EDITORIAL: THE HINDU

GENERAL STUDIES 3: INTERNAL SECURITY   **DATE:** 09.04.2025
TOPIC: HOME MINISTRY ROLE

The gradual transformation of the Home Ministry

1. Context: Changing Nature of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) was traditionally seen as a **reactive 'Crisis Ministry'**, intervening during **riots, terror attacks, insurgencies,** and **state governance failures**.

- Over the past few years, it has undergone a major transformation, repositioning itself as a **reform-oriented and future-ready institution** focused on *long-term internal security planning*.

2. Shift from Reactive to Proactive Governance

- Earlier, MHA focused more on **managing unrest** than on preventing it.

- Today, it emphasizes **institutional reforms, law modernisation, and strategic coordination**.

- The Ministry is building a **comprehensive internal security ecosystem**, making India better prepared for both **current and emerging threats**.

3. Constitutional Role of MHA

- The Ministry derives its authority from constitutional provisions such as:

  - **Article 355** – Duty of the Union to protect States from external aggression and internal disturbance.

  - **Article 256** – Obliges states to comply with central laws.

  - **Article 356** – Allows for President's Rule in case of breakdown of constitutional machinery in a state.

- Thus, MHA plays a **central role in federal governance and internal stability**.

4. Historical Challenges and Regional Security Priorities

- Since the 1980s, India has faced persistent **internal security challenges**, such as:

  - **Terrorism in Kashmir**

  - **Insurgency in the North-East**

  - **Left-Wing Extremism (LWE)** in Central India

- State police forces were **understaffed and undertrained**, which led to increased deployment of **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)** like:

  - **CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP**, etc.

- For instance, **CISF** was expanded to deal with **industrial security and labour unrest** during the 1970s–80s.

5. Past Approach: Crisis-Led Legislative Action

- Earlier laws and institutions emerged *after* crises, not as proactive measures.

  - **TADA** (Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act)

  - **POTA** (Prevention of Terrorism Act)

  - **NIA** (National Investigation Agency) – created post-26/11 attacks

- Frequent leadership changes limited long-term **institutional planning and execution**.

6. Reforms and New Vision Since 2019

- Since 2019, over **27 new laws** have been enacted to **modernise internal security and policing**.

- Key areas of reform:

  - **Strengthening UAPA** (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act)

  - **Amending NIA Act** to expand its investigative powers

  - **Cracking down on terror funding**, using **financial tracking and cross-border monitoring**

- The MHA has adopted a **multi-agency approach**, involving coordination across intelligence, finance, enforcement, and legal systems.

7. Criminal Justice Reforms

- Three **new criminal laws** introduced to replace colonial-era codes:

  - *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita* (replacing IPC)

  - *Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita* (replacing CrPC)

  - *Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam* (replacing Indian Evidence Act)

- Initiatives include:

- Establishing **forensic science institutions**

- Upgrading **digital crime tracking and investigation systems**

- Encouraging **separation of investigation and forensic functions** for improved delivery of justice.

8. Increased Budgetary Support

- The **MHA's budget has more than doubled**, reflecting the government's prioritization of internal security:

  - From **₹1 lakh crore in 2019** to **₹2.33 lakh crore in 2025**.

- Specific allocations:

  - **Spending on CAPFs** rose from **₹38,000 crore in 2013-14** to **₹97,000 crore in 2024-25**.

- This allows better infrastructure, welfare, training, and operational capabilities for security forces.

9. Ground-Level Impact of Reforms

- Notable improvements in **conflict-prone regions**:

  - **70% reduction** in violence across Kashmir, North-East, and Maoist-affected areas.

  - Significant **decline in stone-pelting** incidents in Kashmir.

  - **Peace pacts** and negotiation efforts in North-East (e.g., Bodo and Naga agreements).

  - Integrated **security-development model** in LWE regions improving both security and governance.

10. Future-Oriented Policing and Preparedness

- The MHA is no longer waiting for crises to occur.

- Focus is on:

  - **Predictive policing**

  - **Intelligence coordination**

  - **Digital surveillance tools and real-time analysis**

- It is creating an ecosystem where law enforcement is:

- **Modern, trained, and tech-enabled**

- **Linked with judiciary, forensic science, and civic governance**

- **Capable of addressing both cyber and physical threats**

11. Conclusion: A Transformative Shift

- The **Ministry of Home Affairs** has transformed from a reactive bureaucracy to a **proactive national security institution**.

- By focusing on **structural reforms**, **capacity building**, and **technology adoption**, the MHA is laying the foundation for a **secure and resilient India**.

- This transformation ensures India is **prepared not only for today's internal threats**, but also for the **complex security challenges of the future**.

Source: https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-gradual-transformation-of-the-home-ministry/article69427884.ece#:~:text=In%20recent%20years%2C%20the%20MHA,technology%20and%20improving%20intelligence%20coordination.