

What is Naxalism?

Naxalism is an extremist ideology which doesn't believe in the ideology of democracy and democratic process. Democracy has been hailed as the true and authentic voice of people, working for both their tangible and intangible interests. In a meaningful democracy, political stability and working within the conventional framework of law and ethics are the two most desired virtues. People across the country have long cherished the dream of living under healthy governance, which has led to their reaffirming the mandate for constitutionally approved governments irrespective of their efficiency levels or experience.

Widespread practice of social discrimination, untouchability, domestic violence, and atrocities against the weaker sections is an index of the failure of the promises made to the oppressed people of this country. In this situation it should not cause surprise that a large section of the people are angry and feel alienated from the polity. It is in this context that it has become necessary to identify the variety of causes of discontent and to seek ways by which the State could answer them in a humane, caring and democratic way. If the emphasis of this exploration is on the Naxalite phenomenon it is not because other modes and forms of agitation are less important but only because the method of struggle chosen by the Naxalites has brought the problem to a head.

It has been found that violation of human rights is a contentious issue which is being continuously recorded in the Naxal affected areas. The violation of human rights is not occurred one-side, always it has been happened both-sided. Human rights are those minimum rights which are compulsorily obtainable by every individual as he/she is a member of human society. Equal status and equal dignity is not merely a Constitutional right but also a basic human right. Inherited

institutions of caste, gender and unequal property have traditionally deprived the majority of society of this right. The Constitution intended the process of governance to lead to a progressive decrease in social and economic inequalities. The Constitutional and statutory agencies entrusted with the task of safeguarding the entitlements of all marginalized groups have failed to provide adequate support.

In the view of Naxals, the crux of Naxalism stands and based only on violence, which is generally imposed by the ruling class. When the forces go inside to search the naxals, they don't know who is a Maoist and who isn't — and they sometimes resort to huge human rights violations. And it is going to increase, as more forces will go inside now. Now thousands of people have died in several huge massacres and a regular feature of Naxal attacks, and there was no human rights violation? Nobody is thinking that father, mother, sister, brother, daughter and son have been killed together, drivers and police personnel have been killed. What happens when people are killed in village courts and are chopped to pieces? A small violation by the police goes a long way, but what about the Maoists...? Will this continue in a democracy, will they not be criticised by society? Cases of illegal detention and torture of Naxalite prisoners in Indian jails is also a grave matter of violation of human rights. In a democratic country like India the state is primarily responsible to provide secure environment of living. But in the case of Naxal affected areas the state has failed to do so.

When we talk about judicial inquiries, the conviction rate is very low due to lack of evidence. In any Naxal affected area, where any incident takes place, there is an atmosphere of fear. People get picked up but they cannot talk against them (Maoists). They know they'll have to stay in that place. So while people get identified, it's a problem to make them talk in court. One major issue of discontent

against the Govt. among the tribals is arrests. They are picked up randomly and remain for four, five, six years in jail as undertrials. The judicial process is slow and families suffer, they get frustrated. Maoists campaign that innocents are kept in jail for no reason. Still a huge number of innocent villagers and tribals are languishing in jail, and this the matter of major violation of human rights.

The Naxalite movement came into being as a result of prevailing social and economic issues. In fact, while conducting an enquiry into the uprising, the West Bengal State Secretariat of the CPI(M) stated, “Behind the peasant unrest in Naxalbari lies a deep social malady- malafide transfers, evictions and other anti-people actions of tea gardeners and jotedars.” These issues were longstanding and there was no dearth of reform legislation. Naxalism is the greatest threat to India’s internal security and progress, in opinion of the Prime Minister Dr.Manmohan Singh. The credit for the survival of the movement for over 40 years must go to the government, which has failed abysmally in addressing the causes and conditions that sustain the movement. The problem has been in the Indian state's perception of the causes of the Naxal movement. All the regions in which the Naxal movement took hold are ones with alarming levels of poverty.

When the Naxal uprising began in 1967, the Indian government looked at it as a law and order problem. It did not analyze the causes of the movement and the extent of mobilization of people. Hence, it believed that it could and would put an end to it in a short span of time using force. During the outbreak of the armed clashes in Naxalbari, the then Home Minister Y B Chavan, addressing the Lok Sabha on June 13, 1967, described them as mere ‘lawlessness’¹ – a transgression to be repressed and contained. So, while Charu Mazumdar named the 1970's the ‘Decade of liberation’, the Indian state chose to make it the ‘decade of repression’.

The United Front government in West Bengal, confronted by the Naxal violence, was in a dilemma about the nature and scope of its response. It recognized the crucial need to address the problem of monstrous iniquity. As a government it could not let any violent uprising threaten its legitimacy, even if the cause was morally valid. The government chose to react based on the latter point and so launched a massive police operation that drove the movement underground and brought most of its leaders under police custody within four months of the uprising.

The emergency in 1975 was a period of carte-blanche to the state authorities to crush the movement. It led to the legitimization of violation of human rights by the state. But ironically, the movement arose again in a more violent form after the emergency. Police excesses like extra-judicial killings and extortion, misappropriation and harassment of the Naxals support base are public secrets, which governments have turned a blind eye to. The state has to do much more than plan counter-insurgency operations or support violent vigilante groups to suppress the Naxalite movement. The governments have enacted several laws to empower themselves to combat Naxals. After close examination of the historical and ideological origins of the movement, it is clear that the movement thrives on the dissatisfaction of the marginalized and alienates the population. The socio-economic perspective of Naxalism talks about how the rebel movement is shaped due to the failure of the institutional mechanisms and frameworks to deliver socio-economic justice.

The Naxal movement will enable to understand that the marginalized take up arms only to break down the insensitive establishment, which has failed to deliver an egalitarian society. The Naxalite leaders may talk about 'deliverance of the proletariat from the neo-liberalist bourgeoisie, and the dawn of New Democracy', but such phrases mean little to the tribals and landless labourers who find

themselves at the receiving end of state sponsored and non-state-sponsored exploitation.

This area of central Bihar (rural Patna and Jehanabad) had been marked by a strong presence of two CPI-ML groups. the Party Unit) (PU) and the Liberation. The Ranbir Sena. an armed gang sponsored by landlords of the Bhumihar caste was strong in Bhojpur district, across the river Son. The Son. a tributary of the Ganga. runs north, dividing Bhojpur on its west from Patna and Jehanabad on its east. and finally joins the Ganga at the tri-junction of Patna. Bhojpur and Siwan districts. Bhojpur was the legendary birth place of the CPI-ML movement in Bihar. Since the early 1970s the movement has spread virtually to the entire state and every district has the presence of at least one of the CPI-ML groups. The largest of these organizations and the greatest scale of their activities were concentrated in the plains of Central Bihar and the plateau areas of Chhotanagpur in South Bihar. The earliest groups were the Liberation in Central Bihar and the Most Communist Centre (MCC) in South Bihar. The Party Unity started organizing in the early 1980s in Jehanabad area of the then Patna district and in Palamu district in South Bihar. Today the areas of activity of these three CPI-ML groups overlap significantly. While the ML groups, especially the Liberation, still had considerable following in Bhojpur district, and that time Bhojpur was the main base of the Ranbir Sena. On the other hand, the Sena has in recent times (from early 1997) entered Patna district too and has been involved in a violent conflict with the Party Unity in the course of which its bhumihars on one side and 12 dalit and backward caste labourers on the other have been killed to date (not all of them necessarily connected with the Ranbir Sena or the Party Unity). In the 'encounters between the police and Party Unity that had taken place in the context of this conflict, one policeman and five Naxalite activists had been killed.

They are in the battle only because of their disillusionment with the status quo. It is clear that there is a wide chasm between promises and their eventual deliverance. Until the government implements employment, poverty alleviation and land reform programmes, counterinsurgency measures cannot achieve much. Social justice and inclusive growth are the planks on which the government must build its programme. Only with consolidated efforts on the part of legal and political framework, socio-economic reforms can be implemented, the genesis, growth and expansion of Naxalism and violation of human rights problems raised due to Naxalism tackled.

Naxalism and Terrorism has become such a big industry that big business is thriving on it.

Naomi Klein calls it 'Disaster Capitalism'. There are weird proposal of making bomb-proof roads and bridges and putting mine sweeper vehicles on train-engines. There is no wonder if these are accepted.

Now let us see how and why this happens--

When there is oppression and resultant gross inequalities inherent in the system and structure of any society or nation, it necessarily begets violence because oppression cannot happen without violence and to maintain vulgar and exploitive inequalities more violence is needed. Thus an oppressive act is a necessarily a violent act. According to Paulo Freire " A situation in which A objectively exploits or hinders his pursuit of self-affirmation as responsible person , is an act of oppression . Such a situation in itself constitutes violence... because it interferes with the individual's ontological and historical vocation to be more fully humane."

According to him oppression dehumanise both oppressor and oppressed and thus, is a big hurdle in realisation of ontological vocation of human-beings that is to become a full human-being.

It is true that oppression cannot rest long on the basis of violence or power alone. So, various finer and cunning instruments of internalisation of oppression are devised. They use various institutions of discipline like religion, education, hospitals, courts and jails to create and maintain oppression and inequality whereas the same institution may also be used for just the opposite purpose especially, the education, as Paulo Freire has forcefully shown not only in theory but in practice also. Michel Foucault has brilliantly and finely captured these devices in following words“Prison is one part of a vast network, including schools, military institutions, hospitals, and factories, which build a panoptic society for its members. This system creates “disciplinary careers”

Irony of the situation is this that often these practices are coated in the ideals ,language and

discourses of high –sounding moral and ethical principles like ‘ Dharma,’ ‘ Equality’ , ‘Democracy’ and so on . We have to take shelter of Foucault again - “Historically, the process by which the bourgeoisie became in the course of the eighteenth century the politically dominant class was masked by the establishment of an explicit, coded and

formally egalitarian juridical framework, made possible by the organization of a

parliamentary, representative regime.¹Elaborating this further legendary and as much loved as hated , Che Guevara writes “ When the forces of oppression maintain themselves in power against laws established by themselves , peace is considered already broken.

But this vicious circle of oppression cannot be broken unless fundamental changes are brought in our social, political and economic system. To make these external changes permanent and to get internalise these by masses , there is need for basic and revolutionary changes in our present education system, which Paulo Freire calls, “ Banking Concept” of education and in which the oppressed internalise the oppressed and want to become like him. Thus the only change, if at all, present education brings that some of the oppressed of yesterday becomes oppressors tomorrow.

Karl Polanyi had mentioned in clear terms in 1944 that though the market asks for freedom from government interference yet the market itself is the result of a conscious and often violent intervention of the government. So, more often than not the State is inferring violently in the favour of big business and multinational corporations. Noted Economist Professor Amit Bhaduri has put this in following words “ In our democracy, terrorism is practised increasingly with the sole purpose of enriching big business, but under the guise of industrialising and modernising the economy. And what is worse, it happens with the support of media and the middle class.” These policies ruined Latin American economies, killed so called Asian Tigers, destroyed Russia, failed the dreams of blacks of South Africa, erased Iraq and ultimately brought greatest recession after Great Depression of 1930’s in USA. Even once supporters and initiators of these policies like Joseph Stiglitz , former

Chief Economist and Senior Vice President of World Bank, Chairman of President Bill Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers and recipient of Nobel Prize for Economics (2001) and Jeffrey Sachs, Former Advisor of IMF, have severely criticised these policies. Stiglitz calls it "curious blend of ideology and bad economics," and argues that the IMF itself is responsible for worsening—in some cases, for actually creating—the problems it claims to be fighting. He further observes that stabilization is on the agenda; job creation is off. Taxation, and its adverse effects are on the agenda; land reform is off.

There is money to bail out banks but not to pay for improved education and health services, let alone to bail out workers who are thrown out of their jobs as a result of the IMF's macroeconomic mismanagement.

Even after utter failure of these policies world over and its originator and staunch pusher world over, USA, after the recession, saying adieu to these policies and resorting back to Keynesian economic policies, in India Milton Friedman and his 'voodoo science' still rules and runs the show. Supporters of this model of development often label its critics as 'Anti-development' and in turn 'Anti-national' and often aggressively ask whether you want to go back to stone age or support centralised and totalitarian model of development and state. But this is the language of 'Either with us or against us' and pre-supposes, rather forces us, to choose between two evils. Then they aggressively ask "What is the alternative?" "According to Naomi Klein this is done because for savage capitalism democratic socialism is greater enemy than totalitarian communism. But rejecting savage capitalism does not mean choosing totalitarian communism.

So, let us make it pretty clear that there are a lot of alternatives under the umbrella of Democratic Socialism from which every nation and society may choose according to its, environment, circumstances, needs and capabilities. Gandhi ji had given one such model 100 years ago in 'Hind Swaraj', E.F.

Schumacher presented another in 'Small is Beautiful'. In her book 'Naming the Enemy' Amory Starr has written about various alternative models of development. These models are working in villages like Ralegaon Sidhi and Bilgaon. Democracy at grass root is at function in the jungles of Lacadon, Mendha Lekha, in Modragon cooperatives in Basque and in the fields adopted by Navdanya.

These are working successfully in Scandinavian countries since long and it seems that after the

economic shock even USA wants to give this model a chance.

It has been proved beyond reasonable doubt that violence in a society is proportionate to oppression and inequality present in it. It is crystal clear in comparison of societies like Sweden and Denmark on the one end of continuum and that of USA and India on the other. The more egalitarian and just the society, the less violent and more peaceful it would be. Secondly, the dream of an egalitarian society is so popular that till there are unwanted and violently maintained inequalities, someone or else will keep on fighting for it; moreover it is difficult rather almost impossible to defeat these fighter in fair play.

But however effective these instruments of oppression and brain-washing may be, as basic nature of human-being is freedom and to resist oppression, there is always passive as well as active, individual as well as collective resistance to this. Naxal ideology or no Naxal ideology, this revolt of freedom-loving and respecting tribal is inherent in present development paradigm to which Amit Bhaduri calls "Developmental Terrorism." This proposition is supported by the fact that even before the birth of communism and Naxalism, there were numerous revolts of oppressed people in India as well as abroad raging from Spartacus, Maccabees, Red Indians, Maoris to Santhals under the leadership of Siddhu and Kanhu and Mundas under the leadership of Birsa Munda.

Naxalism- A Historical Journey

Naxalism is pure and simple TERRORISM, which disguises itself with terms like 'class struggle' and 'social justice'. This chapter monitors all terror activities of Naxalites Groups of India i.e. PWG (Peoples War Group) and Government Policies to tackle naxal menace. PWG current goal is to destabilize India and Sub-Continent by a well coordinated strategy with the help of international revolutionaries and covert support from Pakistan and China.

Maoism's political orientation emphasizes the "revolutionary struggle of the vast majority of people against the exploiting classes and their state structures", which Mao termed a "People's War". Usually involving peasants, its military strategies have involved guerrilla war tactics focused on surrounding the cities from the countryside, with a heavy emphasis on political transformation through mass involvement of the lower classes of society.

- ***Maoism in India***

The Communist Party of India (Maoist) is a Maoist political party in India which aims to overthrow the government of India.^[44] It was founded on September 21, 2004, through the merger of the Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist) People's War and the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCC). The merger was announced to the public on October 14 the same year. In the merger a provisional central committee was constituted, with the erstwhile People's War Group leader Muppala Lakshmana Rao alias Ganapathi as General Secretary. It is currently proscribed as a terrorist organization by the Indian government for organizing mass killings in furtherance of their ideology.

- *Maoism in Nepal*

The Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), a national communist party with a revolutionary background, is a follower of Maoism, although it is believed that the party has developed its own ideology, Prachanda Path, which was developed taking Nepal's political, sociological and geographical constraints into consideration. Still, this party is believed to have taken Maoism as its doctrine as its name suggests.

- *Naxalism- At a Glance*

Naxalite movement or Naxalism is an informal name given to communist groups that were born out of the Sino-Soviet split in the communist movement in India. Ideologically, they belong to various trends of Maoism. Initially, the movement had its centre in West Bengal. In the recent decades, they have spread into less developed areas of rural central and eastern India, such as Chhattisgrah, Andhra Pradesh Jharkhand, Bihar, through the activities of underground groups like the Communist Party of India (Maoist). They are conducting an insurgency, typically called the Naxalite- Maoist insurgency. They now have a presence in more than 40 percent of India's geographical area, and are especially concentrated in an area known as the 'Naxal Belt' comprising 16 states, 195 districts, 92, 000 square kilometres, and near about 50 crores population lived in that areas. According to India's intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing, 20, 000 insurgents are currently in operation, and their growing influence prompted Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to declare them as the most serious threat to India's national security. The CPI (Maoist) and some other Naxal factions are now considered terrorist by the Government of India. In February 2009, Central Government

announced its plan for simultaneous, co-ordinated counter-operations in all Left – Wing Extremism (LWE)– hit states – Chhattisgrah, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, to plug all possible escape routes of Naxalites.

The term Naxalite comes from Naxalbari, name of a village in West Bengal. Naxalbari become famous for being the site of a revolutionary peasant uprising in 1967, which began with the ‘land to tiller slogan and inspired similar revolts in other parts of the India, popularly known as Naxalite movement. At that time West Bengal was going through a phase of severe unrest due to the communist movement. Thousands of rural labourers and poor peasants chanting slogans inspired by Lenin and Socialism staged blockades against the police and the government resulting in violence and bloodshed. This movement had a big role in the development of revolutionary and communist theory in India, where a section of Communist Party of India (Marxist), CPI (M) led by Charu Majumdar and Kanu Sanyal led a violent uprising in 1967, trying to develop a ‘revolutionary opposition’ in opposition to the CPI (M) leadership.

The birth and development of the Naxalite movement under the leadership of the CPI (M-L) should also be located in the contemporary global context of the 1960s. Practically, all Naxalite trace their origin to the CPI (ML). In 1967 ‘Naxalites’ organized the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCCR), and later broke away from CPI (M). Uprising was organized in several parts of the country. In 1969 AICCCR gave birth to Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist). A separate tendency from the beginning was the Maoist Communist Centre, which evolved out of the Dakshin Desh-Group. MCC later fused with People’s War Group to form Communist Party of India (Maoist). A third tendency is that of the Andhra Revolutionary Communists, which was mainly

presented by UCCRI (ML), following the mass line legacy of T. Nagi Reddy. That tendency broke with AICCCR at an early stage.

Ironically enough, although the uprising in Naxalbari in May 1967 was crushed by the police. Naxalite ideology gained rapid currency in other parts of West Bengal and India within a few years. By the early 1970s, the Naxalite movement had spread from far-flung areas like Andhra Pradesh and Kerala in the South, to Bihar in the east, and Uttar Pradesh and Punjab in the north. Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh in particular became a 'mini-liberated zone' for a brief spell, when Naxalite Guerillas drove out the landlords, and set up alternative institutions of administration in several hundreds of villages. In parts of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, the Naxalites succeeded in mobilizing the peasantry to recover lands that they had lost to the moneylender-cum-landlord class (to whom they had mortgaged their properties in lieu of money) and carrying their harvested crops to their homes. In Punjab, rich landlords and policemen were targeted by bands of Naxalites. In West Bengal itself the birthplace of Naxalite movement-armed peasants' struggles broke out in Midnapur and Birbhum, where some villages passed over to total Naxalite control during the 1969-70 period. Identically, in Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal, the Naxalites found their main support among the aboriginal tribal communities, who had been the most oppressed and marginalized in Indian society-the Girijans in Andhra Pradesh and the Santhals in West Bengal.

Instead of fully implementing land reforms to alleviate their grievances-as suggested by many impartial observers as well as its own previously mentioned committee of 1969-the Indian government chose the simplistic path of military suppression of peasant grievances. It unleashed a reign of terror on the Naxalite bases and the villagers who supported them. In Srikakulam, Para-military forces swooped down upon Girijan villages, arrested thousands of young tribals, captured and killed their Naxalite leaders, and resorted to the policy of setting up 'strategic

hamlets' (as the US did in Vietnam) where entire tribal villages were removed, so that the mass base of the CPI (M-L) could be dispersed. In Birbhum, West Bengal, the Indian army was deployed to encircle the Naxalite-controlled villages, close in and kill the leaders. Thousands of their Santhal tribal followers were thrown behind bars. With military suppression of their bases in the villages, dissemination of their leaders by the police, dissensions within their ranks, and choked out from any democratic avenue of expressing their grievances, the Naxalites reached the end of a phase of their movement in the late 1970s.

Apart from the state repression, several splits within the Naxalite movement in the 1970s weakened its capacity to resist the police and army offensive. Many among Charu Mazumdar's comrades and followers become critical of his tactics of assassination of individual 'class enemies', his indifference to mass fronts like trade unions (that led to the isolation of the Naxalites from the industrial workers), and the growing bureaucratization of the party organization. As a result, the CPI (M-L) split into several factions- often fighting among themselves. This fragmentation in the Naxalite ranks helped the Indian state to suppress them- for the time being.

By 1972, West Bengal succeeded in defeating the Naxalite rebellion to some extent-its main trophy being the capture of the ideology of Charu Majumdar from a Calcutta hideout on July 16, 1972. Majumdar died in police custody 12 days after his arrest-raising suspicious about the treatment meted out to him by the police. The movement continued even after his death-with sporadic battles between the police and the Naxalites in far-flung villages in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and other states. But it faced increasing repression from the state. By 1973, the number of Naxalite activists and supporters held in different jails all over India had swelled to 32,000. News of their ill-treatment compelled more than 300 academicians from all over the world including Noam Chomsky and Simone de

Beauvoir to sign a note protesting against the Indian government's violation of prison rules, and send it to New Delhi on August 15, 1974-the 27th anniversary of India's Independence Day. A month later, Amnesty International released a damning report, listing cases of illegal detention and torture of Naxalite prisoners in Indian jails. Such attempts by academicians and human rights organizations- whether in India and abroad-to highlight the plight of prisoners were soon snuffed out by the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, when she declared Emergency on June 26, 1975, which imposed censorship on publication of news, apart from clamping down upon public demonstrations of protest.

It was only after the lifting of Emergency and the coming to power of the Janta Party (an alliance of non-Congress and anti Indra Gandhi parties) at the centre in New Delhi after the 1977 elections, and following a wide scale movement organized by various human rights groups in India and abroad, that the Naxalites were released from jails. The different Naxalite factions and their leaders found an opportunity to meet and chart out their new path of action in the light of their past experiences. Although committed to the original strategy of eliminating the feudal order in rural India, they parted ways on the question of tactics- one group of followers deciding to lay stress on the parliamentary path of elections (e.g. the Liberation Group of the CPI-M-L, concentrated in Bihar), and the others preferring to go back to the path of guerrilla warfare, like the PWG-People's War Group-in Andhra Pradesh, and MCC-Maoist Communist Centre-in Bihar. During the last three decades since the 1980s, these two different streams of the Naxalite movement drifted along with their respective tactics- often fighting among themselves.

But, during this period, it is these armed groups which have emerged as the main challenge to the Indian states. They have also expanded their area of operations (from their old pockets in West Bengal, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh in the 1970s) to

new guerrilla zone in other states like Orissa, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh in the new millennium. Their main support base in these states is the poorest and the most deprived classes- the landless and tribal people, who are ousted from their homes by upcoming industrial projects, are being denied access to their traditional forest resources, regularly exploited by landowners and money lenders and persecuted by the police, and who continue to suffer from non-availability of education and health facilities in their far-flung and inaccessible villages.

Apart from expanding their guerrilla zones within India, the PWG, MCC and other smaller armed Communist groups have been able to build a network with similar Communist revolutionary organizations in the neighbouring states of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Nepal under the banner of the Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organizations of South Asia. Their representatives met in a guerrilla zone in eastern India in July 2003, to chalk out future strategy of coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organizations of South Asia. Their representatives met in a guerrilla zone in eastern India in July 2003, to chalk out future strategy of coordination of their activities. All these South Asian Maoist parties are also members of a larger International organization called the Revolutionary International Movement.

It should be pointed out however that despite their survival for almost four decades, the Naxalites do not yet control any large area comparable to the 'liberated zone' that the Chinese Communists could establish in Yen-an within a decade or so in the 1930-40 period, or the sizable tract that the Maoists occupy in neighbouring Nepal today. They have not been able to reach out to the masses of the peasantry in the vast countryside of other parts of India, and have expanded only to a few isolated pockets and stretches of areas inhabited mainly by tribal and landless poor. Closeted in their rural underground shelters, the Naxalite leaders

have ignored the task of setting up bases among the large number of workers both in the organized industrial and the unorganized sectors. They have also failed to build up a regular army like the Chinese People's Liberation Army, or the Vietnamese too effectively fight their enemies.

These shortcomings have both crippled and distorted the character of the Naxalite movement. Practically, all Naxalite groups trace their origin to CPI (ML). A separate tendency from the beginning was the Maoist Communist Centre, which evolved out of the 'Dakshin Desh-group'. MCC later fused with People's War Group to form Communist Party of India (Maoist). A third tendency is that of the Andhra Revolutionary Communists, which was mainly presented by UCCRI (ML), following the mass line legacy of T. Nagi Reddy. That tendency broke with AICCCR at an early stage.

During the 1970s the movement was fragmented into several disputing factions. By 1980 it was estimated that around 30 Naxalite groups were active, with a combined membership of 30 000. A 2004 Home Ministry estimate puts numbers at that time as '9,300 hard-core underground cadre (holding) around 6,500 regular weapons beside a large number of unlicensed country – made arms'. According to Judith Vidal-Hall (2006), "More recent figures put the strength of the movement at 15,000, and claim the gurrillas control an estimated one fifth of India's forests, as well as being active in 160 of the country's 604 administrative districts". India's Research and Analysis Wing, believed in 2006 that 20,000 Naxals are currently involved in the growing insurgency.

Today some groups have become legal organizations participating in Parliamentary and Assembly elections, such as Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation. Others, such as Communist Party of India (Maoist) and Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Janashkti, are engaged in armed gurrilla struggles.

Causes of Naxalism

The Naxalites regard the 1947 Independence as a sham. They see India as a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country which can achieve true independence only through protracted armed struggle as there has been in China. Ever since the revolution in China 1949 Telengana leaders started studying Mao's works and reports about the People's Liberation Army. The most important period in the history of the Naxalite movement came when the extremists moved into the villages and attempted to organize armed peasant uprising. Naxalbari and Srikakulam become the starting point to launch a long-drawn armed struggle. The Naxals want to radically change the nature of the political organization in India, with very few powers and functions remaining with the Centre. This involves a through recasting of the Constitution. The Constitution should be flexible enough to adapt itself to the new needs and demands of the people.

The need of the hour ,according to the Maoists is to launch an annihilation campaign against the feudal authority in the villages. This is too replaced by peasant committees to destroy unjust debt and mortgage agreements with landlords and money-lenders. Land is the basic unit of this struggle. Land should be freed from landlords and money-lenders and should be redistributed among the poor and landless peasants. The tillers must own the land. These goals cannot be achieved without attacking individual landlords in villages and annihilating them,the Maoists want.

The following extract, from an authentic research work on Naxalism, throws a flood of light on the inherent causes behind its expansion:

“ However, wrong in their method adopted in order to attain the objective, it needs to be realized by any dispassionate observer that the crime of Naxals is the crime of all those who cannot remain unmoved and inactive in an India where a child

crawls in the dust with a begging bowl; where a poor girl can be sold as a rich man's plaything; where a poor and low caste man's wife is an object of sex for a rich; where an old woman must half-starve herself in order to buy social acceptance from the powers that be in her village; where countless people die of sheer neglect; while many are hungry while food is hoarded for profiteering; where usurers and trickster export the fruits of labour from those who do the work; where the honest suffer and languish while the villainous prosper; where justice is exception and injustice the rule; and where the total physical and mental energy of millions of people is spent on the struggle for mere survival. It is the crime of those who know that a radical change is necessary, so that the skill, creativity, ingenuity and diligence of the Indian people can be given full scope to work in building a different kind of India, a truly independent India, a better India.'''

The new development model, which has been adopted and which is sharply embodied in the new economic policies of liberalization, privatization and globalization, have , led in recent years to a huge drive by the state to transfer resources, particularly land and forest, which are critical for livelihood and the survival of the tribal people to corporations for exploitation of mineral resources. SEZs and other industries most of which have been enormously destructive to the environment. These industries have critically polluted water, bodies land, trees, plants and have had a devastating impact on the health and livelihood of tribal people. This has resulted in leaving tribals in a state of acute malnutrition and hunger which has pushed them to the very brink of survival. It could well be the severest indictment of the state in the history of democracy anywhere, on account of the sheer number of people (tribal) and the diabolic nature of the atrocities committed on them by the state, especially the police, leave aside the enormous and irreversible damage to the environment. It is also a glaring example of corruption- financial, intellectual and moral – sponsored and / or abetted by the

state by the state, that characterizes today's India, cutting across all party lines. Peaceful resistance of tribal communities against their forced displacement and the corporate grab of their resources is being sought to be violently crushed by the use of police and security forces and state and corporate funded and armed militants. The state violence has been accentuated by operation Green Hunt in which a huge number of paramilitary forces are being used mostly of the tribal.