

Left Wing Extremism

A War upon the State

► | 5.1 | What is Left Wing Extremism (LWE) or Naxalism (as it is popularly called)?

The term 'Naxal' derives its name from the village Naxalbari of district Darjeeling in West Bengal, where the movement originated in 1967 under the leadership of Charu Majumdar and Kanu Sanyal. It refers to the use of violence to destabilize the state through various communist guerrilla groups.

Naxalites are far-left radical communists who derive their political ideology from the teachings of Mao Zedong, a Chinese revolutionary leader. They have been operating in various parts of the country since the early seventies. At various points of time, different areas of the country have been seriously affected due to overt violence resorted to by naxalite groups active in those areas.

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh described naxalism as the most significant threat to internal security being faced by the country today. The threat has existed since long though there have been many ups and downs.

► 5.1.1 Philosophical background of Naxalism/Maoism/LWE

History has been witness to repeated occurrence of violence against the ruling elite mostly by the peasant class motivated by leftist ideologies. The

ideological basis for these violent movements was provided by the writings of *Marx* and *Engels*. This ideology is commonly called **Communism/Marxism**. This was later supported by *Lenin* and *Mao Tse-tung* (Mao Zedong). Leftist ideologies believe that all existing social relations and state structures in an elitist/capitalist society are exploitative by nature and only a revolutionary change through violent means can end this exploitation. Marxism advocates removal of the capitalist bourgeois elements through a violent class struggle.

Maoism is a doctrine that teaches to capture State power through a combination of armed insurgency, mass mobilization and strategic alliances. Mao called this process, the 'Protracted Peoples War'. The Maoist ideology glorifies violence and, therefore, the 'bearing of arms is non-negotiable' as per the Maoist insurgency doctrine. Maoism fundamentally considers the industrial-rural divide as a major division exploited by capitalism. Maoism can also refer to the egalitarianism that was seen during Mao's era as opposed to the free-market ideology.

Maoism's political orientation emphasizes the 'revolutionary struggle of the vast majority of people against the exploiting classes and their state structures'. Its military strategies have involved guerrilla war tactics focused on surrounding the cities from the countryside, with heavy emphasis on political transformation through mass involvement of the lower classes of society. 'Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun' is the key slogan of the Maoists. They mobilize large parts of the rural population to revolt against established institutions by engaging in guerrilla warfare. Maoism is no longer an ideological movement. Maoists are now creating a fear psychosis and denying democracy and development to tribals.

Unlike the political mass movements with violent underpinnings in the border areas, naxalites do not seek to secede from the Indian Union to establish a sovereign independent state of their own but their aim is to capture political power through armed struggle to install the so called 'people's government'.

► 5.1.2 Phases of Naxalism

Maoists spread their ideology very systematically and in a phased manner as follows—

1. **Preparatory Phase**—Detailed survey of new areas identifying important people, important public issues on which masses can be mobilised.
2. **Perspective Phase**—Mobilisation through frontal organisations – staging demonstration against government / administration based on local public grievances.
3. **Guerrilla Phase**—Converting the public movement into violent guerrilla warfare.
4. **Base Phase**—Here the Maoists try to establish their base and change the guerrilla zone into a liberated zone.
5. **Liberated Phase**—Establishment of people's Government.

► 5.2 Evolution of Naxalism in India

The spread and growth of Naxalism in India can broadly be divided into three phases or stages. The three stages have been described below.

► 5.2.1 First Stage

The Naxalite movement began in May 1967 in the three police station areas, Naxalbari, Khoribari and Phansidewa, of Darjeeling district in West Bengal. In November 1967, left wing extremists from the whole country founded the 'All India Coordination Committee' in Kolkata. In May 1968, the Committee was renamed as 'All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries' (AICCCR). It declared four ideological aims:

1. Protracted people's war in accordance with Mao's teachings
2. Adapting to guerrilla warfare tactics
3. Establishment of rural revolutionary base areas
4. Encircling the cities as well as abstaining from parliamentary elections

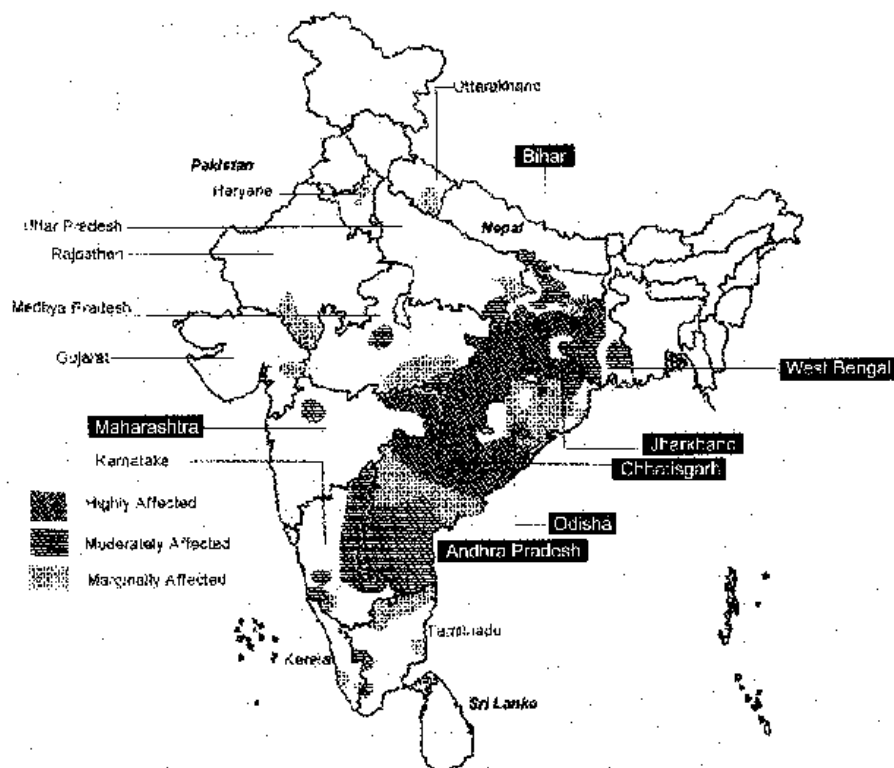
AICCCR founded the revolutionary party CPI Marxist-Leninist (ML) in 1969 that was based on Maoist ideology. Soon, the Naxalite movement spread to many parts of the country, especially West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. Their main followers were peasants and adivasis, or tribals, who often experienced discrimination and exploitation from state authorities. Also, several young unemployed people and students got attracted to the Naxal ideology. The period 1970 to mid-1971 was the peak period of violent activities by Naxalites. A joint operation of police and army in 1971 in the worst affected areas in West Bengal, Bihar and Odisha led to the arrest and death of almost all top leaders of the movement. Charu Mazumdar was caught and died in 1972 in police custody. The movement faced a severe blow during emergency when around 40,000 cadres were imprisoned in 1975.

► 5.2.2 Second Stage

The movement arose again in a more violent form after the Emergency. It continued to widen its base as per the strategy of 'protracted war'. Their base grew from West Bengal to Bihar to Odisha and also to Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. CPI(ML) was converted into People's War Group (PWG) in 1980 which had its base in Andhra Pradesh and struck heavy casualties among police personnel. PWG was banned by Andhra Government in 1992 but it continued its activities. Simultaneously, Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI) grew in strength in Bihar and carried out large scale attacks on landlords and other upper caste outfits. Naxal movement continued to grow at a steady pace across many parts of the country.

► 5.2.3 Third Stage

In a significant development in 2004, the People's War Group (PWG), operating in Andhra Pradesh, and the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI),



Extent of Spread of Naxalism

operating in Bihar and adjoining areas, merged to form the CPI (Maoist). Over 13 left wing extremist (LWE) groups are currently operating in the country. The CPI (Maoist) is the major left wing extremist outfit responsible for most incidents of violence and killing of civilians and security forces, and has been included in the Schedule of Terrorist Organizations along with all its formations and front organizations under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

After the formation of CPI (Maoist), Naxal violence has been on the rise since 2005, to the extent that in 2006, the Prime Minister had to declare Naxalism the single biggest internal security challenge being faced by India. Estimated to be 40,000 strong, the Naxalites have been a strain on the country's security forces and a barrier to development in the vast mineral rich region in eastern India known as the 'Red Corridor'. It is a narrow but contiguous strip passing through Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha. In fact, at the peak of Maoist movement in Nepal, Naxal influence was seen to be spreading from 'Tirupati to Pashupati'.

Today, the Naxalites influence a third of the geographical spread of country. Right now, the movement has expanded its activities covering over 460 police stations in 223 districts across 20 states. But the worst affected areas of the Maoist influence include approximately 30 districts of 7 states namely Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal. Most of these areas fall in the Dandakaranya Region which

includes areas of Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. CPI (Maoist) has stationed some battalions in the Dandakaranya region. Local panchayat leaders are often forced to resign and the Maoists hold regular Jan Adalat. They have been running a parallel government and parallel judiciary in these areas.

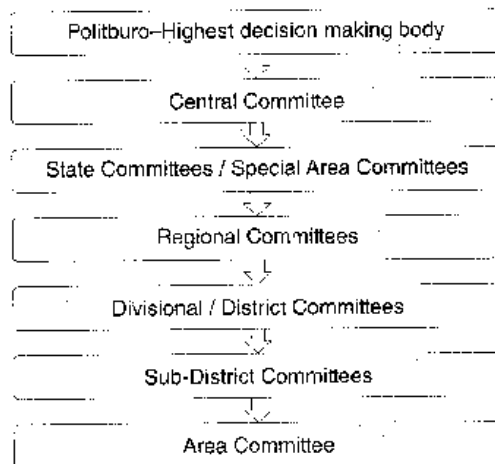
But violence alone cannot be the only yardstick to measure Maoist expansion. Maoists are also expanding in terms of indoctrination and consolidation. They are also trying to spread their ideology in the Bheel and Gond tribes dominated area, the 'Golden Corridor' stretching from Pune to Ahmedabad. They are trying to exploit new areas, various social groups and marginalized sections like Dalits and minorities through active association with their grievances against the state. Maoists have also made their presence felt in western Odisha, Upper Assam and Lohit in Arunachal Pradesh while they faced huge setbacks in Jangalmahal area of West Bengal and Kaimur and Rohtas districts of Bihar.

The movement's capacity to challenge the state has also increased enormously considering the incidents of violence and casualties resulting from them. The biggest incident was when they ambushed a whole CRPF Company in April 2010 in Dantewada of Chhattisgarh and killed 76 CRPF armed personnel, showing the extent of their strategic planning, skills and armament.

In 2013, the left wing extremist movement made international headlines when they killed 27 people, including some high-level politicians, in Sukma District of Chhattisgarh.

► 5.3 Party Structure

CPI (Maoist) is the main party now after the merger of various Naxalite groups in 2004. M Laxman Rao / Ganpati is the Secretary General of the party. The organizational structure of CPI (Maoist) is as follows:



It operates through Peoples Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA). PLGA has three kinds of force:

1. Basic force (Gathering of intellectuals)
2. Secondary force (Area committee plus guerrilla squads)
3. Main force (Structured on battalion/platoon format like the armed forces, and an intelligence unit)

As on date, the strength of PLGA is around 8,000-9,000 while Jan Militia is around 38,000. Usually 40-50 % of the total cadres consist of females.

► | 5.4 | Aims and Objectives and *Modus Operandi* of the Naxalites

The aim of the naxalites is to destroy the legitimacy of the State and to create a mass base, with a certain degree of acceptability. The ultimate objective is to attain political power by violent means and establish what they envisage as 'The India People's Democratic Federal Republic'. The naxalites predominantly attack the police and their establishments. They also attack certain types of infrastructure, like rail and road transport and power transmission, and also forcibly oppose execution of development works, like critical road construction. Naxalite activity is also manifesting itself through various civil society and front organizations on issues such as SEZ policy, land reforms, land acquisition, displacement, etc., with the objective of expanding their mass base and acquiring support of some intellectual elite.

While impeding development works and challenging State authority, the naxalites simultaneously try to derive benefit from the overall under-development and sub-normal functioning of field institutions like police stations, tehsils, development blocks, schools, primary health centres and anganwadi centres, which administer and provide services at the ground level and also reflect the State presence and writ.

► 5.4.1 Frontal Organizations of LWE (Left Wing Extremists)

The Maoists use their front organizations, like the Revolutionary Democratic Front, Peoples Democratic Front of India, Democratic Student Union and other student groups from left wing institutions like the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) of Delhi, to generate people's sympathy through persistent pursuance of propaganda on issues of human rights violations by the security forces. Maoists take help from left leaning civil society groups, human rights groups, national and international media and other students groups for mass mobilization. They exploit the sluggish judicial system to get away from legal conviction and punishment.

► 5.4.2 Guerrilla Warfare

The Maoists use guerrilla warfare tactics. Guerrilla warfare is a form of irregular warfare in which a small group of combatants, such as armed civilians or

irregulars, use military tactics including ambushes, sabotage, raids, petty warfare, hit-and-run tactics, and extraordinary mobility to fight a larger and less mobile traditional army.

► 5.4.3 Powerful Propaganda Machinery

Naxalites have very powerful propaganda machinery which is active in all major towns as well as in the national capital. They even have their supporters in the media. These NGOs and activists wage a non-stop propaganda war against any government step that aims to check the naxalite movement. As a matter of strategy, naxalites try to be on the right side of the media all the time. They have their sympathizers everywhere who raise a hue and cry in the name of human rights against police action on the Maoists. These media groups are conveniently silent when naxalites kill innocent people.

► 5.4.4 Tactical Counter Offensive Campaign (TCOC)

Maoists carry out violent activities called "Tactical Counter Offensive Campaign" (TCOC) which runs from March to early Monsoon in July. Maoists usually resort to TCOC every year to put the security forces in disarray so that they can go on a recruitment drive. The aim of "TCOC" is to exhibit and consolidate their (Maoists) strength, by carrying out violent operations. Going by the past experience, the rebels have launched a number of deadly attacks against security forces during the TCOC period.

► 5.4.5 Fresh Strategy of Maoists

Fresh strategy of Maoists is to expand outside forests into urban area, win over non-peasant classes and other social groups, seize leadership of ongoing local struggles, intensify mine warfare, militarise the Jan Militia, force the dispersal of police resources by launching attacks outside its strongholds, establish organisational bases in towns adjoining guerrilla zones and harden its stance downtrodden on abductions.

► | 5.5 | Links with Other Terrorist Organizations and Foreign Countries

The CPI (Maoist) has close fraternal ties with many north-east insurgent groups, especially the RPF/PLA of Manipur and National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) for sourcing arms. Most of these outfits have linkages with external forces inimical to India. The CPI (Maoist) has also frequently expressed their solidarity with the Jammu and Kashmir terrorist groups. These ties are part of their 'strategic united front' against the Indian State. The CPI (Maoist) also has close links with foreign Maoist organizations in Philippines (Communist Party of Philippines), Turkey, etc.

The above outfit is also a member of the 'Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organizations of South Asia' (CCOMPOSA), which includes ten

Maoist groups from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The CCOMPOSA cited its chief aim as resisting not only US imperialism and globalization, but also the 'centralized' Indian state and its internal repression of minority people. It also targeted the alleged expansionist designs of India in South Asia backed by US imperialism. In 2006, CCOMPOSA at its Fourth Conference in Nepal reiterated its anti-India stand and reaffirmed its commitment to spread protracted people's war to capture state power through violent means in South Asia.

➤ 5.5.1 Sources of Funding and Linkages with Organized Crime

The main source of funding of the left wing extremist movements is extortion from government projects as well as from corporate companies working in their areas of influence. Most of the time, it is in the form of protection money. Sometimes they resort to kidnapping and killings also to terrorize the rich people so that they give financial help easily. Left wing extremism is most intense precisely in areas which are rich in natural mineral resources, i.e. where coal, iron, bauxite, manganese, nickel, and copper are found in abundance. Odisha and Jharkhand alone account for more than half of the country's coal reserves. Coal is by far India's largest energy resource. Therefore, it provides them enough scope for extortion.

➤ 5.6 Naxalites are not Really the Messiahs of the Downtrodden

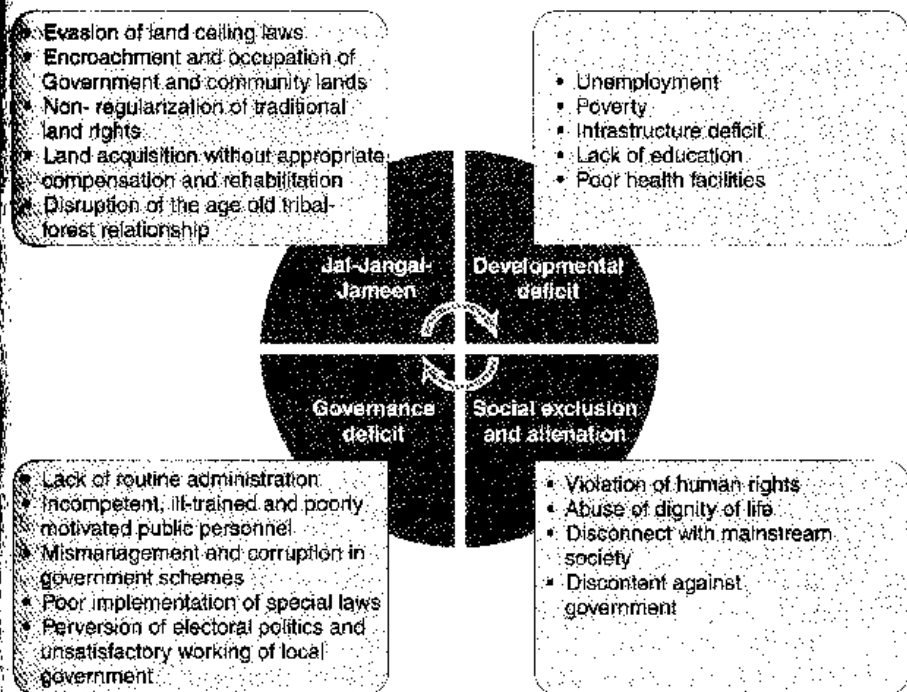
From their ideology, it appears that naxalites are fighting for the rights of poor people and want to establish a people's government, while the facts are quite contrary. Social uplifting of the down trodden is not their real aim, rather it is political power. They study the local problems and issues and use them as fodder to foster their end game which is clearly the seizure of power through violent means.

Maoists have vested interest in keeping poverty alive because it enables them to expand their territory. They don't allow district administration to do any development work like building roads and improving electricity and water supply in the areas. The local population very soon realizes that they have been used by the naxalites and their social and economic issues take a back seat while the battle for supremacy emerges as the prime motto of the Maoists. But, at times, it is too late and the locals are forced to support them.

➤ 5.7 Factors Responsible for Rise of Naxalism

It is ironical that even after 66 years of Independence, many remote areas which are otherwise rich in mineral resources are yet to see any sign of development. This situation, combined with many other socio-economic problems, has

contributed towards the rise of naxalism in India. These factors can be broadly categorized as follows:



► 5.8 Fight Against Naxalism

Under India's Constitution, issues of law and order have traditionally been the responsibility of the states, rather than the central government. Till 2006, the affected states were mainly taking on the Red challenge. Andhra Pradesh had even succeeded in curbing naxalism to a large extent.

In 2006, after the Prime Minister's declaration of the naxal problem as the biggest challenge to internal security, many new steps were taken. This included creation of a separate division in the Home Ministry (Naxal management division) and appointment of an expert committee headed by D Bandopadhyay by the Planning Commission in 2006.

The expert committee underscored the social, political, economic and cultural discrimination faced by the scheduled castes/scheduled tribes (SCs/STs) across the country. The committee established the lack of empowerment of local communities as the main reason for the spread of naxalism. It further stated that state bureaucracy had failed miserably in delivering good governance in naxal affected areas. It recommended a tribal friendly land acquisition and rehabilitation policy.

More than three years after identifying Naxalism as the biggest internal threat, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh admitted in 2009 that the government's efforts at containing the Naxalites had not been up to the desired level. After this, the worst affected states launched a large-scale offensive that involved deployment of heavy troops in the worst affected areas.

➤ 5.8.1 Change in Strategy by the Home Ministry

The government has realized that the issues of good governance, development, regular functioning of critical field institutions and public awareness are also important in dealing with left wing extremism. Therefore, its approach has accordingly changed to deal with naxalite activities in the areas of security, development, administration and public perception in a holistic manner.

➤ 5.8.2 Important Schemes for States Affected by Left Wing Extremism

- **Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme:** Funds are provided for meeting the recurring expenditure relating to insurance, training and operational needs of the security forces, rehabilitation of left wing extremist cadres who surrender in accordance with the surrender and rehabilitation policy of the State Government concerned, community policing, security related infrastructure for village defence committees and publicity material.
- **Special Infrastructure Scheme (SIS):** The scheme for special infrastructure in affected states was approved in the XIth Plan, with an allocation of ₹500 crore, to cater to critical infrastructure gaps which cannot be covered under the existing schemes. These relate to requirements of mobility for the police/security forces by upgrading existing roads/tracks in inaccessible areas, providing secure camping grounds and helipads at strategic locations in remote and interior areas, measures to enhance security in respect of police stations/outposts located in vulnerable areas, etc. Now, this scheme has been expanded to provide funds for upgradation of infrastructure, weaponry, equipment and training of special forces of the states affected by extremism.
- **Central scheme for assistance to civilian victims/family of victims of terrorist, communal and naxal violence:** This scheme was started in 2009. The broad aim of the scheme is to assist families of victims of terrorist, communal and naxal violence. An amount of ₹3 lakh is given to the affected families under the scheme.
- **Integrated Action Plan (IAP):** Planning Commission is implementing a plan for 88 selected tribal and backward districts in the country for accelerated development. The aim of this initiative is to provide public infrastructure and services. Existing model of spending ₹30 crore per district through a district level three-member committee headed by the District Magistrate, with the Superintendent of Police and the District

Forest Officer as members of the committee is being implemented. Major works/projects taken up under the IAP include construction of school buildings/school furniture, anganwadi centres, drinking water facilities, rural roads, panchayat bhawan/community halls, godowns/PDS shops, livelihood activities, skill development/trainings, minor irrigation works, electric lighting, health centres, etc.

- **Road Requirement Plan for extremist affected areas:** Phase I of the plan was approved in February, 2009 for improvement of road connectivity in 34 districts in 8 states extremely affected by left wing extremism, viz. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh, with a projected cost of ₹7,300 crore.
- **Scheme of Fortified Police Stations:** The Ministry has sanctioned 400 police stations in 9 affected states at a cost of ₹2 crore per police station.
- **Civic Action Programme (CAPs):** Under this scheme, financial grants are sanctioned to CAPs to undertake development in the affected states. This is a successful scheme which aims to build bridges between the local population and the security forces.

Meanwhile, the Home Ministry has brought some changes in its civic action programme. It has now adopted an 'individual-oriented' approach rather than a 'project-oriented' approach as this will help in bridging the gap between locals and security personnel more efficiently. Under the project christened 'Winning Hearts and Minds', the Central Reserve Police Force and the Border Security Force, who have till now been spending funds on small projects and development activities which included building small bridges and roads, implementing drinking water and irrigation schemes, etc., can now spend ₹20 crore per annum, on welfare activities directed at individuals and families under the revised guidelines.

- **Roshani Scheme (Ministry of Rural Development):** It is a placement linked skill development scheme targeting 50,000 rural men and women, mostly the tribal population, in 24 worst affected districts. It emphasizes on special efforts to proactively cover the particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) on a priority basis.

► 5.8.3 Administrative Hurdles in Dealing with Left Wing Extremism

1. Poor infrastructure, lack of communication and shortage of trained manpower are key problems in fighting with Maoists.
2. Due to lack of infrastructural growth, there is clear absence of routine administration in these areas which allows Maoists to run camps, collect taxes and extort money from all industries and infrastructure companies working in their area. Thus, Maoists conduct a virtual parallel government. The Dandakaranya region straddles different states. It gives the Maoists a distinct advantage.
3. Interstate boundaries are fissures which are being exploited by Maoists. There is poor coordination among various state police forces. The interstate trijunctions are the worst affected.

4. There is also lack of professionalism and proper understanding between central forces and state police.
5. Differences in policies of state governments regarding surrenders, talks and policing strategy are also exploited by the Maoists. Pressure in one state allows easy movement into another. It happened during Operation Greyhound which was very successful in Andhra Pradesh. It had almost eliminated Naxalites in the state but they made an easy escape to adjoining states like Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Odisha. Had the operation been supported by all these states at that time, naxalism would at least have been eliminated in the Dandakaranya region.
6. Besides this, since many rebels are recruited from among the tribals, they have a built-in advantage over the security forces. Even though government forces outnumber the rebels and have greater resources at their disposal, they frequently fall prey to devastating attacks in remote areas.
7. The state police is poorly equipped and trained and is short of manpower, while the central forces apparently lack commitment and motivation.

► 5.9 The Way Forward

Naxalism is not merely a law and order issue. The phenomenon of naxalism is directly related to under-development. It is not a coincidence that the tribal areas are the main battleground of left wing extremism today. Exploitation, artificially depressed wages, inadequate employment opportunities, lack of access to resources, under-developed agriculture, geographical isolation, lack of land reforms, all contribute significantly to the growth of the naxalite movement. All these factors have to be taken into consideration as we evolve solutions for facing the challenge. History tells us that masses do not want to associate with non-violent people. They are generally peace loving. It is only due to circumstances that they are forced to adopt a path of violence.

Naxalism is not the problem; rather it is the symptom of a problem. Why doesn't Naxalism flourish in the markets of Gujarat, the fields of Punjab or in the IT parks of Gurgaon and Hyderabad? Why is Maoist ideology succeeding in Nepal when it is failing in China? The answer is obvious. In the places that left wing extremism succeeds, people are relatively poor, they face oppression from various segments of society, and the government is indifferent to their plight with little prospects of things getting better in the future. Left wing extremism fails when the reverse is true.

To eliminate naxalism, it is not enough to eliminate their leaders, imprison their rank and file or arrange for mass surrenders of men and weapons. You do all of that and you can still fail; new leaders will rise, the cadres will return and weapons are easy enough to get.

To truly eliminate naxalism, we must undercut their *raison d'être*, their reason for existence. While their methods may be abhorrent, most of their goals (apart from overthrowing the government) are not. Therefore, the government

must fulfil their goals for them. If they have nothing to fight for, they will not fight.

Electricity and running water are virtually non-existent in remote areas of the Red Corridor. The absence of basic necessities has produced opportunities for the naxalites to provide services to local residents, such as irrigation systems. The infrastructure that does exist has long been a target of the naxalites: power plants, schools, and phone and rail lines have all been attacked. This gives credence to the central government's assertion that security needs to be established before development can come. This is a contentious issue among affected states, which argue that the naxalites would be able to attract fewer new recruits if basic needs are met on a more acceptable basis.

The fight against naxalism has to be long and persistent. There must be multi-pronged composite strategy to deal with it. Developmental initiatives should follow security forces' action closely. Otherwise, success of security operations will not sustain for long.

We can broadly divide the strategy as follows:

► 5.9.1 Development Strategy

The following steps should be taken to wean away the masses from the influence of naxalism:

1. Special focus on political security and accelerated socio-economic development in a holistic manner
2. Better infrastructure like roads, electricity and communication in core naxal areas
3. Political parties must strengthen their cadre base in naxal areas so that potential youth can be weaned away from the path of naxal ideology
4. Affirmative action by state
5. Decentralization and participative democracy
6. Coordination among different departments of state to ensure holistic development
7. Coordination between police and different state departments
8. Coordination and implementation of schemes of different central ministries, especially the Integrated Action Plan for 82 districts and Road Requirement Plan for 34 districts.
9. Coordination and implementation of various development schemes, flagship programmes and distribution of titles under the Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, in left wing extremism affected states.

► 5.9.2 Security Strategy

Those who are hardcore ideologues and whose only purpose is to overthrow the state have to be dealt sternly with the policy of bullet-for-bullet. We have to wean away peace loving common people from the hardcore naxalites as these people do not want development. They use underdevelopment and governance

deficit as a means to achieve their selfish goals. Operation Greyhound of Andhra Pradesh has shown a professional way to handle the naxal menace.

Some broad points of security strategy are given as follows:

1. Professional dominance by security forces
2. Primacy of state police at all levels augmented state police strength, upgradation and capacity building of local state police
3. Increasing the number of security forces in the strongholds of the Naxals
4. Local police infrastructure should be developed with more thanas, chowkis, posts and battalions. Thanas and chowkis should be strategically located and well-functional
5. Modernization of weapons and technical equipment
6. Improvement of communication systems and electronic surveillance systems
7. Special training to police personnel
8. Formation of specially trained special task forces on the pattern of the Greyhounds in Andhra Pradesh
9. Special emphasis on strengthening of local intelligence units of the affected states
10. Since it is an inter-state problem, the states should adopt a collective approach and pursue a coordinated response to counter it
11. Promote local resistance groups on lines of 'village defence committees' (VDC) in Jammu and Kashmir
12. Inter-state police coordination, especially in Dandakaranya region
13. Better command, control and coordination between state and central forces
14. Tightening of control on availability of explosives
15. Posting of competent and motivated police officers in LWE affected areas and subsequent incentives for choice postings and suitable reward packages.

► 5.9.3 Psychological Operations

The following measures should be implemented:

1. Effective and persistent psychological operations must be launched to delegitimize the movement
2. Media and public perception management
3. Administration to engage with public at large, civil society, NGOs to restore people's faith and confidence in the government machinery

► 5.9.4 Other Measures

The following measures should additionally be implemented:

1. Cutting financial support to the naxal movement
2. The doors for peace talks should always be open
3. There should be genuine attempt to win the hearts and minds of the people

4. Time-bound conviction of arrested cadre must be ensured through vital reforms in criminal justice system
5. Effective surrender and rehabilitation policy ensuring proper safety and care of their families
6. Better adherence to the law legislated for protection and development of tribals

► 5.9.5 A Few Success Stories in the Fight Against Naxalism

1. *Story of Sandesh (Bihar)*

Sandesh block in Bihar has seen gradual elimination of Naxalites. Sandesh comes under Bhojpur district. There are 11 panchayats under the block. A grassroots' view of the end of naxal dominance in panchayats of Sandesh block would be illuminating. Naxalism in Bihar started from two blocks of Bihar, Sandesh was one of them. The other adjoining block was Sahar. The most important factor which proved instrumental in dismantling naxal dominance was the Panchayat elections initiated in Bihar. In the panchayat elections of the year 2000, six panchayats had Maoist mukhiyas. The second panchayat elections were held in 2006. It was the first important signal of the growing unpopularity of Maoists in the villages. It also created a significant distance between the Maoist leaders and the local community. The process of social cohesion against the Maoists started in many panchayats of Sandesh block. This new attitude of the social order forced sympathizers of naxalites to mend their ways or leave the villages. Social pressure forced many naxalites to switch over to farming and shed off their association with naxal outfits. Gradually, Sandesh block grew relatively free from naxal violence.

2. *The Aasdwat Project in Jehanabad (Bihar)*

There are many initiatives started by the Bihar government to curb naxal movement in Jehanabad district which remained in the news for naxal violence for more than two decades. One such is the Aasdwat Project in Jehanabad district. The scheme is currently underway in five Naxalite affected panchayats of the district. These are Sikariya, Sewanan, Mandebigha, Surungpur-Bhawanichak and Jamuk, all in Sadar block. Villages under these five panchayats are witnessing a flurry of development activities on a war footing. The state government has come out with a liberal package of welfare schemes under Aasdwat, including construction of cement lanes, drains, chaupals and link roads worth ₹29 crore. Other works include construction of buildings for schools and Aanganwadi centres, culverts and individual toilets. The government has also taken some affirmative action in respect of forest rights (Forest Act 2008), displacement (R&R Policy), livelihoods (NREGA), etc. The people, at large, seem to have embraced the state's Aasdwat programme in a big way. So, as this case study amplifies, Naxalism can be defeated and eliminated by the process of development and a new social order but the change has to come from within.

3. AP Greyhounds Model

Andhra Pradesh had shown a model for controlling naxalism. Though the 'Greyhounds' naxal fighting force was its main element, infrastructure development and effective surrender and rehabilitation policy have also proved effective. The model was so successful that all the Naxalite leaders were forced to leave Andhra Pradesh and try new hideouts in Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra.

Key elements in the Andhra Pradesh model

- Effective surrender and rehabilitation policy
- Culture of police leadership
- Infrastructure development
- Sound knowledge of local terrain
- Grass roots involvement in anti-Naxal operations
- Incentives to police for good work
- Superior intelligence, coordination and assessment
- Operations based on local intelligence

► 5.10 Key Issues

► 5.10.1 Intellectual Support to Naxalism

Top intellectuals like Arundhati Roy and Binayak Sen regularly support naxalism in the name of advocating an egalitarian society, human rights and tribal rights. They condemn security forces for human rights violation but surprisingly they adopt a noble silence when naxalites brutally kill security forces, politicians and common people. It clearly reflects their double standards. They should also understand use of violent means cannot be supported to achieve a noble cause in a democratic set-up. Although it has become a disturbing fact that resorting to violent agitation is the preferred strategy for aggrieved citizens to articulate their grievances as compared to constitutional methods of democratic agitation, the success of the Anna Hazare movement and subsequent electoral results in Delhi have proved otherwise. Rather than supporting Naxals blindly, these intellectuals should encourage Naxals to fight elections, to join mainstream society and to learn the art of give and take of democratic bargaining without aggression.

► 5.10.2 What was Salwa Judum and why it Failed?

Salwa Judum was a movement in the Bastar area of Chhattisgarh which assumed the form of mass movement against the atrocities committed by naxalites. It literally means 'collective problem solving platform' and it gained momentum because people got fed up with naxalites' intimidation and extortion. The administration claims that it was spontaneous, peaceful and a voluntary case of public uprising against the Maoist movement. The naxalites never

wanted the Salwa Judum movement to succeed in Bastar because they were hounded by the 'Greyhounds' force of Andhra Pradesh and Bastar was their biggest bastion. They established their people's government in Dandakaranya Zone (which is a cluster in the remotest corner of the five adjoining states of Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra). This is an area of immense strategic and geo-political importance for naxalites. They adopted some counter strategies against Salwa Judum. Firstly, the leadership of this movement was branded anti-people and some key leaders were executed. Secondly, the entire propaganda machinery in favour of the naxalites was ordered to throttle Salwa Judum movement in its infancy. Soon, the movement was discredited on many counts. It was shown that it was a proxy police movement and the police was recruiting children forcibly. It is believed that in 2006, more than 100 villagers involved in the movement were killed by the naxalites. Finally, in May 2013, senior Congress leader Mahendra Karma, who had supported the movement, was killed mercilessly. Surprisingly, the so-called human rights activists and intellectual supporters of naxalites were silent on this killing. With no support from any quarter to counter this propaganda, the Salwa Judum movement was killed in its infancy.

► 5.10.3 2013 Chhattisgarh Elections

For the first time in decades, the Maoists have encouraged calibrated polling in some areas, instead of fanatically implementing a policy to boycott the election. The districts of Chhattisgarh partially controlled by Maoists — with 12 Assembly constituencies — voted overwhelmingly in 2013. Compared to 2008, voter turnout in 2013 increased by 9.67 percentage points in 12 constituencies. The record rise in polling illustrates that Naxal-dominated constituencies embraced the democratic process more avidly than the rest of Chhattisgarh. The rise in polling in south Chhattisgarh was attributed to a reduction in Maoist strength. Several villages located deep inside Maoist areas voted overwhelmingly

It is believed that Maoists are fading in Chhattisgarh. A decreasing number of ambushes conducted on the forces, contradictory statements from rebel leaders indicating fissures in the rank and file are signs of this. Also, the large-scale desertion of cadres in some areas, increasing frequency and intensity of security operations in base areas hitherto unexplored by the forces and the initiation of welfare programmes in Bastar division have pushed the rebels to the brink, thus resulting in a record voter turnout.

However, as a result of a well-established political and military network, the Maoists still control half of at least four south Bastar districts and one-third of the rest. In Bijapur, most of the government-run welfare programmes are not allowed by the rebels; government officials never undertake any road construction projects without tacit approval from the local commanders; tribal constables request the Maoists to protect their families in at least one-third of the district.

► 5.10.4 Should Army be Deployed Against Naxals?

The army is trained to fight against an enemy country. Fighting with our own people is not the job of the army. In fact, the army is employed to protect its own people. It would be very difficult for the army to distinguish innocent people from hardcore Naxalites. The Army is a symbol of national pride. We must ensure that the image of the army is not affected. So, naxalism has to be fought by the police and other para military forces.

Also, a complete armed solution is not the only answer to naxalism. We should give more emphasis on effective administration, development and growth of the affected areas. As of now, it is not advisable to deploy Indian army against naxals. However, air support from army can be taken not for air strikes but for evacuation, supply, medical aid, etc.

PROBABLE QUESTIONS BASED ON THIS CHAPTER

1. Should army be deployed in left wing extremism affected areas? Justify your answer.
2. How much intellectual support to Naxalism is justified?
3. What are the basic features of Operation Greyhound?
4. What are the aims and objectives of Naxalites? Are they really the messiahs of downtrodden as they claim to be?
5. What are the factors responsible for the rise of Naxalism?