



# ISSUE BRIEF

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## Institutionalising National Security Policy-Making in India



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### Introduction

The fundamental shortcomings in India have been neglect and non-institutionalisation of thinking and a lack of incorporation of the Indian characteristics of strategic culture in national security policy-making. There has been a failure to identify the stakeholders who must participate at different levels to add value to the process of public policy-making on national security by the government. Shri Manohar Parrikar, the Raksha Mantri (RM), on May 14, 2016, addressed the “Defence Minister - Defence Studies Community Dialogue” to consider (a) what the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies (DDSS) can do to provide policy oriented outputs to the government; (b) changes needed in academic/ pedagogical content in the syllabi of DDSS; and (c) how national security literacy of the young generation can be enhanced by creating Centres of National Security Studies (CNSS). He has, thus, been the first Defence Minister who has tried to institutionalise the role of the academia as a stakeholder in national security policy-making perspectives.

### *Key Points*

1. There has been neglect and non-institutionalization of thinking in National Security Policy Making process in India.
2. There has been a failure to identify the stakeholders who must participate at different levels to contribute in National Security Policy making process.
3. Raksha Mantri on 14 May 2016 initiated Defence Minister - Defence Studies Community Dialogue.
4. In Indian Context, Constituting the TRIAD consisting of Defence and Strategic Studies (DSS), Defence Studies and Analysis (DSA) and National Security Studies (NSS) is essential to demarcate role .
5. Creation of FIRST VERTICAL, SECOND VERTICAL and the THIRD VERTICAL will allow the synergization between each other.
6. Urgent need to introduce academic paper on DSS in the UPSC examination for creating human resources for future.

The Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), New Delhi, is an autonomous think-tank dealing with national security and conceptual aspects of land warfare, including conventional and sub-conventional conflict and terrorism. CLAWS conducts research that is futuristic in outlook and policy-oriented in approach.

## Institutionalising National Security ...

The following framework is postulated to arrive at a consensus to restructure our thinking on national security in the Indian context and standardise it with the demarcation of the role of the three entities: the stakeholders who do not come under the Official Secrets Act (list given below), government organisations and the political leadership. Having clearly defined roles and duties of each component and making them inter-dependent without loss of their autonomy will help the nation-state in framing a composite national security architecture and national security policy for India.

### The Indian Context: Constituting The Triad

In the Indian context, Defence and Strategic Studies (DSS), Defence Studies and Analyses (DSA) and National Security Studies (NSS) are the three legs of the TRIAD to deal with national security policy-making.<sup>1</sup> They have to be compartmentalised and contextualised with different sets of definitions before they can be synergised under one portal for nation-building.

**Role of Defence and Strategic Studies:** Briefly, DSS should endeavour to calculate the concept of power by assessing the vitality of a nation, covering strategic assessments and securitising the non-strategic dimensions related to ecology, environment, pollution, energy and the rights of the unborn. DSS is, therefore, an intellectual inquiry conducted through inter-disciplinary methodology in a multi-disciplinary format. *Its output is more policy relevant rather than policy oriented by bridging the gap between the realm of ideas and the domain of public policy-making.* The main stakeholders for furthering the role of DSS are:

- Civil servants, including those from the armed forces having demitted office and not on deputation or on paid employment in any government organisations like the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO), etc.
- Universities and the academia therein.

- Think-tanks.
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).
- Professional institutes of higher education: Indian Institutes of Science (IISCs), Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), National Law Schools, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICII), Chambers of Commerce, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, etc.
- Chief Executive Officers (CEOs)/Chief Managing Directors (CMDs) of industries who are involved with defence production or any other area of civil industries having a direct impact on India's defence related capacity-building.
- Government of India (GOI) – established various institutions like the Indian Council of Social Science Research whose Researchers and Fellowship holders, as National Fellows, Senior Fellows and Post Doctoral Fellows, are pursuing their research in the area of defence and strategic studies.

DSS consolidated its hold amongst the intellectual segment of the Indian universities from 1982 onwards and today has institutionalised its role academically. The standards or the quality of its products may be questionable but its existence cannot be denied nor can it be obliterated. Interestingly, DSS has started the slow process of synergising the relationship between the university departments of DSS and the government establishments, be it the armed forces or any other establishment with duties towards safeguarding the security of the nation.

*All stakeholders in DSS have no access to classified information and, hence, are outside the Official Secrets Act. They can be permitted to have strong opinions backed by their skills of advocacy to influence policy-making.*

**Role of Defence Studies and Analyses:** DSA conceptualises the power calculus by calculating capacity based on comparative military balances. DSA, therefore, has to be privy to classified information to arrive at a precise calculation of military power.

Evolution of doctrines which becomes a sub-set of training is, hence, one of the many outputs for policy orientation. It is the professionals and practitioners in the government establishments dealing with the armed forces who are suitable to undertake the tasks related to DSA. And it is only the government agencies like the NSCS, NTRO, Cabinet Secretariat, etc., that can undertake or commission classified studies related to national security. Such studies have to be conducted by experts who are under the Official Secrets Act and are bound by the laws therein. *The outputs of DSA will always to be policy oriented.*

**Role of National Security Policy-Making:** National security policy-making, the third leg of the triad of security studies, is not a discipline at all but a problem area. The solutions to the problems go beyond policy orientation and precipitate into policy-making. It entails an inter-disciplinary approach, not in the academic sense but from political, social and professional perspectives based on the experience and judgment of those who are the elected members under the Constitution and who have the authority to make national policy to safeguard national interest, national integrity and national security. Deliberations on national security have to concentrate on war preparedness to safeguard national integrity and protect the nation from external and internal threats. Hence, it is not, and can never be, merely a professional viewpoint or an academic venture. Only the head of government can be held responsible for making national security policy, aided by the Cabinet Committee on Security and the Cabinet.

### Standardising the Lexicon

#### *First Vertical*

**Defence and Strategic Studies (DSS)** in the Indian context lie in the realm of ideas and, hence, comprise both an academic venture and outputs of professional education. They, thus, need to be pursued vigorously in universities and institutes of higher education in India where teaching and research are undertaken

and simultaneously by all other stakeholders listed above under DSS. The entire conglomerate may be defined as the **FIRST VERTICAL**.

#### *Second Vertical*

**Defence Studies and Analyses (DSA)** should be part of institutions and organisations of the Government of India, which are manned by professionals serving under the Official Secrets Act. This can be termed as the **SECOND VERTICAL**. There is no place for personnel from the **FIRST VERTICAL** in the **SECOND VERTICAL** institutionally. However, as is being done in many government organisations, the personnel of the **SECOND VERTICAL** should be encouraged to improve their educational standards by perusing postgraduate studies in universities to widen their intellectual outlook.

#### *Third Vertical*

**National Security Policy-Making** is the concern of the head of government, Cabinet Committee on Security and the Cabinet, led by the Prime Minister. This can be termed as the **THIRD VERTICAL**.

High-level task forces may be constituted by the government to synergise the **FIRST** and **SECOND VERTICALS** to carry out specific study and make recommendations to the head of government on any matter related to safeguarding of national interest and national security.

### Recommendations

- All the stakeholders listed under the “Role of Defence and Strategic Studies” must be encouraged by the government to take active part in discussions on national security organised by the government in a selective way plus interact with national security policy-makers. Those in the **SECOND VERTICAL** must participate in various discussions, seminars, conferences, workshops, etc. organised by institutions of

the FIRST VERTICAL. This will institutionalise collegial inter-dependence and provide value addition to the SECOND VERTICAL.

- The DDSS in universities will be responsible for the grant of degrees. Hence, the DDSS and constituent colleges must be enriched and substantially encouraged to ensure that their curricula are constantly updated to develop into discipline bound programmes having a paradigm status. They should be encouraged and allowed to grow in the Indian universities under the existing University Grants Commission (UGC) programmes called the Special Assistance Programme (SAP) and Centres of Advanced Studies (CAS). SAP and CAS must remain as per existing rules as a part of, and in, the Departments of Defence and Strategic Studies.
- All specialised academic units which are not statutory departments but whose research and teaching contribute towards policy implications in national security policy covering non-traditional security studies, refugee studies, human rights, peace studies, conflict resolution studies, disaster management studies, etc. must be an integral part of defence and strategic studies for the award of a degree.
- The government must take immediate steps to initiate recruitments in the existing organisations like the NSCS, NTRO, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), etc. by laying down nationally advertised procedures to enlist the products of the Indian University Departments of Defence and Strategic Studies or from existing specialised sections as enumerated in Para 2 above. In almost all the developed countries, the governments advertise nationally to fill up their research manpower vacancies required for their different organisations responsible for looking after their national security affairs. It is time that the Government of India initiated this

process in a transparent and institutionalised manner.

- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has to play a proactive role to encourage the FIRST VERTICAL to synergise with the government's requirements. Presently, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) examination does not have the option for the candidates to offer defence and strategic studies as a special paper. If instituted, it will increase the awareness on national security amongst the young generation as a whole. This awareness will assist in the indigenous growth of a strategic culture needed for India in the 21st century.

It is strongly recommended that fashionable and fancy nomenclature like Centre for National Security Studies should not be introduced in any university or any other allied institution. Such names are misleading for all and also give opportunities to those who have never been academics or teachers or researchers to enter not only the university system but pollute the other organisations constituting the FIRST VERTICAL.

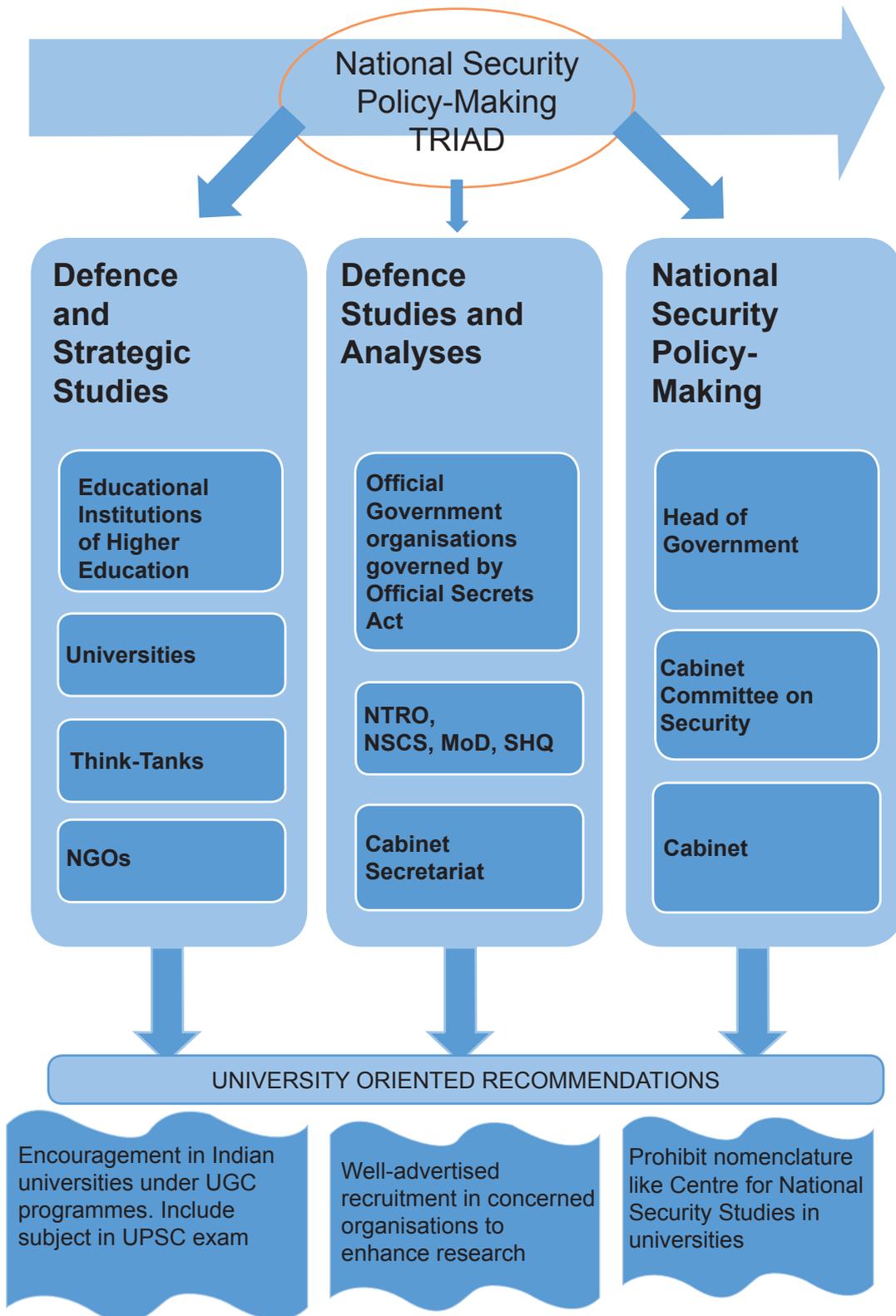
### Conclusion

Strengthening the national security architecture will be possible if the triad of Defence and Strategic Studies, Defence Studies and Analyses and National Security Policy-making become inter-dependent organically, intellectually, professionally and systemically. It also needs to be emphasised that "doctrine" as a term is loosely used. Doctrine is the crystallisation of concepts that in due course have the potential to yield policies. Also, there is an urgent need to compile a suitable lexicon of terms to be used in the domain of security and strategic studies. If India has to play its rightful role in global politics as a major power, then it is essential for her to develop world class human resources specialised in national security affairs.

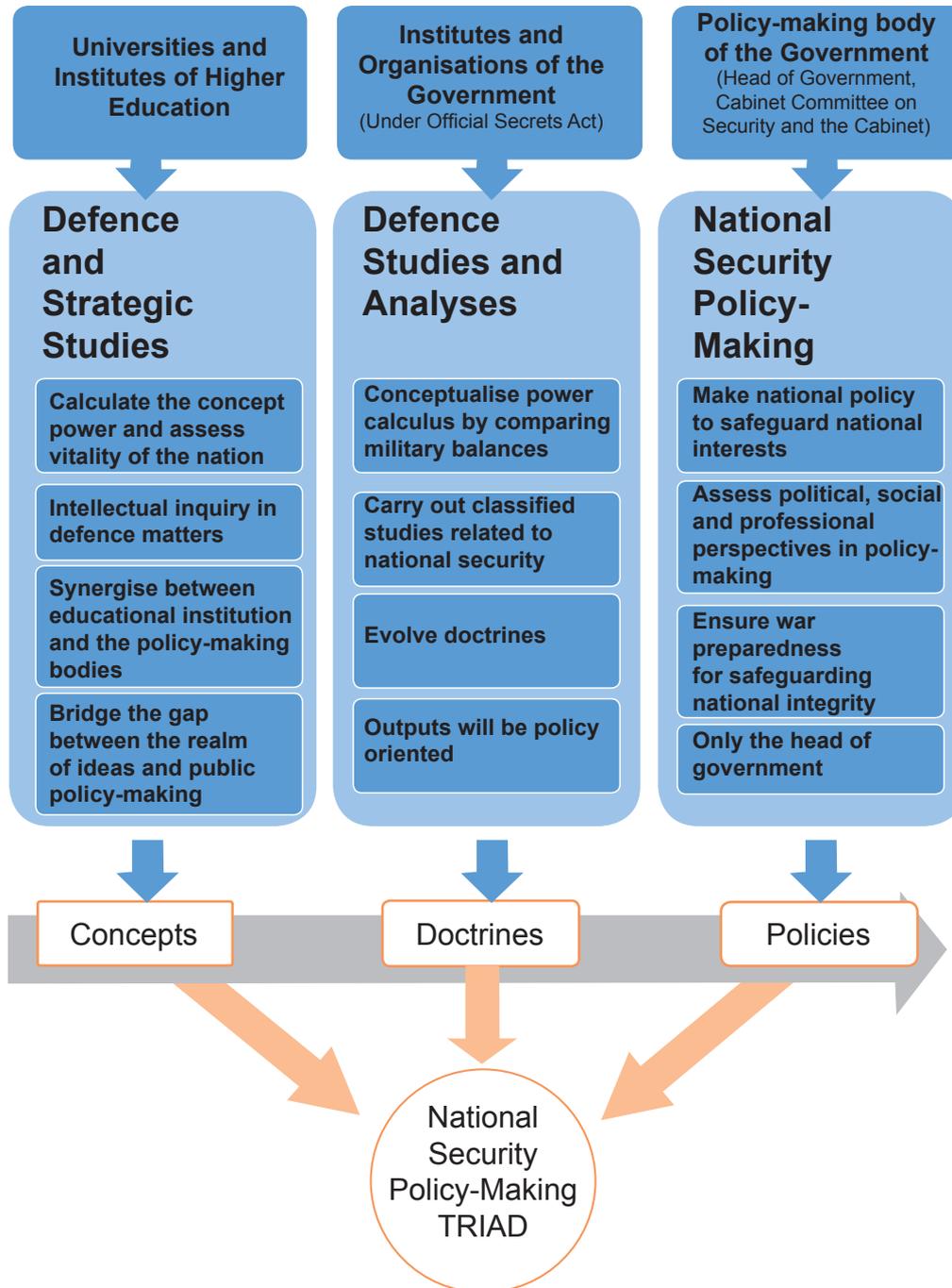
### Notes

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**The Indian Context: Constituting the Triad**



## ... Policy-Making in India



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