



Maoism and Internal Security in India: Evolution, Spread, and Countermeasures

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ARTICLE DETAILS

Research Paper

Keywords:

Naxalism, Maoist insurgency, Marginalised ethnic groups, Proliferation

ABSTRACT

Naxalism, denoting the Maoist insurgency in India, remains a significant threat to the nation's internal security. The movement originated in West Bengal in the late 1960s and developed into a structured insurrection that spread to many Indian states, particularly within the "Red Corridor" region. Maoism in India is based on Marxist-Leninist principles and the ideologies of revolutionary Mao Zedong. It has drawn marginalised ethnic groups, landless labourers, and discontented youth. This study examines the evolution of Maoism, the ideas that fuelled its development, the reasons for its proliferation, and its implications for security in China. The analysis examines the Indian government's response, encompassing police operations and development-oriented initiatives, while critically assessing their effectiveness. The research examines evidence from educational institutions, governmental reports, and field assessments to demonstrate that Maoism constitutes an issue of law and order as well as a societal and political challenge.

Introduction

The internal security challenges faced by India are intricate and varied, involving elements such as terrorism, cross-border infiltration, communal tensions, and left-wing extremism. The Maoist insurgency, frequently characterised as the "single biggest internal security threat" by former Prime

Minister Manmohan Singh (Press Trust of India [PTI], 2006), represents a continuous and violent challenge to the legitimacy of the Indian state. The Maoists, functioning under the aegis of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), promote the notion of armed insurrection aimed at dismantling current democratic frameworks and supplanting them with a regime that embodies proletarian ideals.

In spite of numerous decades dedicated to counter-insurgency efforts and socio-economic initiatives, Maoism persists, though its intensity has diminished. This paper aims to elucidate the origins and development of Maoist violence, examine its geographical expansion, analyse the factors contributing to its persistence, and assess the state's diverse responses. This inquiry seeks to elucidate the reasons behind the enduring presence of Maoism over the decades, as well as to assess the efficacy of countermeasures implemented to restore governance and peace in the regions impacted.

The origins of the Maoist movement in India can be traced back to the Naxalbari uprising of 1967 in West Bengal, spearheaded by radical communists including Charu Majumdar and Kanu Sanyal. This peasant revolt signified a departure from established communist factions, leading to the establishment of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), which aimed to emulate Mao Zedong's agrarian revolution within the Indian context.(Banerjee, 2006).

Initially perceived as a battle that was confined to a certain region, the movement quickly gained national attention due to the violent means it employed and the ideological enthusiasm it displayed. Despite the fact that the original Communist Party of India (ML) broke up by the middle of the 1970s as a result of internal strife and pressure from the government, it was instrumental in the formation of further splinter groups. In the end, these two organisations came together to form the People's War Group (PWG) and the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI), which are the two most prominent organisations. By combining forces in 2004, these two organisations came together to form the Communist Party of India (Maoist), which provided the insurgency with a unified identity.(Singh, 2006).

Over the years, Maoist violence has grown from intermittent peasant uprisings into a long-term armed confrontation that uses guerilla warfare in forested and tribal areas. The movement's strength has changed throughout time as political climates, operational strategies, and developmental initiatives have changed. Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, and Mao Zedong's ideas are very important to the Maoist movement. They want to start a class struggle to bring down the capitalist state and set up a dictatorship of the proletariat (Chakravarti, 2009). Maoists say that the Indian government works for a small group of

people and has consistently kept large parts of society from getting justice, respect, and job opportunities.

The CPI(Maoist)'s main goal is to start a Protracted People's War (PPW) in the countryside and then surround cities to take over the government. The party's founding texts call the Indian government "semi-feudal, semi-colonial" and say that parliamentary democracy is a tool of the bourgeoisie (Singh, 2013). Their beliefs support using violence to change society. This includes attacks on police, government officials, schools, railroads, and other infrastructure, as well as the killing of people who are seen as class enemies. Recruitment frequently focusses on young people from poor and marginalised groups, with a focus on brainwashing and militarisation.

Geographical Spread and Affected Areas (The Red Corridor)

The Maoist insurgency had an impact on more than 200 districts in 20 Indian states at its height, which was roughly 2010–2012, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA, 2011). The Red Corridor was the name given to this area, which included sections of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, and West Bengal. The Red Corridor is known for its rough terrain, dense forests, poor infrastructure, and large tribal communities. These conditions give militants tactical advantages and show how little attention state agencies have paid to the area (Shah, 2010). Maoists work in tiny, fast-moving groups called dalams and use hit-and-run tactics, landmines, and IEDs. Recent data shows that the number of afflicted districts is going down (MHA, 2020), but there are still areas with a lot of Maoists, especially in the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh, where the insurgency is still quite strong.

Socio-Economic Factors Behind Maoist Insurgency

Maoism's long-lasting power is not just a matter of law and order; it also comes from deep-seated poverty in society. Adivasis, Dalits, and landless peasants have frequently felt left out of mainstream development. Some of the main reasons for this discontent are:

- **Land Alienation:** Many people have been unhappy about being forced to move because of mining, dams, and industrial developments without getting the help they need to get back on their feet, especially in places like Odisha and Chhattisgarh (Kujur, 2006).
- **Poverty and Illiteracy:** The Red Corridor runs through a lot of India's poorest districts. The Planning Commission (2012) says that areas where Maoist activity is common have high levels of poverty and low levels of human development.

- Exclusion from Governance: Tribal people are angry because they don't have a voice in government, there is corruption in local government, and there are no ways to file complaints (Shah, 2010).

Maoists take advantage of these divisions by claiming to be defenders of the weak. In regions they dominate, they often provide basic conflict resolution, parallel government, and even basic public services.

Impact on Internal Security

The Maoist insurgency is a serious threat to India's internal security because it questions the authority of the state, weakens democratic administration, and makes large rural areas less stable. Between 2004 and 2020, Maoist violence killed thousands of civilians, security personnel, and Maoist cadres (SATP, 2021). The insurgents have often attacked police stations, railway tracks, schools, highways, and telecommunications infrastructure, which has slowed down progress and made it harder for the government to provide services.

The security forces have also lost a lot of people. In well-known events like the Dantewada massacre in 2010, 76 CRPF jawans were slain in one ambush (The Hindu, 2010). These actions show that the insurgency can plan and carry out coordinated strikes that stop the government from working, especially in isolated places.

Also, the presence of Maoists often stops private investment, forces people to leave their homes, and keeps the cycle of violence and lack of development going. In Maoist areas, there is a climate of dread where both government workers and regular people are at risk of punishment. This threat also affects local governments like Panchayats, which typically don't work in areas where there is an insurgency (Verma, 2012).

Government Policies and Counter-Insurgency Measures

The Indian government is using a "two-pronged strategy" to deal with the Maoist danger. This means that they are combining security operations with programs to help people develop. This response has been shaped by a number of important policies:

a. Operation Green Hunt

Operation Green Hunt started around 2009 and was a big counter-insurgency operation that involved paramilitary forces and state police in areas where Maoists were strong. It got rid of a lot of Maoist

leaders and cadres, but it was also criticised for collateral damage and human rights violations (Chakravarti, 2009).

b. Updating security

The Ministry of Home Affairs started the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme to update police personnel in afflicted states, make it easier for them to get around, and build stronger police stations (MHA, 2011). The Centre also started the Special Infrastructure Scheme (SIS) to get troops ready for fighting in the forest.

c. Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)

The number of CRPF battalions, especially the CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action) troops, that are sent to afflicted areas has gone up a lot. These special forces are trained to fight in the woods and have proven very helpful in tactical missions. Even if these steps were taken, a solely military approach hasn't worked very well in the long run. Experts have said that it's important to deal with the core reasons of alienation instead of just using force (Roy, 2011).

Developmental Approaches and Rehabilitation Initiatives

Since militarisation alone can't solve the Maoist problem, successive governments have concentrated more and more on development-based interventions:

a. Integrated Action Plan (IAP)

The IAP started in 2010 and was meant to give block-level support to basic infrastructure, education, and health services in districts affected by LWE. District collectors got money to carry out projects without having to deal with red tape (Planning Commission, 2011).

b. The Aspirational Districts Program

This flagship program finds districts that are not well-developed, including those in the Red Corridor, and keeps track of their growth in categories like health, education, and infrastructure.

c. Policy for Surrender and Rehabilitation

A number of governments have made it possible for Maoists who give up to get cash rewards, job training, and legal help. The goal is to get local young people to stop supporting the movement and

make it easier for them to reintegrate. However, problems with implementation, like corruption, delays in distributing funds, lack of coordination, and poor handling of complaints, have made these programs less effective (Gaikwad, 2014). To really work, the developmental approach needs to be backed up by trust-building and inclusive the government. Intelligence-gathering and law enforcement institutions are very important for both stopping Maoist operations before they happen and responding to them. But there have always been certain issues with the internal security system:

Several Maoist attacks, including as the surprise in Dantewada, have shown that local intelligence collection isn't working well. A big problem has been the lack of human intelligence (HUMINT) because people are scared and don't trust each other. Poor communication between the central forces and the state police has often led to overlapping jurisdictions, slow responses, and operational inefficiencies (Verma, 2012). Political competition and jurisdictional friction make this much worse.

Many police stations in places afflicted by Maoism still don't have enough people, equipment, or training. The MHA (2019) says that a lot of states have police vacancies of more over 20%, and that this is because the police aren't getting enough new technology and aren't being paid enough to work in dangerous areas. Counter-Insurgency and Anti-Terrorism (CIAT) Schools have been set up, and police are being trained in how to acquire intelligence and fight like guerrillas. These are some of the things being done to make things better.

Human Rights Concerns and Civil Society's Role

There have been significant human rights issues with counterinsurgency tasks, including as fake encounters, custodial abuse, unlawful arrests, and harassment of tribal communities (Human Rights Watch, 2008). Allegations against state-sponsored militias, such Salwa Judum in Chhattisgarh, drew a lot of condemnation from human rights groups and were ruled unlawful by the Supreme Court in 2011.

These kinds of things make those living in the area feel alienated, which supports the Maoist story of state tyranny. Groups like the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) and activists like Binayak Sen have brought attention to the problems faced by civilians who are stuck between militants and the government.

At the same time, the Maoists have done terrible things too, such recruiting children, using people as shields, and killing informers. This double aggression has made it hard for justice to happen. Civil society groups, human rights groups, and local NGOs have been very important in pushing for

democratic accountability, keeping an eye on abuses, and helping communities grow. Their involvement is crucial for rebuilding trust in government institutions, supporting peacebuilding, and making rehabilitation initiatives possible.

Conclusion

The Maoist insurgency in India is a serious and complex threat to internal security that is based on more than just ideological differences. It is also based on decades of neglect, state failure, and political exclusion. In the last ten years, security forces have delivered serious blows to Maoist capabilities, but a full resolution is still out of reach. You can't get lasting peace just by using military force. It needs to be done in a way that makes sure tribal communities have secure land rights, access to justice, a voice in government, and chances to make money. More significantly, we need to make sure that democratic institutions are responsible, open to everyone, and caring. The Maoist rebellion is a reminder and a criticism of the uneven progress in the Indian republic. If these core reasons are not dealt with in a long-term and all-inclusive way, the cycle of violence and separation could start up again, even in new forms.

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