



Transformation and Friction in a Globalising India

Mapping the Motivations and Local Support

Second National Dialogue on the Naxal Problem

IPCS in collaboration with the NTNU



Report by

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I **THE NAXAL MOVEMENT: MAPPING THE MOTIVATIONS AND LEVEL OF POPULAR SUPPORT**

Understanding the Popular Support

Dr. Nihar Nayak

As the present situation stands, the Maoists have always had only one objective – to capture power by armed struggle and set up what they refer to as “New Democracy”. This in mind they have between an intense to moderate presence in at least 161 districts spread over 9 states. While exact figures are hard to confirm, estimates put their numbers at around 15,000 underground cadres, both men and women in addition to around 3 lakh sympathisers. While the intensity of the movement’s activities has been “managed” somewhat effectively by the government of Andhra Pradesh, it has spread to new areas and with no end in sight it has become the second longest conflict in India

It is unparalleled in its geographical reach covering about one third of India’s landmass. Its support base is extensive, and covers the entire gamut from ideological voluntary to coerced cooperation, consisting of a wide spectrum - intellectuals, tribals, farmers, industrial workers, dalits etc. There has been a steady increase in the level of military and political campaigning which takes many forms including public meetings, economic blockades, protests etc in addition to its military operations. The civil side of this effort is managed through a number of front organisations. One of the military innovations of this movement is that though they do have an urban presence they do not capture urban centres preferring to control the same by dominating the surrounding countryside hence controlling essential supplies to said urban centres. The civil side of the effort also enjoys significant international support due to careful and extremely savvy media management in the form of human rights groups, civil society groups and international aid organisations and NGOs.

The issues raised by the movement involve its opposition to the bourgeois state and its constitution, and is described by its leaders as a movement for “dignity and justice and against unequal development”. To this effect it encompasses a wide variety of related local issues which tend to swell its ranks such as Land, forest, denial of tribal natural rights, poor labour law and discrepancy in wages, displacement, issues related to minority communities and any other issues, where the state has failed to address the same in a successful and timely manner. Moreover given the chronic delays in the Indian justice system, the rampant inequalities and exploitation, the Maoists promise and deliver on their assurances of instant justice, equality and safeguarding of tribal prerogatives. Their cadre structure is divided into four broad categories: The educated who have a formal ideological indoctrination, the less educated (those who have some primary school attendance), the illiterate, and finally children whose indoctrination starts early and is largely informal. Through this structure all cadres are incentivised through a range of non pecuniary as well as pecuniary benefits and are

kept in line by solidarity norms. Also held over their heads are a range of coercive deterrent measures, including the threat of harsh swift punishment, and an imposed delegitimisation and alienation from society by being forced to commit crimes.

In Andhra Pradesh 8 out of 23 districts – concentrated in the north as can be seen from the map – have what can be described as a low level of Maoist influence. The issues here include underdevelopment and unequal distribution of land. Sometimes when such causes are subsumed into a sub-state identity such as the Telangana movement, the Maoists also tag onto the popularity of this issue. Additionally the underdevelopment of Rayalseema and the Northern Coastal regions and tribal rights which are affected by the creation of Special Economic Zones as well as large scale bauxite mining - also play a role in adding fodder to the fuel. It has however been observed that the levels of motivation are low reflected in a depleted support base with the total number of active cadre surprising low at around 122 strong. In Bihar on the other hand 30 out of 37 districts are Maoist affected. As in Andhra the causes of sustained support are similar though more deep rooted. These include underdevelopment and unemployment, opposition to industrialization, the creation of SEZs, unequal distribution of land, exploitation, injustice and indignities heaped on the backward castes and Dalits. The integrated action plan however seems to have culminated in a stalemate situation with the support base among the politically strong Yadav caste dwindling rapidly. Active cadre strength is estimated to be around 1500.

Jharkhand has a total of 18 out of its 24 districts affected by Maoist violence. This can be traced directly to over 100 MoUs signed for exploration of minerals in this mineral rich state. The total displacement of people as a result of this since 1995 has been a staggering 15,03,017 persons in total, and touching upon the common themes of tribal rights, underdevelopment and unemployment among others. Motivation and support base is strong with active cadre strength at around 2,500. In gauging the State's responses, in addition to a fundamental governance deficit, the main identified problem is a lack by the state and central government to diagnose the problem in the first place, with adhoc-ism being the norm till 2001. Since then, however, the government has followed a two pronged strategy that can be described as carrot and stick. The stick end of this comprises police action in the worst affected areas while simultaneously deploying an inclusive development programme in the same. Essentially this incentivises Maoist cadres into the mainstream, while encouraging surrender by providing the prospect of rehabilitation. These development programmes unlike the forced land grabs of the past have a significant amount of public involvement and perception management is key to this strategy of winning hearts and minds. This process is sometimes but not always facilitated by the offer of peace talks to create divisions within Maoist ranks while military operations maintain a strategy of permanent tension. Is the policy effective? Yes to some extent as can be seen in the case of Andhra where the situation seems to be contained. However this containment is probably temporary





since the underlying factors fuelling the Naxalism are yet to be dealt with. What are these factors? 1. Differences in understanding the problem between affected states and Centre and between states, 2. Blame game-responsibility of whom? 3. Lack of coordination due to ideological differences between ruling parties and politically motivated decisions 4. Demotivated and corrupt civil administration 5. Ill-equipped and demoralized police forces 6. Nexus between some political leaders and Maoists 7. Maoists terror tactics 8. Lack of political willpower

Naxal Movement in Odisha & Chhattisgarh: Reasons, Motivations & Level of Popular Support

Dr. Rajat Kumar Kujur

To give a broad understanding of the situation one needs to pay attention to two significant statements: the first by G.K Pillai, Former Secretary, MHA, GOI “Left Wing Extremists operate in the vacuum created by functional inadequacies of field level governance structures, espouse local demands, and take advantage of prevalent dissatisfaction and feelings of perceived neglect and injustice among the under privileged and remote segments of population”. Sri Naveen Patnaik, Chief Minister of Odisha “People in the backward regions lack economic opportunities. They are deprived of fruits of developmental efforts. People in socio-economically depressed regions often carry a deep sense of frustration and discrimination against their better off neighbours. Poor and disaffected people are often easily manipulated by anti-social elements and powerful vested interests. These pockets of poverty breed serious socio-economic problems. There is corroborating evidence that the problems of terrorism, Naxalism, increased incidents of crime, law and order and social strife in many pockets are attributed to social and economic depression of such regions.”

Contrary to popular belief ‘Naxal Movement’ in Odisha, is not a recent phenomenon. For long Odisha’s tryst with the Naxal movement was reduced as a spill over effect from the neighbouring Andhra Pradesh. However, Odisha has a long history of Communist Movement, Peasant mobilizations and Labor Unrest. Left wing Extremism or the Naxal Movement in Odisha is altogether a different experience, quite different from that of West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh or Bihar. The long history of Naxalism in Odisha doesnot have a Naxalbari or Telangana to boast about yet Odisha does have a separate and distinct place in the Naxal map right from the beginning. Led by the maverick Nagbhushan Pattnaik, the echoes of Spring Thunder were felt in different pockets of Odisha as early as 1968. To provide a brief historical insight into the Naxal Movement in Chhattisgarh: It was none other than the founding father of People’s War (PW), K. Seetharamaiah, who envisaged the idea of establishing a guerrilla zone in Dandakaranya. Particularly Bastar, for its typical geopolitical situation

and socio-economic condition, soon found a prominent place in the Maoist road map. Back in 1979, a six-member squad with five more squads in the following year was sent to build up revolutionary consciousness.

What are the reasons for the naxal growth? Absence of Credible Governance, Diagnostic Failure, Failure to Undertake Land Reforms, So called “Participatory Development”, Corporate Abuse & Theft of Tribal Lands, Critical Errors in Rehabilitation and Resettlement, Poverty & Underdevelopment, No Naxal Policy (Odisha) & Salwa Judum (Chhattisgarh), Lack of Empowerment at the grass root level, Robin Hood Image for the Naxals, Compulsion, Fear & Chaotic Atmosphere of Terror, Ideology.

Combined with these broad categories there are several motivational factors that assist the Maoist buildup - The Social, Political and Economic Inequalities, Emotional, Livelihood, Political, Connectivity Factors, Lack of Alternatives, Early Life Indoctrination, Gun Culture and resultant Pseudo Empowerment as well as Ideological Factors. To gauge the level of popular support one needs to ask the question “Who is a Naxal?” Alienation alone cannot explain the surge in Naxal Support. Primarily this is a feature of the absence of Government – an administrative vacuum leading to presence of Naxals followed by consolidation. It is important to remember that not all tribals are Naxals nor are all Naxals tribals. Statistics too are deceptive since they do not point to the causes but rather reflect symptoms. In labelling “sympathisers” one must remember that silence is not always affirmative. For example notice in the following statement of a surrendered Naxal cadre the daily conundrum that the locals face. “We were forced to become sangham members. We gave them food and drink, though we had so little for ourselves. For 25 years, they have been here. Earlier they would sweet-talk us, promising to stop exploitation of Adivasis; they said they would form the government. They made fools of us. They harass us, after the police ask questions; they even take away our young girls. Then, they began to kill.”

It is true that Maoists have drawn on the genuine socio-economic grievances of the poverty-stricken masses for political mobilization in favour of their ideological campaign. This is one side of the story; the other part dwells on how they seek to fulfil their aim. As true Maoists, Naxalites unhesitatingly resort to violent means to change the inequitable society.

The recent violent operations of the Naxalites, it seems, leave no space for ideological commitment. Indiscriminate use of violence in the name of revolution cannot be countenanced. The Naxals have repeatedly stated that ‘armed struggle’ is non-negotiable. This position does not make sense. ‘Armed struggle’ may be the means to the end, but it cannot be an end in itself. The Naxal brand of politics may highlight the evils of the Indian socio-political framework, but it will not be able to eradicate these evils. On the other hand, the state cannot escape the blame for inflicting more violence and suffering upon its civilian population through counter-violence.

What then should the components of a comprehensive counter-Naxal strategy be? Committed,





transparent and high priority implementation of land reforms measures must form the critical core of whatever strategy evolves. Empowering the grass roots level self-government organisations like the Panchayats and Gram Sabhas would help building a primary line of defence against the Naxalites. An element of transparency may be brought into the deals of land acquisition by private/public sector undertakings in the tribal areas. A process of making the land losing tribals permanent beneficiaries from the industrial units may be inserted in the memorandum of understandings. Government may ensure compulsory presence and functioning of administrative structures in Naxal affected areas. Stricter and transparent anti-corruption measures may form a critical part of the efforts to improve administration. The tribals should be provided rights over the forest land where they have been living for decades. Sensitization on gender issues and human approach in solving extremism is very much necessary for tackling issues concerning national security. In the police action elements of the strategy it is critical that the state realises that the deployment of Central Paramilitary forces no permanent solution. Police personnel need to be recruited and trained to keep a constant watch on Maoist activities in vulnerable areas. The State governments should regularly release its share of resources for the police modernisation scheme and not base the entire programme on the central contribution only. The state should gradually reduce its dependence on the SPOs. Coordination among the security forces operating from both the side of state borders is a must. Intelligence sharing is vital. A sound strategic communication campaign is needed for the success of anti-Naxal operations.

II STRATEGIES OF THE NAXAL GROUPS VIS-À-VIS CENTRAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS AND THE PEOPLE

Understanding the Naxal Strategies

Dr. PV Ramana

What are the strategies that the Maoists adopt towards the people and towards the government? Broadly speaking, there is something called the mass line and the class line. The former is to build a political movement and the latter, which is the military strategy is to wage a protracted people's war. Propaganda and mobilisation of people on important issues are the core strategies adopted by the Maoists to win over the people. These issues could be grievances against the state, the local

authorities or even the personal grievances of the people. For instance, in Jadavpur town close to 2 lakh tribals were mobilised against giving land to the Tatas. Similarly, the Naxals also recruited a girl of 14-15 years in Karimnagar as she was unhappy on account of being forced to marry against her wishes. Another important component of the Maoists is the United Front. It has two entities- tactical and strategic. Tactical United Front is the one which operates with the overground organisations, mostly in Urban centres, to politically corner the Indian state. It also seeks to spread its propaganda internationally with the intention of winning wider public support. However, this has not managed to ensure a consistent source of money or arms.

As far as the urban movement of the Naxals is concerned, they try to link up with the working class. This serves a two-fold purpose. First, this will give them the catchment area for the underground cadre. Second, it gives them a foothold into strategic industries like transport and communication to cause sabotage. Similarly, they also link up with the youth in urban areas and the unorganised sector. The conglomeration or joining of forces of all the underground mass organisations of the CPI (Maoists) is the Strategic United Front. Their strategy is to form such organisations among the tribals, peasants and women to establish a base in villages and encircle cities. They then resort to extortion, which amounts to nearly 1500 crores across the country. They also use intimidation or cause retribution for the purpose of intimidation as a strategy. Police informers are brutally killed in order to frighten other people from helping the police or the state. For example, the number of civilians killed in 2011 was 464 of which police informers were 216. What are the military strategies towards the state? The most common is the synchronised attacks in large numbers – people’s militias are encouraged to participate. The confidence of the Indian state is that it has the largest armed might at its disposal and thus, 15000 people can be easily handled. But the Maoists have come up with a new idea - do not stay back to hold territory - If the offensive increases just mingle with the crowd and lay low.

Then, regroup and target small concentrations of security forces in large numbers. The Maoists have also understood that there is a limit to the total number of security forces that the Indian state can commit at any given point in time. Similarly, at any given point in time, there is an upper limit to the number of security forces that can be present. Thus, it is important to stretch the security forces thin across the country. It is a political movement that substantially draws upon social issues and has often taken a law and order dimension. Even in achieving their final objective i.e. capturing political power, the Maoists follow strategies to win over the people either through mobilising them on issues close to their heart or intimidate them into submission and fighting the Indian state militarily.

Mapping the vulnerable and peripheral areas: Towards an Early Warning

Medha Chaturvedi





The application of indicators that give rise to grievances and give further support to the Naxal movement to new states, which have seen some Naxal activity in the last 5-10 years can give an idea of how vulnerable these new states are with respect to Naxal activity.

The indicators – picked from the red corridor are:

1. The governance deficit, which focuses on access to primary and secondary education, basic sustainable employment, basic healthcare facilities, drinking water, Law & Order, Grievance redressal and the Public Distribution System.
2. Geographical indicators – terrain, forest cover in the area, rainfall and accessibility of these areas.
3. Social and economic indicators- level of poverty, class and caste divisions, gainful employment of the youth, level of industrialisation and land holdings.
4. Miscellaneous indicators - drug trafficking, youth population component, religion and conversion issues, role of women and environment indicators.

If the indicators are applied to Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Assam, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Jammu & Kashmir, one can witness different levels of Naxal activities.

The three worst-case scenarios are: First, hard combat against the Naxals pushes them out temporarily but they use other states to regroup and rearm. Taking advantage of jurisdiction problems between states small but effective groups carry out attacks in different parts of the country and escape to other states to lie low. This can be associated with the Andhra Pradesh model, where the intensive use of greyhounds had led to a lot of spill over to other states. Second, new territory in new states may result in a corridor for Naxals to collaborate with other insurgent groups, who are essentially ideologically different but are anti-state. This could result in an urban push of the movement, which would be devastating. This can be associated with the developing situation in Assam and even in J&K. As both are already disturbed areas, it provides an easy footing for the Naxals. There have been reports of collaboration between the Naxals and the pro-Azadi leaders in J&K and of ULFA training the Naxal cadres.

Third, collaboration with International Maoist movements could give it a much more dangerous dimension and India is not prepared to tackle such a situation at the moment. There have been lots of talks about International Maoist Organisations having some sort of a connection - not just from Nepal - with the Indian Naxals.

What are the possible solutions?

- To fill the leadership gaps in areas which have been identified as peripheral areas and vulnerable

to a Naxal threat. For e.g. the UP model, where in Sonbhadra and Chitrakoot District when there was a leadership gap the government in the state had set in its own MLAs to ensure that there is no vacuum that exists.

- Effective grievance redressal is also important because in its absence the Naxals are scoring in the Red Corridor but in the newer states as well. There is a need for fast-track judgement on Naxal-related incidents.
- Implementation of Panchayati Raj - forest dwellers act will make the people of those areas stakeholders. Here differences can be made between industrialisation and making the local people stakeholders. The industrialisation process without the active participation of the local dwellers has increased the sense of deprivation and frustration among them over the years making them more susceptible to Naxal ideology.
- Stringent anti-corruption laws so that there are no gaps in PDS.
- Developmental activities for women.
- Setting up of cantonment areas as that can lead to the development of infrastructure in the area.
- Instead of combating with them, the Indian agencies should compete with them. Instead of cracking down on them make them absolutely archaic so that people do not join them.

III

EXPLAINING THE NAXAL INSURGENCY AND GEOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION OF NAXAL VIOLENCE

Katinka Sætersdal Remøe

The effort of the research has been to explore the driving forces behind internal conflicts, particularly the Maoist insurgency in India. The presentation comprises of an empirical analysis across Indian states between 1997 and 2007, which acts as the foundation for this project coordinated with Indra De Soysa. It was a peasant uprising that dates back to 1967 in Naxalbari, West Bengal, which later came to be popularly known as the Naxal movement in India. Today, the Maoist movement has spread to central and eastern India. The movement has been characterized by factionalism through the last three decades. Even so, Maoist violence has been observed to have escalated since 2004 in varied fashion in different states in India and the intensity of violence is understood to have mounted since 2008. This is chiefly attributed to the merging of two large splinter groups- the People's War Group (PWG) and the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCC) - to form the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist). The areas affected by intense Maoist violence are understood to be distressed by poverty.





The Planning Commission of India's Report of 2008 declares modernization and discrimination of rural population as plausible reasons that prove advantageous for the growth of Maoist support base in its strongholds. Underdevelopment and economic inequality are learnt to be reasons for mobilization of people to join the Maoist movement. Motivation for this analysis has been the intriguing spread of Red Corridor in certain areas avoiding locations thriving in similar socio-economic conditions, especially poverty, in the country. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the presence of natural resources in the region acts as crucial financial source to Maoists. Even so, it is imperative to question if there are other factors of grievance that could explain the expanse of the insurgency in India. Although the existing statistical data cannot support the conventional grievance argument, few ethnological evidence establish the local support base for the Maoists in some areas. The aim of the research, therefore, has been to identify common factors that can illustrate broader dynamics of the rebellion. The theoretical framework of this research has been based on the contrasting grievance debate and factors related to opportunism; both influencing a conflict situation. When grievance debate is broadly scrutinized within relative deprivation and structural inequality, opportunity factors analyse the capacity of the State to counter insurgency moves.

The hypotheses, thus, recommends the possibilities of less access to land and consequently escalating the level of poverty and mounting economic and political discrimination of minority population in the country to be directly proportional to the rise in the intensity of incidents of Maoist violence in the country. The opportunity variable that points to an inverse relationship is between the states of India under the rule of BJP-led governments and the spread of Maoist violence.

This inverse relationship needs further study to verify if the states under the rule of BJP governments have been able to strongly diminish the presence of Maoist activities. This ongoing project would widen its periphery of research to include samples from districts affected by Maoist violence to closely analyse the vitality of forest cover and natural resources in the spread of violence. The research is expected to involve recent and updated political data for detailed study of opportunity factors. The sample selections used throughout the present research would be updated to the recent years, particularly between the years 2000 and 2010, for deeper understanding of the Maoist insurgency in the country.

Jan Ketil Rod

This project titled 'A Geographical Exploration of the Naxalites Violence' has been under work along with Krishna V. and Katinka Sætersdal Remøe. This study focuses on the six states in eastern India that have been experiencing intense Maoist violence. A mixed method approach with statistical techniques have been initiated to have an indepth understanding of Maoist violence through a district-level analysis in the states with high degree of Maoist insurgency. The presentation and an ensuing discussion should be able to facilitate the process of enhancing the methodology to pursue a fieldwork on the topic in consideration.

The early phase of this research has witnessed an assessment of 151 districts in the country and a reported 107 cases of Maoist violence in these districts between 2004 and 2010. It is evident from the initial observation that there is a significant difference in the level of violence and the number of related events in these districts. For example, Dantewada and Midnapur are two districts that have witnessed an escalated intensity of Maoist violence unlike other districts that have been taken into consideration in the sample data. It is critical to realize that statistical data cannot explain an array of varying differences in the level of violence in the districts observed. Residual data are required to have a closer understanding of those areas that do not conform to the general trend, which are displayed in statistical data. Newspaper reports on the subject are essential to look into the geographical coordinates. It is beneficial to have explanatory variables than dependable variables to pursue spatial-temporal analysis. While quantitative data provide the broad assessment, qualitative facts are necessary to understand the outliers.

The variables that have been accounted for the geographical exploration of Maoist insurgency in the country include poverty and exclusion; contested rural-urban debate that necessitates the focus on samples that assess the distance between a rural tract and nearest city; natural resources and cumulative assessment of mining areas of different minerals; forest cover granting safe haven for guerrilla tactics.

Historically, forest has been a refuge for the elements hiding from the State. In addition, the variable includes the GDP growth rate of each of these states, scrutinizing them against the national average. The research also places importance on the extent of aggressive actions and reactions from the government in the areas that lie in its periphery. In the early phase of this research, the primary observation has been the relationship between mining activity, mineral resources, accessibility variable, and forest cover and disaggregated GDP.





ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

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