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Naxalism & The Challenge to the Internal Security of India

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ABSTRACT

The strife of Naxalism has been a consistent threat to Indian internal security. Their opposition to the State has been mired in their violent means and repressive strategies to counter the counter-terrorism efforts of the paramilitary forces. This paper aims to provide an overview of their motivations and the threat posed by them to safety and security of the distressed rural hinterlands they have captured to grow the expanse of their movement.

I. INTRODUCTION

Strife and struggle in a democracy are legitimate means of protest. In the land of Gandhi – democratic means and protest have certain constitutional bounds. The ‘rule of law’ is the cornerstone of contemporary Indian society. These values were promoted and defended by the dedicated men and women of the freedom struggle and the intelligentsia of the Constituent Assembly of India. All ideologies are allowed to flourish in a liberal democratic system where institutions take precedence over the bleak rough and tumble of ideologies and politics. Ideologies exist wither to promote the national cause or to destruct it, regardless of what the ends might espouse.

The Naxalist movement and its aims have been contrary to the letter and spirit of the rule of law, democratic principles and the pious values of our freedom struggle. A Naxalite is a person who finds his allegiance with the Communist Party of India (Marxist – Leninist) [“CPI (ML)”]. The CPI (ML) was founded in the erstwhile city of Calcutta, West Bengal (now, Kolkata) in 1969. ‘Naxal’ is a unique and peculiar name which is derived from the village *Naxalbari* in West Bengal. The paradoxical struggle of the Naxal movement remains their pursuit to fight a ‘protracted people’s war’ through an armed struggle to capture political power.² Their alignments and engagement with paramilitary forces have led them to organise

¹ Author is a Student at National Law University, Jodhpur.

² Status Paper on Left-wing Extremism in India presented by Shri Shivraj Patil MP, Hon. Union Minister of Home Affairs, Government of India, March 13, 2006, available at https://www.satp.org/satporgtip/countries/india/document/papers/06mar13_naxal%20problem%20.html

themselves on military lines.³ They are also acquiring contemporary weapons and they are resolute in their goals to expand and sophisticate the technology being put to use for their agenda and ‘war’.

The struggle found its epicentre in West Bengal, a state at odds with its government and known for the frequent *bandhs* and anarchy which it was subject to in the early years of independence. An armed struggle to counter and curb the ‘tyranny of the state’ as was preached by the Naxal forebearers found an easy audience and committed following among destitute masses who bore the brunt of Partition and were subject to semi-human treatment. Ramachandra Guha in his gospel of contemporary Indian history, *India After Gandhi* has recorded the rather apathetic conditions of refugees in West Bengal,⁴ the natural consequence remains that there are many committed followers to be found for armed conflict where the seductive dogmas of left-wing fanatics can prevail.

The struggle may have had its epicentre in Bengal, but the phenomenon of Naxalism spread its tentacles all across the underdeveloped eastern and southern parts of the Indian Union. As this paper is being drafted, it is prevalent across an expanse of land known as the ‘Red Corridor’ in academic circles and popular reference. As on November 22, 2016, there are 106 districts across 10 states where ‘left-wing extremism’ [“LWE”] (the Government’s nomenclature of Naxalism and other sister armed struggles) remains prevalent.⁵ The states include Andhra Pradesh with 8 districts, Bihar with 22 districts, Chhattisgarh with 16 districts, Jharkhand with 21 districts, Madhya Pradesh with 1 district, Maharashtra with 4 districts, Odisha with 19 districts, Telangana with 8 districts, Uttar Pradesh with 3 districts and West Bengal with 4 districts.⁶ It is evident that the states where the Naxalist movement has gained ground are underdeveloped states where the GDP and per-capita income remain low. The states which are otherwise considered prosperous have some distressed districts where the arms of the State have not reached effectively. States such as Maharashtra which have a steady GDP and growth trajectory finds themselves tacking the menace in agrarian districts like Chandrapur and Gadchiroli where farmer suicides are rife. The plausible explanation for these statistics, in my opinion remain that the plausible alternative in

(accessed on May 28, 2020 at 01:54 pm).

³ Id.

⁴ See Dr. Ramachandra Guha, *INDIA AFTER GANDHI*, 90-91, 127, 137, 322, 397, 737, 10th edition (New Delhi: Pan Macmillan India, 2018).

⁵ Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Parliament Section, Starred Question 86 by Shri Laxman Giluwa MP & Shri Ram Tahal Choudhary MP answered by Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir MP, Hon. Union Minister of State, Ministry of Home Affairs, 22 November, 2016, available at <https://www.mha.gov.in/MHA1/Par2017/pdfs/par2016-pdfs/ls-221116/86.pdf> (accessed on May 28, 2020 at 02:30 pm).

⁶ Id. at Annexure-I.

illiterate, uneducated and disillusioned minds is found in armed struggle against the State, since the indoctrination of radical Maoist fanaticism is served to the youth in these areas on the platter.

The Government of India has been deploying paramilitary forces and security apparatus to tackle Naxalism and the threats to civilians and daily life due to the extremist incursions. The Ministry of Home Affairs has adopted a cooperative federal approach from the start to confer and coalesce with states which have been victims of the armed conflict. The Ministry has adopted an approach called 'SAMADHAN' to meet the challenge.⁷ The pillars of this approach according to the National Policy and Action Plan are smart policing and leadership, aggressive strategy, motivation and training, actionable intelligence, dashboard for development and key performance indicators, action plan for each theatre and no access to financing.⁸ In the same breadth, the Government has claimed that 2014-onwards there has been a reduction in incidents by 25 per cent, a reduction in deaths caused by LWE by 42 per cent, an increase in elimination of LWE cadres by 65 per cent and finally, an impressive increase in surrenders by LWE cadres to the tune of an astounding 185 per cent.⁹ These statistics make for a fruitful analysis of the cause and consequences of such insurgencies.

This paper shall commence with an outline of the history and leadership of Naxalism; the growth and dissemination of the phenomenon; funding and financing of the insurgency; state action and the way forward with conclusions.

A critical part of the paper shall be criticism of the Government's policies and initiatives to politically resolve the matter and bring a halt to the menace of Naxalism.

II. BACKGROUND OF NAXALISM

The background of tribal unrest remains in the flawed policies of the British in the rural areas and their apathetic stance against the *Adivasis*. The onset of confrontation with the establishment (the British Raj) begun in February 1910 with the overt rebellion of the tribals in Bastar (a princely state in Bihar) against the platoon posted in the state.¹⁰ This event has found legend among the milestones of tribal history in India, known as the 'Bhumkal',¹¹ it is

⁷ Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Pre-empt Prevent Protect – Security with Sensitivity (National Policy and Action Plan – 2015), available at https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/Keyinitiatives_07062017.pdf (accessed on May 28, 2020 at 03:18 pm).

⁸ Id. at 8.

⁹ Id. at 10.

¹⁰ Ajay Verghese, *British Rule and Tribal Revolts in India: The curious case of Bastar*, Modern Asian Studies 50, 5 (2016) 1620, DOI: 10.1017/S0026749X14000687.

¹¹ R. Ray, *THE NAXALITES AND THEIR IDEOLOGY*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002).

still a narrative that incenses the young tribals who are influenced and indoctrinated by the contemporary Naxal movement. Rural unrest was rife in colonial India and the rights of *Adivasis* like many Indians were non-existent; these have been documented brilliantly by Indian and British scholars (some devoted to the cause of human rights of the tribal populace) in literature available to all Indians to peruse in the contemporary times.¹² The disruption to the tribal lifestyle and oppression coupled with state apathy was never a feature as widespread and prevalent as was introduced by the British and outdid the oppression of the tribals by the Mughals.¹³ These never surfaced for very long and they found a credible, courageous and committed spokesman in Jaipal Singh, the luminary who took the struggle to the Constituent Assembly, his efforts bore fruition in the Constitution's and Indian Union's commitment to the cause of the tribals.¹⁴

Anti-state and anti-establishment sympathies among the tribal population were raging in the 'first-three quarters of British rule' and 'until the very end of the nineteenth century'; these ranged from local riots to war-like campaigns.¹⁵ Policy action was never affirmative or even remotely directed towards the prosperity or marginal growth of tribal society rather they were consistently diverted to oppress, repress, exploit and stifle. The rural economy saw debilitating destruction of traditional structures which had helped support its unique equilibrium of sorts for centuries together. Destruction followed an agenda of commandeering forest lands, increased rural taxation which culminated in the discontent and antipathy,¹⁶ as has been noted in this paragraph.

It would be unfair, however, to hold the tribal devoid of credence for the continuity of their struggle (within the means of the Constitution, as should be construed for the purposes of this opinion) after independence in 1947. The tribal conflict was resolute since the Government of India, having attained *Swaraj* did not bother to reform a number of colonial-era policies, especially those dealing with forestry which were critical for the tribals' homegrown, self-sustaining economy.¹⁷ These conflicts were perpetuated by government inaction throughout the country but especially in areas that were directly under the erstwhile Raj like Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. It was against this backdrop in independent India, which was a dream of each Indian including the tribals who longed for salvation under the governance and

¹² Kathleen Gough, *Indian Peasant Uprisings*, Economic and Political Weekly (EPW) 9:32, 1391-1412 (1974).

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ Dr. Ramachandra Guha, *supra* note 2 at 114, 262-4, 266.

¹⁵ Ranajit Guha, *ELEMENTARY ASPECTS OF PEASANT INSURGENCY IN COLONIAL INDIA*, (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1999).

¹⁶ Ajay Verghese, *supra* note 9 at 1621.

¹⁷ Dr. Ramachandra Guha, *Forestry in British and Post-British India: A Historical Analysis*, Economic and Political Weekly (EPW) 18:45-46, 1940-47 (1983).

sovereignty of their tricolour that Naxalite movement became the principal vehicle of their struggle for rights and privileges to save their unique economy and culture among other objectives to alleviate social backwardness.¹⁸ The bottom-line of the Naxalite movement's perpetuity lay in the Government of India's inept handling of the crises and their continuation of the colonial policies which were a setback to the expectations and aspirations of the tribal populations in the core areas of Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar and Odisha which has come to inhabit a sizeable tribal population in key districts.

The post-colonial stance of forest management remained and remains disheartening. Dr. Ramachandra Guha, in his piece for the Economic and Political Weekly has succinctly noted that the organising principles of the British Raj have been inherited and imbibed by successive governments and instead of ensuring that these policies and structures do not perpetuate, these have been 'further strengthened'.¹⁹ In addition, he has scathingly criticised forest resource management strategies of the post-colonial state for accelerating 'state authority over forest resources'.²⁰

The Government of India does not have any precise statistics to point toward the demographic and social constitution of the cadres of the Naxalites. Speculative enough, scholars have concluded to their satisfaction that with the exception of Jharkhand (where the rural elite have been known to participate in the Naxalite movement)²¹, Naxalists are mostly from the impoverished and downtrodden tribal communities which constitute bulk of the Scheduled Tribes.²² It would not be far from true to assert that the belief of discontent and disillusionment with the forest policies of the Government of India has been key to perpetuate the conflict. This has been accepted by policy experts and senior bureaucrats who have been positions where the strategy of countering the struggle was firmly their mandate.²³ As was observed in the introduction, Naxalites include themselves and their sister struggles. These groups operate on a scheme of intense guerrilla warfare which requires consistent funds in contemporary times for them to weigh the risk of competing with the paramilitary forces which have manual and machine might, much superior and sophisticated compared to the

¹⁸ Ajay Verghese, *supra* note 9 at 1621.

¹⁹ Dr. Ramachandra Guha, *supra* note 16 at 1940.

²⁰ *Id.*, See also Richard Haeuber, *Indian Forestry Policy in Two Eras: Continuity or Change?*, *Environmental History Review*, 17:1, 49-50 (1993).

²¹ Alpa Shah, *Alcoholics Anonymous: The Maoist Movement in Jharkhand, India*, *Modern Asian Studies* 45:5, 1005-1117.

²² *Hindustan Times*, History of Naxalism, December 15, 2005, available at <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india/history-of-naxalism/story-4f1rZukARGYn3qHOqDMEbM.html> (accessed on May 29, 2020 at 11:52 am).

²³ See *Times of India*, Maoists looking at armed overthrow of state', March 6, 2010, available at <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Maoists-looking-at-armed-overthrow-of-state-by-2050/articleshow/5648742.cms> (accessed on May 29, 2020 at 12:02 pm).

insurgents. As has been noted earlier, the number of troops operating across states has been recorded by the Government at 106 districts across 10 states in 2016;²⁴ which remains at odds with the estimates of scholars writing academic literature on the subject as Ajay Verghese in the Modern Asian Studies periodical where he estimates the presence of Naxalite cadres ‘roughly [in] 180 districts’²⁵. Since, the Government is bound by privilege and the sanctity of Parliament, the author shall rely on the figures of the Ministry of Home Affairs for the purposes of this paper.

III. NAXALISM AND COMMUNISM – FRATERNAL TWINS

In a nutshell, the Naxalites have been conceived from the womb of the Indian communist movement. The Indian communists have been convoluted, if it were in terms of political euphemism. Their electoral footprint has largely found space in the southern state of Kerala and the eastern state of West Bengal, where they governed for 34 years, uninterrupted. The Communists faced severe resistance from the State and particularly the first-Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.²⁶

The first overtures of left-wing extremism in 1948, which were uncannily similar to those of the Naxalists were led by B.T. Ranadive who called for a ‘mounting revolutionary upsurge’.²⁷ Ranadive derived ideological strength and dangerous inspiration from Mao Zedong and his hazardous ‘Great Leap Forward’. The intensity and anti-democratic tendencies of the Communists can be measured by the calls promulgated by Ranadive imploring his ‘comrades’ to ‘turn your guns and bayonets and fire upon the Congress fascists’ (sic); the ultimate aim being ‘destroy the murderous Congress government’ (sic).²⁸ It is rather simple to draw parallels to the ideological strength and legacy of the Naxalist movement starting with Ranadive, at the birth of the Indian republic. This incipient threat was met with ‘all the force’ at the government’s command. The government launched a fierce propaganda war against the communists, which was led by the military governor of Hyderabad, J.N. Chaudhuri.²⁹ This state-led assault on the communists bore fruit and the membership of the Communist Party dropped from a whopping 89,000 to a frugal 20,000 two years later.³⁰ Two years hence, the

²⁴ Ministry of Home Affairs, *supra* note 4.

²⁵ Ajay Verghese, *supra* note 9 at 1626.

²⁶ Dr. Ramachandra Guha, *supra* note 3 at 96-97.

²⁷ *Id.* at 96.

²⁸ Gene D. Overstreet & Marshall Windmiller, COMMUNISM IN INDIA, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), Chapter 13 as cited in Dr. Ramachandra Guha, INDIA AFTER GANDHI, 799, 10th edition (New Delhi: Pan Macmillan India, 2018).

²⁹ Dr. Ramachandra Guha, *supra* note 3 at 96.

³⁰ Amit Kumar Gupta, THE AGRARIAN DRAMA: THE LEFTISTS AND THE RURAL POOR IN INDIA 1934-51, (New Delhi: Manohar, 1996), 464-5 as cited in Dr. Ramachandra Guha, INDIA AFTER GANDHI, 799, 10th edition (New

Communist Party of India reinvented its political conscious and eschewed violent revolution and participated in parliamentary politics in 1951. This led to a split in the organisation with the founding of the Communist Party of India, Marxist.³¹ This was followed by another fracture which laid the founding of the Communist Party of India, Marxist-Leninist [“CPI (ML)”] in 1967.³² It may be noted that most contemporary Naxalists originate from the CPI (ML). They draw Mao Zedong as their inspiration and ideological anchor and take cue from his strategy – armed and political from the Chinese Civil War.

(A) Stages of Naxalist Growth

There are broadly three phases in which the systemic growth of Naxalist ideology and movement can be traced.³³ The **first** – 1967-1975, as has been observed earlier in the first two segments of the paper, the Naxalist movement found its epicentre in West Bengal.³⁴ The campaign against the State found itself taking an armed position and stance which was against the principles of independent India. The beginning of the Naxal campaign dates back to 1967 as an uprising of peasants against landlords in 1967 in Naxalbari, a village in West Bengal.³⁵ The important record of history lay in the leadership attributed to this uprising which shall help us understand and trace the roots of the stewardship that the movement found. History has taught us that any armed struggle for aims, right or wrong always depends on the success and charisma of its leadership. The leadership must have the moral currency to exact popular support and capture the imagination of the public mind. Few can imagine and hypothesise the culmination of the campaign for the liberation of erstwhile-East Pakistan (now, Bangladesh) without the Awami League and its popular, charismatic leader *Bangabandhu* Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The Naxalite movement was not bereft of a patriarch of sorts, it was not orphaned much to our disdain. The carnage against the landlords in Naxalbari was led by one Charu Majumdar, ‘the nominal founder of the Naxalites’³⁶. The peasants who opposed the landlords and rose up in arms against them were comprised mostly of the *Santhals*,³⁷ and the *Adivasis* were integral to the uprising.³⁸ The uprising died a consequent death by the onset of 1975; the grit and

Delhi: Pan Macmillan India, 2018).

³¹ Ajay Verghese, *supra* note 9 at 1626.

³² *Id.*

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ *See* Introduction.

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ Ajay Verghese, *supra* note 9 at 1626-27.

³⁷ *Id.*

³⁸ Edward Duyker, TRIBAL GUERRILLAS: THE SANTHALS OF WEST BENGAL AND THE NAXALITE MOVEMENT, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987) as cited in Alpa Shah, *Alcoholics Anonymous: The Maoist Movement in Jharkhand, India*, *Modern Asian Studies* 45:5, 1103.

determination of the peasants, however, persisted for very long and the movement they started in Naxalbari lasted 8 years. **Second**, The fragmentation of these groups who would be called Maoist since the epithet 'Naxal' was not attached by academics and did not breed familiarity with the colloquial tongue, carried on from 1975-2000.³⁹ This fragmentation led to lack of coordination as an obvious consequence and hampered their ability to conduct attacks and military-like action against the State. **Third**, the decade from 2000-2010 marked the beginning of a reinvigorated movement led by hardliners who were [and have been determined as this paper is being written to wage war and civil unrest to subvert the State] committed to the cause of subverting the State in the 'Red Corridor'⁴⁰ and had in the previous decade come to pose a substantial threat to political stability in the affected states.⁴¹

IV. CHALLENGES TO INTERNAL SECURITY

The reinvigoration of the Naxal movement got further push with the coming together of the largest Naxalite factions in 2004, the Maoist Communist Centre and the People's War Group to form the united front Communist Party of India, Maoist.⁴²

The alarm of the Naxal insurgency can be appreciated by the acknowledgement it found in the then Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh's comment where he called it "the single biggest internal security challenge faced by our country" and that the country was losing the war to them after a spate of attacks and insurgent strikes.⁴³ The Prime Minister's apprehensions and concern were not unfounded, these can be corroborated with concurring views of academics well-versed with the subject. Professor Dipak K. Gupta is rather liberal with his analysis, according to his estimate Naxalists in 2010-11 controlled one-fifth of the Indian land mass, in all fairness, he has presented evidence by means of a representative map released by the Institute of Conflict Management.⁴⁴

³⁹ Time, India's Secret War, May 29, 2008, available at <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1810169-1,00.html> (accessed on May 30, 2020 at 12:04 pm).

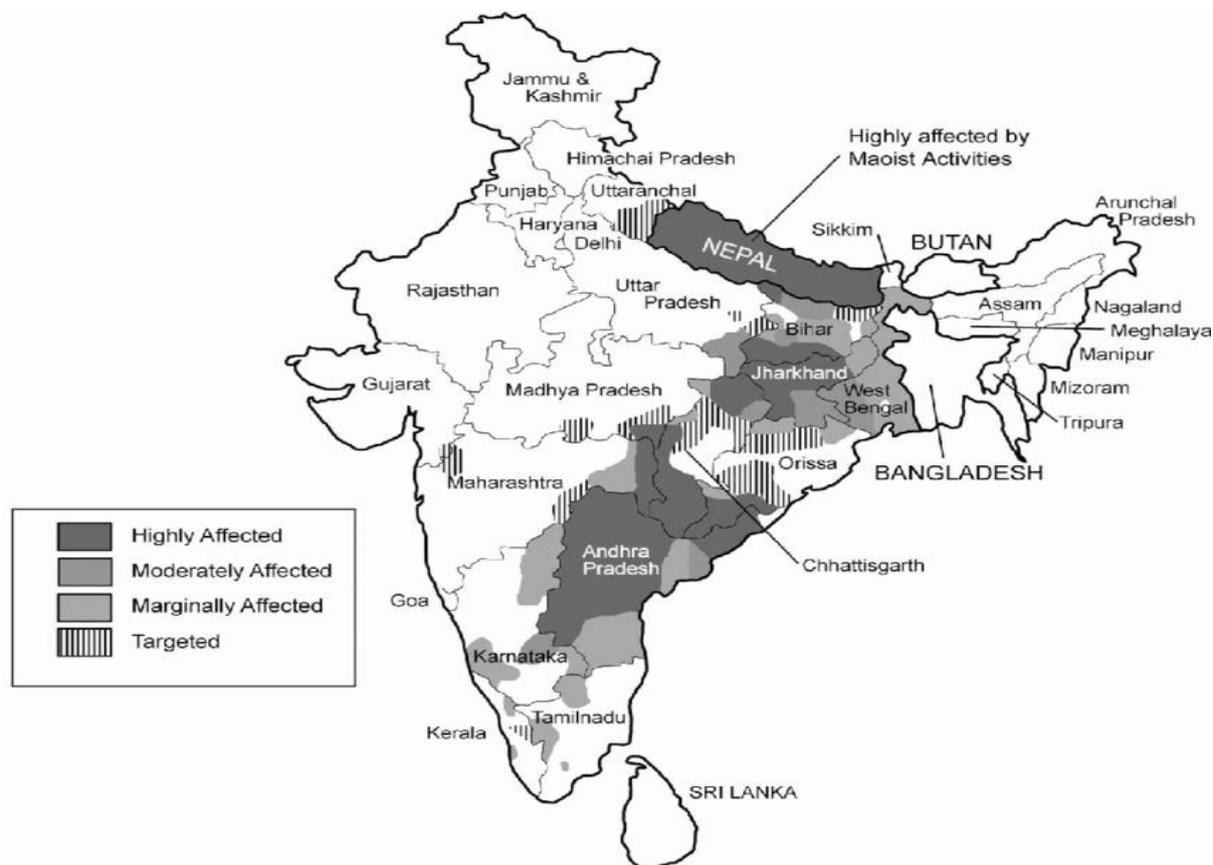
⁴⁰ See 'Introduction' for a perspective on the Red Corridor.

⁴¹ Time, *supra* note 38.

⁴² Alpa Shah, *supra* note 20 at 1104.

⁴³ The Hindu, Naxalism biggest threat to internal security: Manmohan, May 24, 2010, available at <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/Naxalism-biggest-threat-to-internal-security-Manmohan/article16302952.ece> (accessed on May 30, 2020 at 12:27 pm); Government of India, Press Information Bureau, Prime Minister's Speech to the 2nd Meeting of the Standing Committee of Chief Ministers on Naxalism, available at http://pib.nic.in/release/re1_print_page.asp?relid=17128 (accessed on May 30, 2020 at 12:48 pm).

⁴⁴ Dipak K. Gupta, *The Naxalites and the Maoist Movement in India: Birth, Demise, and Reincarnation*, Democracy and Security, 3:2, 157-188, 158, DOI: 10.1080/17419160701374911; *infra* note 44.



Adapted from the Institute of Conflict Management

Figure 1 – Naxalite affected swaths of Indian territory (2005-2006)⁴⁵

The magnitude of this challenge can never be fully appreciated until we encourage the press to freely report and express their opinion on the crisis brewing in the Red Corridor, this is true of any issue facing this democratic nation, but specifically, this issue should be covered without the self-censorship that the media is subjecting itself to. Arundhati Roy's well-known piece for Outlook has extensively given us an insight into the depth and gravity of the crisis.⁴⁶ Ms. Roy has recorded in her essay, the complete collapse of the structure and machinery of the State in the Naxal-ridden areas. Parallel governments and the gerrymandering done by the Naxalists is of a different kind, it is not for any political benefit rather it is a military strategy. There are local structures that have been set up replacing those of the State; schools have been set up and courts are administering justice to peasants by making the eerie landlords and

⁴⁵ Id. at 158.

⁴⁶ See Arundhati Roy, *Walking With The Comrades*, March 29, 2010, Outlook, available at <https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/walking-with-the-comrades/264738> (accessed on May 30, 2020 at 03:00 pm).

moneylenders suffer immense retribution.⁴⁷ Military-style weaponry and sophisticated explosives aid them,⁴⁸ in the pursuit of this armed tinpot government. Travelling from districts which are controlled by the Naxalites to any other adjoining or neighbouring district is a herculean task.⁴⁹

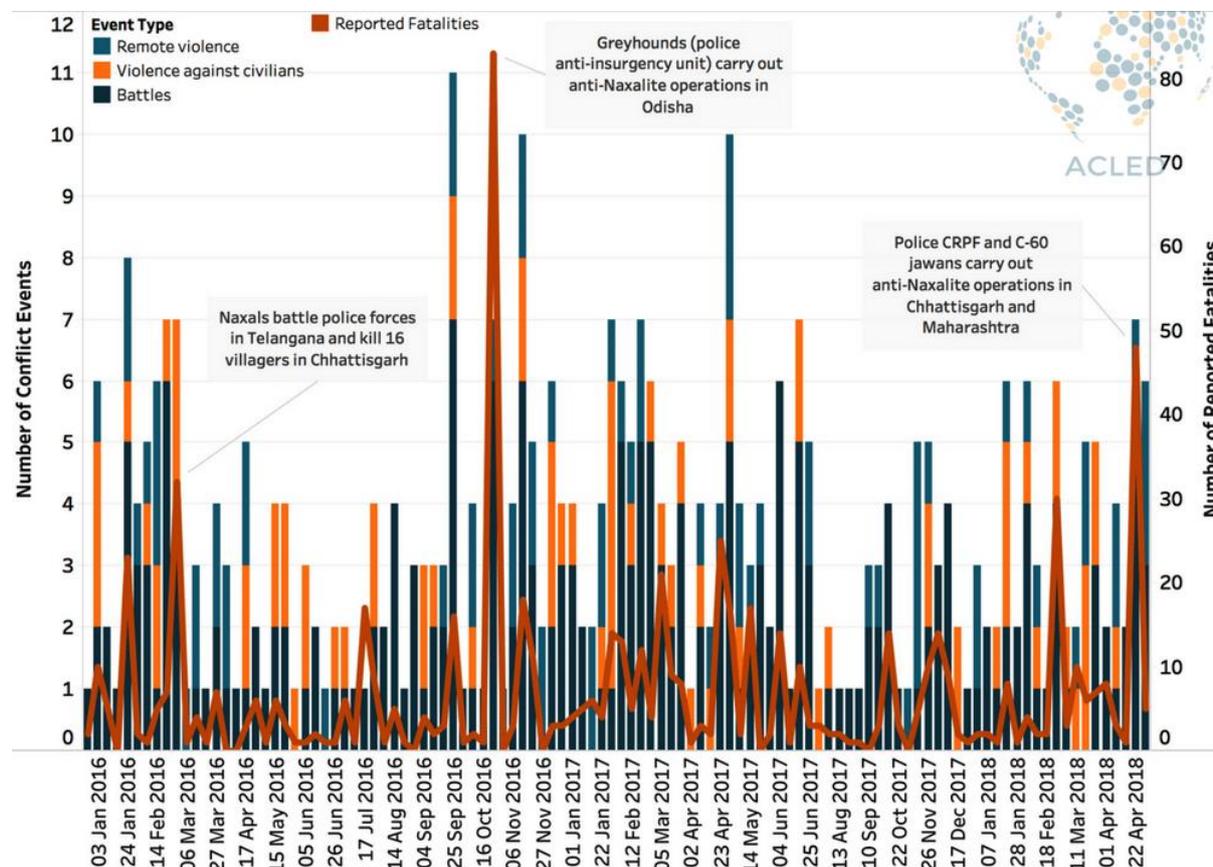


Figure 2 - Conflict Events and Reported Fatalities Involving Naxalite - Maoists (01.01.2016-05.05.2018)⁵⁰

There has been a surge in violence due to Naxalism and other forms of LWI. Figure 2 from Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project [“ACLED”] paints a grim picture when juxtaposed with the figures released by the Ministry of Home Affairs.⁵¹ The Government claims a reduction of 25 per cent in incidents and 42 per cent in deaths due to LWI, while the figure by ACLED claims otherwise. It may be observed prima facie, that the discrepancy is not a narrow deficit rather a widening gulf. The statistics by independent think tanks and academic organisations is in stark contrast to the official narrative and statistics. If there were

⁴⁷ Id.

⁴⁸ Id.

⁴⁹ Ajay Verghese, *supra* note 9 at 1627.

⁵⁰ Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, Naxalite – Maoist Conflict in India 1 January 2016 to Present, available at <https://acleddata.com/2018/05/10/naxalite-maoist-conflict-in-india-1-january-2016-to-present/> (accessed on May 30, 2020 at 03:23 pm).

⁵¹ Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, *supra* note 6.

an increase in surrenders by LWE cadres amounting to 185 per cent, the upsurge in 2016 attributed to the Greyhounds would have a different story to tell.⁵² In addition to the counter-insurgency plan 'SAMADHAN'⁵³, the Government must introspect and resolve to maintain an honest, credible and transparent approach in the official reportage related to Naxalism. It has been proven more often than not, that under-reporting of figures and scuttling of data has led to disastrous and cataclysmic consequences since the people of the states where Naxalism is spreading its tentacles would downplay the threat posed by the insurgent extremists. Combatting and countering the extremism cannot be left to the Government and its exclusive domain, to defeat a movement so sinister and entrenched, the State must cooperate and win popular confidence.

The initiatives launched by the Government of India and by various state governments involved in the conflict have to be centred around the development of the affected areas to evince faith of the people in the State and its abilities. Armed conflicts can be suppressed and quietened with military might, but the ideological convictions persist and perpetuate. The focus should obviously be concentrated on the alleviation of poverty and illiteracy. An assault of poverty would make lives more meaningful and better to live for the downtrodden who are, at this point, a currency for the extremists. It has to be noted and considered that under-expenditure by States is an acute and pressing problem which needs to be rectified. The devolution of funds should be centred on the ability or initiative of the States to spend them; if a certain state lacks initiative in expenditure, as a consequence the devolution should be done and administered by the Centre and none else. Chhattisgarh has 10 districts included in the Red Corridor.⁵⁴ The Government of India disbursed ₹32.89 crores under the aegis of the Special Infrastructure Scheme ["SIS"], the Government of Chhattisgarh's expenditure in November 2016 lay at an apologetic low of ₹96 lakhs.⁵⁵ The funds devolved to states under the SIS were to be used for 'funding upgradation of infrastructure, training, weaponry, equipment and vehicles'.⁵⁶ The lack of expenditure is a textbook case of government apathy towards the situation; lack of initiative to provide inertia to the development of these underdeveloped districts only perpetuates the crisis and breeds contempt for the State in the psyche of the impoverished and unfortunate.

⁵² See Figure 2.

⁵³ Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, *supra* note 6.

⁵⁴ Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Parliament Section, *supra* note 4.

⁵⁵ *Id.* at 2 of Annexure-II.

⁵⁶ *Id.*

V. FUNDING OF NAXALISTS & BROAD CONTOURS IN JHARKHAND

The urgency of the crisis is felt since the previous decade has seen the Prime Minister acknowledging Naxalism as the single biggest threat to India's internal security.⁵⁷ The funding of Naxals has been an intriguing question for laymen and sometimes, experts. Famously, the DGP of the Chhattisgarh Police claimed that the funding of the Naxal cadres was ₹2,000 crores upwards.⁵⁸ The claims might be trumped-up, nevertheless, a crucial understanding of this crisis lay in the flow of funds which is perennial and not intermittent.

The trickling of funds in the early days of the reinvigoration,⁵⁹ was dependent on the raiding of police outposts in the areas where the extremism was steady.⁶⁰ Anil Kamboj in his answer notes that this led to an increased sense of confidence in the extremists and they graduated to 'raiding the armoury and ambushing the police and security force patrol parties to loot / snatch their arms, ammunition and equipments, like bullet proof jackets, night vision devices, communication sets, etc.'⁶¹ (sic).

There has been a marked diversion in ideological and ethical positions of the past within the Naxal movement.⁶² Dr. Prakash has observed that these diversions have been dictated by circumstances such as the authoritative and committed spread of the extremist ideology they wish to affect. The author may hasten to add that the diversion and forgiving stance of the leadership to accomplish its aim remains rather simple – the greater the aim, the more the funds.

The estimations of the funds received by the Maoists pan-India are startling. Key officials at the Centre and in the States have estimated high numbers for the funds. An arrested member of the CPI(M)'s Central Committee admitted an inflow of about ₹1,000 crores in 2007.⁶³ The hardest hit in terms of inflow of funds is Jharkhand (estimated at ₹2,000 crores) followed by West Bengal and Chhattisgarh (at alarming levels); Bihar and Andhra Pradesh (lesser than the others).⁶⁴

⁵⁷ The Hindu, *supra* note 47.

⁵⁸ Times of India, Extortnomics: Maoists raise Rs 2,000 crore every year, February 15, 2011, available at <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Extortnomics-Maoists-raise-Rs-2000-crore-every-year/articleshow/7498493.cms> (accessed on June 1, 2020 at 11:20 am).

⁵⁹ See generally Naxalism and Communism – Fraternal Twins (the third segment of this paper).

⁶⁰ Anil Kamboj, Nishant Turan asked: How and from where do the Naxalites procure their weapons?, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, available at <https://idsa.in/askanexpert/Naxalitesprocuretheirweapons> (accessed on June 1, 2020 at 11:28 am).

⁶¹ Id.

⁶² Dr. Om Prakash, *Funding Pattern in the Naxal Movement in Contemporary India*, Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Vol. 76, 900-907, 900 (2015).

⁶³ Id.

⁶⁴ Id.

The funding of the Naxalists now depends on strong-arm tactics,⁶⁵ adopted by unleashing a reign of terror among innocent people doing business and intimidating wealthy business refusing to toe the line of the extremists. It is evident that big corporations and wealthy individuals in the States affected by the menace are endowing these organisations generously to ensure that there is intermittent disturbance and widespread lawlessness which they intend to use for meeting their own ends.

Jharkhand and the apathy of the State

The major statistic to be followed and understood is the gargantuan proportions the extremism has reached in the tribal-majority State of Jharkhand. This state was dreamt of by the legendary *Adivasi* leader Jaipal Singh as a symbol of inclusion of the tribal communities in the Indian political system and broader social milieu.⁶⁶

Jharkhand has had a politically tenuous past since its establishment in 2001. The Chief Ministers have been corrupt and the administration, largely defunct. The creation of the state remained, in my personal opinion, a cartographic exercise in vain since for long, the State did not see any substantial development. The popular opinion in the rest of the country has also maintained the steady reputation of the Government of Jharkhand being a paper-tiger which has not brought about any substantial development for its citizens.

The ironic stance of successive governments in the State has remained apathetic to the demands and sensitivities of tribal communities. The state has been led by Chief Ministers belonging to tribal communities for the most part, but they have been unable and probably unwilling to act with alacrity against the menace of LWE and Naxalism. The funding of the extremists has only risen due to inaction. In 2014, the eclectic fervour for the Bharatiya Janata Party [“**BJP**”] catapulted the party to power in the Vidhan Sabha with a majority in the House.⁶⁷ The leadership of the BJP had an unconventional choice for Chief Minister in Raghubar Das, largely associated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [“**RSS**”] and an inept administrator with no prior experience. The Raghubar Das-led government failed to meet the basic objectives that they pronounced during the elections and subsequently amended the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, 1908 and the Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act, 1949.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ See Dr. Om Prakash, *supra* note 61.

⁶⁶ See Dr. Ramachandra Guha, *supra* note 3 at 114, 262-64, 266.

⁶⁷ Election Commission of India, New Delhi, Detailed Statistical Report on [the] General [E]lection, 2014 to the Legislative Assembly of Jharkhand, August 20, 2018, available at <https://eci.gov.in/files/file/3787-jharkhand-2014/> (accessed on June 1, 2020 at 12:18 pm).

⁶⁸ See DownToEarth, Amendments to century-old laws on tribal rights spark protests in Jharkhand, November 24, 2016, available at <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/governance/amendments-to-century-old-tribal-rights-laws-spark-protests-in-jharkhand-56411> (accessed on June 1, 2020 at 12:24 pm).

According to activists, the amendments ‘benefit only corporate interests’.⁶⁹ The resentment against the state government intensified with state-wide *bandhs* and a near-complete breakdown of law and order.⁷⁰ This defeated the spirit with which the State of Jharkhand was ambitiously established. The ruling party was voted out of office with the Chief Minister losing his own seat in his pocket borough Jamshedpur East constituency.⁷¹

The amendments to the Chotanagpur and Santhal Pargana Acts,⁷² relate to the menace of LWE since the Naxals are being handed an opportunity by the political class to radicalise unemployed, poor and distressed youth in the tribal areas and recruit them in the armed cadres. The State is defeated not in the armed battles but in the ideological battle which is naturally ordained to be won by democracy. Democracy and India fail when the State and civil society collectively sleep over the rights and interests to disadvantaged marginalised communities such as *Adivasis*.

VI. CONCLUSION – ONWARD, AN ASSAULT ON EXTREMISM

The assault on extremism shall begin not with the might of the paramilitary forces but with the fervent power of persuasion. The State has to take the mantle of winning the hearts and minds of the distressed people who have long been currency for the Maoist extremists to fulfil their sinister aims of defeating democracy and establishing a tinpot Communist state. The governments of States and the Centre need to collectively ensure that the schemes such as the SIS are effective, and under-utilisation of funds should not be a phenomenon. If the spread of Naxalism is not brought about by fervent radicalisation by themselves, the lethargy and lax attitude of state governments shall ensure that doomsday is not far from where India stands today.

The Naxalists have graduated in every direction, the use of technology is an alarming distinction they have earned through the years. The Maoists have been coalescing with insurgent and terror organisations such as the United Liberation Front of Assam [“ULFA”] and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam [“LTTE”].⁷³ Borders need to be effectively managed with strategies that counter the insurgents’ procurement across the borders shared

⁶⁹ Anumeha Yadav, Scroll.in, In Jharkhand, protests break out over changes to land tenancy law in Adivasi areas, November 26, 2016, available at <https://scroll.in/article/822586/in-jharkhand-protests-break-out-over-changes-to-land-tenancy-law-in-advasi-areas> (accessed on June 1, 2020 at 12:26 pm).

⁷⁰ Id.

⁷¹ Election Commission of India, New Delhi, *supra* note 65.

⁷² By amending sections 49 and 21 of the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, 1908 and section 13 of the Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act, 1949 the State allows agricultural land to be used for non-agricultural purposes. See Anumeha Yadav, Scroll.in, *supra* note 67.

⁷³ Dr. Om Prakash, *The Use of Technology by the Maoists in the Conflict Against the State in India*, Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Vol. 75, 1277-1284, 1277 (2014).

with Pakistan, China, Nepal and Bhutan. Procurements across the border shall be a common cause of concern attributed to the links that the Naxals have established with the Inter-Services Intelligence of Pakistan [“**ISI**”] and ‘groups in Nepal, China and Bhutan’.⁷⁴ The government must retain focus on the looting and raiding of the police and para-military forces’ posts in the Red Corridor since these give impetus to the attacks carried out by the Naxals. The indigenous development of weapons by the Naxals are concerning. In Chhattisgarh, they have used booby traps, crude rockets, activated wireless mines and activated pressure mines.⁷⁵ RDX, an indigenous weapon *tope* and military-style ammunition like AK-47s are in the regular use of the Naxals.⁷⁶

The State needs to formulate policies and strategies that alleviate the fear, resentment and economic distress that is experienced by unfortunate tribals and backward communities who are the main recruits in the Naxal movement. Counterterrorism foils such as the *Salwa Judum* are met with fierce resistance. The credentials of *Salwa Judum* as an armed counterterrorism strategy is clouded with popular doubt, but the collateral damage is ideological resentment which is the root cause of the radicalisation of the youth in the Red Corridor. Their lack of belief in democracy is not by the butt of the bayonet, rather a systemic mindset of resistance. In the short-term initiatives like *Salwa Judum* may be praised, hailed and commended but in the long run – they fail to achieve any objectives and obfuscate the narrative that should focus on winning over the resentment. Governments must endeavour to work in tandem with civil society and formulate programs which shall win people over and not alienate them in the process. Besides, *Salwa Judum* has raised prominent eyebrows regarding violation of human rights and repressive agendas.⁷⁷ According to Professor Gupta, the *Salwa Judum* is a deliberate policy of the Government, which is pursuing it to outsource its responsibility to maintain law and order in the State.⁷⁸ If this observation is true in its substance, this is a dangerous precedent which can have consequences beyond recognition. The Government cannot and ought not to abandon the most fundamental of its responsibilities which is to maintain harmony and ensure that the people can live their daily lives in peace. The *Salwa Judum*, reportedly has been coercing entire villages to either ‘join the struggle against the extremists or face violent retribution.’⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Id. at 1277.

⁷⁵ Id. at 1278.

⁷⁶ Id. at 1278-1279.

⁷⁷ See Nandini Sundar, *Bastar, Maoism, and Salwa Judum*, Economic and Political Weekly, July 22, 2006 at 3187-3192.

⁷⁸ Dipak K. Gupta, *supra* note 43 at 176.

⁷⁹ Id.; See also Dr. Ramachandra Guha, The Telegraph Calcutta, ‘Tribe Against Tribe, Village Against Village:

Consternation is natural when the State abdicates responsibility and functions which are naturally incumbent on it. The State and civil society, together, in unison, need to dispel the darkness. It is peculiarly retributive that independent India which was built on the promise of collective progress and socialist credentials is paying for the sins of its long lost erstwhile colonial master. The master has gone, it is now incumbent, morally and ethically on Sovereign, Socialist and Democratic India to bell the cat. Salwa Judum and other initiatives alike shall not guarantee results in the armed insurgency sphere and ideologically, it harms more than it heals.

Economic development and agrarian progress focused on sustainable and dignified livelihoods for the tribal and backward communities shall be the only solution to this crisis. The states which are victim to this menace have to be resolute in their initiative to crack down on corruption with 'zero tolerance' and ensure that the bureaucracy is effective in these areas. Decentralisation and the purposive implementation of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments should be an effective tool to engage the common masses in local self-government which shall ensure that their interests are catered to and the feeling of participative democracy as an alternative to radical left-wing extremism to no ends can be appreciated by them. The battle is not of the might but the 'mind'.

The ballot must replace the bullet; the darkness will dispel.

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