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Q9

The banning of 'Jammat-e-Islami' in Jammu and Kashmir brought into focus the role of over-ground workers (OGWs) in assisting terrorist organizations. Examine the role played by OGWs in assisting terrorist organizations in insurgency affected areas. Discuss measures to neutralize influence of OGWs.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2019 · GS III · 10 marks · Internal Security and Extremism

Linkages between development and spread of extremism.

Core demand of the question

- Examine how over-ground workers assist terrorist groups in insurgency-affected areas
- Discuss measures to neutralise their influence, including the 2019 Jamaat-e-Islami J-and-K ban
- Keep a 10-mark length

Revision summary

OGWs provide shelter, hawala, recce, recruitment and protest cover to terrorist groups.

The 2019 Jamaat-e-Islami J&K ban under **UAPA** focused on that over-ground net.

Similar courier-and-front patterns exist in LWE and some Northeast insurgencies.

- **Neutralisation:** evidence-led **UAPA/NIA**, PMLA/FIU, community intelligence, and livelihoods.

Over-broad bans without due process can create the next recruiter.

Introduction

Terrorist violence needs an **underground armed cell** and a **legal-looking support web**. **Over-ground workers (OGWs) are that web: people who are not always on a banned militant list but who recruit, recce, fund, shelter and propagandise.** The **2019 ban on Jamaat-e-Islami (Jammu and Kashmir)** under the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act** put this layer in the public debate after years of street and terror cycles.

Body**Role of OGWs**

- **Logistics and shelter:** safe houses, transport, SIM cards, medical aid, and movement of weapons or cash. The armed cadre cannot survive long without this civilian-facing chain.
- **Finance:** collection through front charities, **hawala**, over-invoicing, and local extortion. This is where **PMLA, FIU-IND** and bank KYC bite if used.
- **Intelligence and recce:** mapping of CRPF/Army/police routines, festival crowds, and soft targets. Pulwama-type vehicle bombs need local watching, not only a handler across the border.
- **Recruitment and radicalisation:** campus, mosque-committee, social-media and prison pipelines. An **OGW** translates a distant ideology into a neighbourhood slight.

- **Agitation cover:** organising stone-pelting, shutdowns, and funeral processions that pin security forces while a cell moves. The over-ground protest and the underground shot are often one design.
- **Legitimacy:** political or social fronts that contest space with the constitutional state, making the gun look like a community service. That was the charge sheet logic around **Jamaat-e-Islami J&K** as an over-ground ideologue-and-network, not merely a prayer association.
- The same **OGW** pattern appears, with local variation, in parts of the **Northeast** and in **Left-Wing Extremism** (couriers, overground mass fronts, extortion accountants).

Measures to neutralise influence

- **Lawful ban and prosecution:** **UAPA** designations, **NIA** investigation, and court-led seizure of fronts - so the step is evidence-based, not only a notification.
- **Financial disruption:** freeze accounts, follow hawala, use **RBI KYC** and **GST/income-tax** trails on dummy firms.
- **Human intelligence and community policing:** OGWs live among people; **trust of families** and fast grievance redress cut the recruiter's story. Pure kinetic pressure without jobs feeds the next courier.
- **Information:** counter-narrative in local language, school and campus work, and controlled but lawful action against online handlers.
- **Development and politics:** credible elections, **PM employment and housing schemes**, and an open door for those who exit - deradicalisation must have a livelihood end.
- **Safeguard:** over-breadth creates new OGWs. Targeting must separate the **armed support chain** from ordinary dissent.

Flow diagram

Terror cell -> OGW layer
 OGW layer -> Shelter recce funds
 OGW layer -> Propaganda agitation
 Shelter recce funds -> Attacks sustained
 Propaganda agitation -> Attacks sustained
 Attacks sustained -> UAPA NIA FIU
 UAPA NIA FIU -> Jobs and community exit

Conclusion

- **OGWs are the oxygen of terrorist groups:** money, recce, shelter and narrative. The Jamaat ban highlighted that layer in Kashmir. Neutralising them needs **UAPA** and **NIA** where evidence exists, financial intelligence, and a political-economic alternative so the neighbourhood stops supplying couriers. A ban without that second half only drives the web quieter.

Facts & figures

Jamaat-e-Islami J&K 2019

Declared unlawful under UAPA in February 2019, in the security debate after the Pulwama attack period.

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act: bans associations and prosecutes terrorist support, including funds and logistics.

National Investigation Agency (NIA)

National Investigation Agency: Union lead on terror conspiracies that cross State lines, including OGW networks.

FIU-IND / PMLA

Financial Intelligence Unit and Prevention of Money Laundering Act: tools against hawala and front accounts.

OGW

Security usage for over-ground workers who assist underground cadres while often remaining in civilian roles.

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