge the gap but also bring in greater synergy between the Union and the States.

After the Mumbai attack of 2008, some efforts were made to revive and strengthen the internal security architecture in the country with measures like capacity building etc. However, there is a great deal of critical work still to be done in terms of organisational reforms, rapid augmentation of manpower and equipment, improved training, modern weaponry, infrastructure and technology upgradation, enhancing intelligence gathering capabilities, analysis and dissemination of actionable intelligence etc. Violence-affected areas as well as border regions need special attention on priority basis. There is also a requirement of paying greater attention to welfare measures, especially for those in the lower echelons of the civil and armed police forces.

These measures would strengthen the spirit of cooperative federal structure as emphasised by the Government for empowering the states with better capabilities and resources. The first ever principal mechanism established by the Government of India, for inter-ministerial coordination and integration of relevant inputs significant for the formulation of national security policies, headed by National Security Advisor, established on October 8, 2018, is a step in the right direction.<sup>22</sup>

This decision of institutionalizing Special Policy Group (SPG) along with supportive measures and formation of Defence Planning Committee highlight the fact that the national security architecture of India is going for a credible transformation.<sup>23</sup> These timely measures aimed at transforming the national security architecture will not only decentralize the overall decision-making process but also enable the security institutions to more effectively meet the current and future threat profile proactively. This is considered to be the outcome of the review of national security architecture by the Prime Minister's Office in 2017. The

comprehensive review ascertained various aspects significant to the national security and recommended certain changes in the security architecture of India. These developments are considered to be in line with the recommendations of the review.<sup>24</sup>

The enhanced budgetary allocations in favour of the entities coordinated by the MHA looks substantial and seen as a step in the right direction. However, the institutional set-up which MHA has established for introducing transformative changes, requires greater monetary support both under revenue and uninterrupted capital outlays. Though, the budgetary allocations made towards MHA has first time crossed ₹ 1, 00,000 cr mark, utilisation of funds still leaves a lot to be desired.

Before concluding, though not related to the budget-analysis, one would like to raise in passing, an important issue having a direct bearing on security governance in the country. This relates to the systematic restructuring of the security architecture and mechanism based on the recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee (KRC) report as approved by the empowered group of ministers. These were rightly considered as the most important milestone in laying down the security governance approach in India. It was a long overdue exercise under which, perhaps for the first time, all aspects of conventional national security structures and processes were taken up by subject and area experts for restructuring. Post-acceptance of the report, successive governments' prioritised capacity building in the fields of intelligence, internal security, border and defence management. The core principle behind this was to develop an efficient and cost-effective national security system, capable of dealing with the threat profile of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>25</sup>

The fact however remains that the KRC exercise was triggered by the experiences of the specific event that happened nearly two decades back. Admittedly, a great deal of changes have taken place since. National security challenges faced by the country today are entirely different. Global perceptions and approaches to national security too have changed. Terrorism is no longer confined to our region, it has truly assumed global dimensions. Changes have also occurred in ways of dealing with terrorism. India's security interests and challenges have also evolved both internally and the external context.

The Central Government has been shouldering the enhanced responsibilities by proactively providing assistance to the States. Two operational divisions in the MHA are exclusively dedicated to managing the enormous task of meeting the internal security requirements nationally. Their charter is to handle an ever expanding spectrum of issues such as law and order, anti-national subversive activities, policy issues on terrorism, legal support, human rights etc. Apart from the two divisions of internal security, divisions dedicated to the state of J&K, North Eastern States, and Left Wing Extremism (LWE), cyber and information security division, counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation division, define a well knit internal security mechanism of the Union Government.<sup>26</sup> While the Government has initiated a review of the functioning of the MHA, there a number of other

critical areas including the intelligence machinery that need a relook. The question that need to be posed is whether time is ripe for the Government to set up a high level National Commission on National Security to carry out a comprehensive review of all aspects of national security challenges faced by the country now and in the years ahead.

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