



Role of Police and Paramilitary Forces in Resolving Naxalism

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ABSTRACT

Naxalism or Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) continues to be one of the internal security threats in India, especially in remote, forested, and socio-economically challenged areas. This research explores the contribution of police and paramilitary in addressing the challenge of Naxalism and resolution thereof, especially in the context of intelligence operations, policing and counter-insurgency activities, cooperation among various agencies, involvement with community members, protection of infrastructure, as well as rehabilitation and restoration of the civil administration system. The study is qualitative and descriptive in nature, using secondary data sourced from governmental documents and published studies. It can be observed from the analysis that state police contribute through intelligence gathering, investigation, area domination, community policing, and rehabilitation, while the Central Armed Police Force makes contributions through manpower and geographical difficulties. Other challenges mentioned in the study are difficult terrain, IEDs and landmine hazards, intelligence deficiencies, resource shortages, coordination difficulties, alienation of communities and human rights issues. The recent trends show that there is a significant reduction in the LWE violence and geographic extent of the problem due to the cumulative efforts of security operations, intelligence, development and governance initiatives. The results imply

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that security operations alone can never be an answer to this problem and a proper coordination of efforts among the police, paramilitary organizations, intelligence agencies, civil administration and local communities is very much necessary. It becomes clear from the study that an integrated effort comprising security, intelligence, governance, development, community involvement and rehabilitation is required to convert the successes of counter insurgency to peace and stability.

1. INTRODUCTION

Naxalism, popularly known as Left Wing Extremism (LWE), has been one of the prominent security challenges for India since the advent of the Naxalbari Movement in West Bengal in 1967. The movement, which started as an offshoot of social issues like agrarian injustice, land rights, socio-economic discrimination, and marginalisation of backward communities, later metamorphosed into an organised insurgency movement inspired by the Maoist philosophy. In the years that followed, Naxalism extended its tentacles to various parts of central, east, and south India, especially those remote, forested, and tribal areas where geographical seclusion, lack of basic facilities, administrative dearth, and socio-economic vulnerability created a conducive environment for the spread of the extremist movement. The creation of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) in 2004 marked a new phase in the organisation of the movement making it a more serious security challenge. Consequently, addressing Naxalism has required a comprehensive state response involving security operations, intelligence, governance, development, rehabilitation, and community participation.

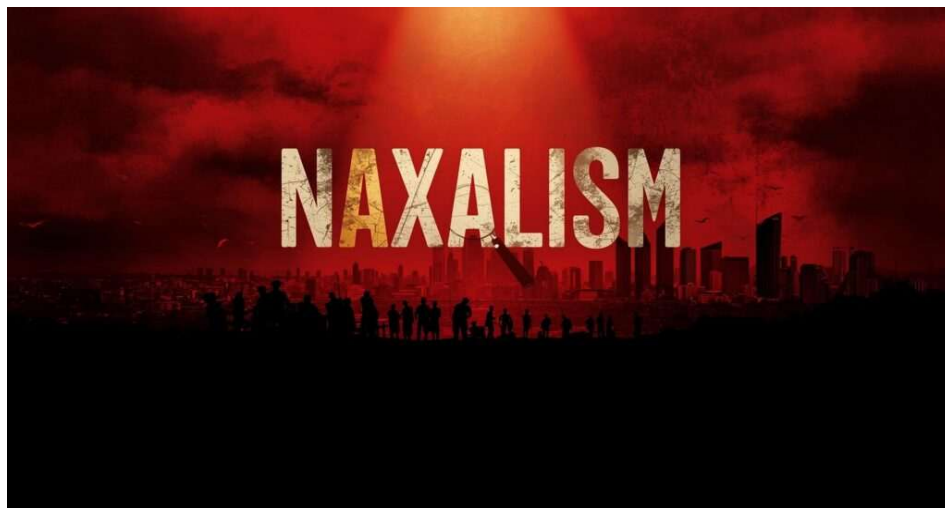


Figure 1: Naxalism (Left Wing Extremism) in India



In this larger strategy, the role of police and paramilitary forces has been vital for internal security and dealing with armed extremist activities. The importance of state police forces lies in their presence in the region, knowledge about the geography of the region, responsibility of conducting investigations, enforcing laws, and developing intelligence networks on the ground. Paramilitary forces, especially Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), offer more operational strength, specialized training, personnel, mobility, and logistics in difficult and inaccessible geographical terrain. The roles of paramilitary forces go far beyond the counter-insurgency operations to cover domination of the area, civilian and infrastructure protection, safeguarding development projects, helping in elections, functioning of civil administration, and even surrender and rehabilitation processes. Coordination between state police, paramilitary forces, intelligence agencies, and district administration thus becomes imperative in order to limit the influence of the extremists and restore the legitimacy of the democratic government.

Nonetheless, the resolution of Naxalism cannot solely depend upon military or coercive approaches. Whereas the police and paramilitary actions are required to control the violence and ensure the existence of a safe environment, sustainable peace also needs the handling of such socio-economic as well as governance issues that could possibly result in alienation and extremism. Poverty, unemployment, poor infrastructure, displacements, access to land and forest resources, lack of public facilities, and poor institutional participation are among the matters that have to be dealt with in addition to security issues. Thus, the roles of police and paramilitary forces must be assessed from an integrated perspective including security, intelligence, governance, development, community involvement, and rehabilitation. In this context, the current paper discusses the roles of police and paramilitary forces in dealing with Naxalism in India, assesses the most important problems associated with police and paramilitary forces, and analyzes the significance of an integrated and community-based approach in the resolution of Left-Wing Extremism.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Barman (2025) examined the persistence of Naxalism in India through an analysis of the history of Naxalism, its ideology, geography, socio-economic inequalities, and governance issues. In this regard, it was found that Naxalism, which had originated from the Naxalbari revolt, was an insurgency that was fueled by the existing structural inequalities and developmental deficiencies. Moreover, the study considered the efforts made by the state, particularly through counter-insurgency activities and development schemes, and pointed out that relying on security-based solutions alone would not ensure sustainable peace. The study suggested that security measures needed to be integrated with development and political dialogue to address the underlying conditions associated with Naxalite mobilization.



Joseph and Srivastava (2020) studied the issue of Left Extremism in India, with special reference to the Naxalite movement and its growth into an internal security problem. In their study, they placed the Naxalite movement in the larger context of armed conflicts in South Asia, and they explored the issue of the nature, spread, and impact of Naxalite violence. This study added to our knowledge about the linkages between extremist mobilizations and the security responses of the State. The significance of political, social, and security factors continued to remain central to analyses of the Naxalite movement.

Baudains et al. (2019) analyzed the effect of police presence on Naxal-led violence in the erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh based on a rare ten-year dataset of political violence events. The authors made use of multivariate point-process models to analyze the space-time pattern of such violence. They found that there was a significant space-time cluster for Naxal violence and that police presence at violent events increased violence subsequently, especially in the short term. It is thus clear from the study that policing and anti-insurgent measures could, at times, cause escalation of violence and that it was important to design police interventions carefully. This research finding is particularly relevant for the current study in that it clearly shows that it is necessary to consider the impact of police forces beyond the consideration of police presence and capability alone.

Chari (2022) explored the significance of the use of military forces in fighting the Naxalites' insurgency in India, focusing on the problems involved in using military capability in cases of internal security issues. The paper explored the challenges facing the security forces in dealing with the issue including lack of information, unfavorable terrain conditions, vulnerability of tactics and the need for proper coordination among the various security forces. It was noted that fighting insurgencies entailed proper planning, specialization and intelligence as opposed to conventional military might. This study was pertinent to the current study since it emphasized the need for operational preparedness and coordination while exploring the right role of the armed forces in handling the violence caused by the Naxalites.

Kumar (2020) discussed the organization, roles and capabilities of paramilitary and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) in the larger context of national defense and internal security of the country. This work analyzed the roles played by various CAPFs, their participation in the process of counterinsurgency and internal security operations and pointed out the problems associated with training, organizational capacity and coordination. The researcher pointed out the problems related to the divide between the leadership and men on the ground, organizational doctrine and utilization of the capabilities of CAPFs. Thus, this research showed the importance of training, organizational coordination and organizational preparedness for better functioning of paramilitary forces.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative, descriptive and analytical research approach to understand the role played by the police and paramilitary forces in addressing Naxalism in India. All the data for this study was based on secondary sources of information, which included government reports – especially those of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), policy papers, scholarly books, journal articles and research publications. The analysis was based on thematic analysis, whereby the role of the police and paramilitary forces in addressing Naxalism was understood through analysis of issues such as history of Naxalism, roles of the police and armed police forces of the Centre, intelligence and interagency coordination, community engagement, development and rehabilitation and governance.

4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND EVOLUTION OF NAXALISM IN INDIA

The history of Naxalism can be considered very important in order to understand the changes that have taken place in it, along with its geographical expansion, organizational development, and security concerns in India. The following sub-sections highlight the journey of this movement starting from its emergence in Naxalbari up till now in which Left-Wing extremism is declining.

Origin of the Naxalbari Movement

Naxalism began as the Naxalbari uprising in the year 1967 in West Bengal. This form of movement arose as a result of agrarian disputes arising out of unequal land ownership and exploitation by those without land and sharecroppers. Being inspired by the ideology of Marxist-Leninist and Maoism, the movement sought to use armed revolt as an instrument for bringing about social change. While the uprising in Naxalbari was restricted to that place alone, the ideology spread to other parts of India thereafter.



Figure 2: 1967: Naxalbari movement



Expansion of Naxalism

In the latter part of the 1960s and through the decades that followed, the activities of Naxalism extended to areas like Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and elsewhere in central and eastern India. Factors like socio-economic disparity, poverty, conflict over land issues, inadequate development of infrastructure and poor administrative control offered opportunities to the extremists to mobilize themselves. Groups like the People's War Group and Maoist Communist Centre became militarized.

Formation of CPI (Maoist)

One notable thing that happened in 2004 was the merger of the People's War Group and the Maoist Communist Center into the Communist Party of India (Maoist). The merger brought together major groups that followed Maoist ideology and enhanced their organizational and operational capacity. CPI (Maoist) is the organization that came out of that merger to be involved in violence related to the Left-Wing extremists in India. Its activities included attacks on security personnel, extortion, recruitment, destruction of infrastructure and attempts to weaken government institutions.

Major Affected Regions

In the past, Naxalism was prevalent over a large geographic area popularly referred to as “*The Red Corridor*”. States which were largely affected include Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Bihar. Forest and tribal regions such as Bastar in Chhattisgarh and Gadchiroli in Maharashtra have been centers of Maoist activities. But in recent years, the geographic extent of LWE has greatly diminished. Official data indicated a decrease in LWE-affected districts from 126 in 2018 to just 8 in December 2025.

Changing Nature of Naxalite Activities

Naxalism now is not an agrarian revolution but an armed insurgency. Naxalites have employed guerrilla warfare, ambushes against the security forces, use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), extortion, road/rail/infrastructure blockades, and terror tactics. The state's counter-Naxalism policy has gradually moved towards intelligence-based operations, specialized police units, deployment of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), technology-based solutions, and community involvement programs.

Recent Trends in Left-Wing Extremism



Recent trends reveal that there has been a considerable reduction in the level of violence and geographical expansion of the phenomenon of Left-Wing Extremism. Statistics reveal that the number of violent acts of LWE decreased from 1,936 in 2010 to 234 in 2025, while the total number of deaths of civilians and security forces decreased from 1,005 to 100 over the same period. It is pertinent to mention that this reduction has been due to effective security operations, better intelligence, infrastructure, coordination and rehabilitation. Nevertheless, the remaining areas require continued attention to governance, development and community participation to ensure that security gains are converted into sustainable peace.

5. ROLE OF POLICE FORCES IN COUNTERING NAXALISM

The police force has maintained its relevance as the frontline in the fight against Naxalism due to the dual nature of their functions in relation to the law and their presence among the affected populations. The function of the police has evolved from mere policing duties to counter-insurgency operations and protecting civilian life and infrastructure, community engagement, and support for rehabilitation and governance.

❖ Local Intelligence Gathering

Local intelligence is one of the key factors that play an integral role in combating Naxalism. Police officers from the states may have an advantage over others in understanding local geography, social network, and language. Local intelligence collected via police channels and social contacts would be helpful in uncovering any extreme groups, recruitment, and logistics. Effective intelligence would enable the security forces to plan their actions effectively.

❖ Law and Order

The enforcement of laws and maintenance of order is one of the primary duties of the state police in Naxal-infected areas. The police guard public institutions and help in the prevention of violence and maintain public trust along with facilitating the working of the democratic process. The police also address issues relating to extremist violence, threats, intimidation, and disruption of public facilities. Through a sustained police presence, the state can reinforce the rule of law and reduce the ability of extremist organisations to establish parallel authority.

❖ Investigation and Prosecution

The police have a critical role to play in the investigation of matters concerning violent acts perpetrated by the Naxalites. This includes attacks, destruction of property, extortion, unlawful possession of firearms, and



other criminal acts. Investigating properly ensures that the people or groups carrying out extremist actions can be identified and brought before the court. Improving investigative powers and working together with the prosecuting authorities could therefore help break down the extremist network while ensuring that action is undertaken through lawful procedures.

❖ **Area Domination**

Area domination includes the deployment of a continuous security force in areas that are vulnerable and restricting the operations of extremist organizations to ensure they do not intimidate the locals. The state police can carry out patrols and set up security camps in critical areas along with the support of Central Armed Police Forces. This will help make the areas functional for developmental works and other administration-related functions.

❖ **Specialised Police Units**

Development of specialized police units has been helpful in improving India's counterinsurgency capability. For instance, specialized units like Greyhounds in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have been specifically established to deal with insurgents and have developed expertise in operating in tough terrain. This experience indicates how specialization, fitness, geographic understanding, intelligence coordination, and operational flexibility are important. Specialized units can be an asset for regular police forces to handle situations requiring specialized counterinsurgency skills.

❖ **Community Policing**

Community policing is significant because the people of that community form an integral part of the socio-cultural milieu in which Naxalism thrives. The police can create trust through their interactions with the villagers, through the process of identifying grievances, conducting awareness programmes, working with the youth, helping in civic matters, and helping in emergency situations. Such interactions would help in improving communication between the community and the security forces as well as instilling cooperation. The Indian government's Civic Action Program does the same.

❖ **Protection of Civilians and Infrastructure**

The police play an integral role in ensuring the safety of civilians, government officials, and the vital infrastructure within areas that are considered vulnerable. The road, bridges, schools, hospitals, communication infrastructure, and other government offices may be attacked and affected at times of extreme activities. Security protection ensures that development staff and civil authorities can work more



efficiently. It should be noted that the protection of infrastructure is both a security issue and a developmental issue.

❖ **Role of State Police in Rehabilitation and Surrender**

The state police can help with surrenders and rehabilitations as well because they can help establish communication with people who want to surrender themselves from the extremist groups and live normal lives again. The surrenders can help the extremist group be weakened since they will lose many of their men and it will give an opportunity for their former members to rehabilitate. The police can help with verification, security assessment, counseling, and coordination with the administration authorities responsible for rehabilitation. Such measures complement security operations by providing a non-violent pathway away from armed extremism.

6. ROLE OF PARAMILITARY FORCES IN COUNTER-INSURGENCY OPERATIONS

The Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) have played an extremely significant supportive role in the country's struggle against Left Wing Extremism. They provide additional manpower, special training and operational experience in tough terrain, besides augmenting the abilities of the state police forces. Their involvement becomes essential in places where Left Wing Extremism has traditionally compromised the effectiveness of civil administration and policing.

❖ **Role of Central Armed Police Forces**

CAPFs are instrumental in helping the state governments maintain the security of the LWE-affected areas. Various forces like CRPF have been employed extensively to provide counter-insurgency assistance, area security cover, protection to sensitive places, and assistance to state police. The existence of such forces in the affected regions is helpful in improving the security setup there and thus allows the state government to gradually extend their administrative and developmental activities. The government of India has also aided the LWE-affected states through CAPF deployment, intelligence assistance, etc.



Figure 3: Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)

❖ CRPF and CoBRA

The CRPF has emerged as one of the major central forces working against the problem of Naxalism. Within the CRPF, there is a special force known as Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA). The CoBRA soldiers have special abilities to operate in the jungles as well as in counter-insurgency operations. They have been trained specially in working in the forests and difficult terrains and they can help in conducting operations against the extremists. Their specialised capabilities complement the local knowledge and intelligence networks of state police forces.

❖ Joint Operations with State Police

Coordination between the CAPF forces and the state police is significant as these two organizations have different strengths to offer. The local intelligence, community knowledge, and geographical expertise offered by the state police will be supported by extra personnel and specialized training offered by the CAPF forces. This coordinated operation may help to cover more areas and minimize any gaps that could otherwise be exploited by extremist outfits. Effective communication, joint planning and information sharing are essential for successful inter-agency operations.

❖ Area Domination and Patrol Operations

Area domination and regular patrols contribute to the creation of a constant security presence in weak regions. The CAPF members undertake such duties, such as patrolling and security operations in the forest and remote areas, where armed groups might try to set up temporary bases or move around. These



operations might limit the activities of such armed groups, while boosting the confidence of local communities. A constant security presence can also pave the way for civil administration.

❖ **Protection of Strategic Infrastructure**

Paramilitary units perform a crucial role in securing strategic infrastructure which is vital for the development of the economy and the functioning of the administration. Such infrastructure comprises of roads, bridges, railways, communication systems, energy sources, administrative centers, and other strategically vital infrastructures. The safeguarding of these infrastructures prevents any interference in public services and enables development initiatives in those regions which have been experiencing insurgent activities.

❖ **Support During Elections**

Elections need appropriate arrangements for security in order to provide safety for the electorate, the electoral officials, and the entire electoral process itself. CAPF forces are often used in elections for helping the state forces maintain law and order in such regions where elections are to be held. It helps in ensuring that a secure environment is established for the voters and the electoral process, which in turn helps in continuing the democratic process. Ensuring regular elections is particularly important in areas where extremist organisations may attempt to discourage participation or undermine governmental legitimacy.

❖ **Operations in Difficult Geographical Areas**

Difficult geographical terrain is one of the problems encountered while carrying out counter-insurgency missions since militant groups tend to operate in tough geographical conditions. Dense forest cover, hilly terrains, poor road connectivity and poor communication facilities could make it hard to carry out traditional policing activities. CAPFs come in handy in this situation since they have personnel that are trained for these difficult tasks. Their ability to conduct long-range patrols and operate in remote areas helps extend the security presence beyond established urban and administrative centres.

❖ **Training and Modernisation**

Constant training and modernization are necessary to keep paramilitary forces effective. Counterinsurgency troops must be trained in skills like jungle warfare, intelligence, communication, navigation, mines and explosives knowledge, first-aid, and operations in compliance with human rights norms. Other means that could enhance operational capacity are modern equipment, secure communication equipment, protective clothing, surveillance devices, and improved mobility. The Government of India too has highlighted the



need for modernization and building up of security structures within its strategy against Left Wing Extremism.

7. INTELLIGENCE, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE IN RESOLVING NAXALISM

The solution to the problem of Naxalism lies in an integrated strategy which takes into account security, intelligence, people's involvement, development, and good governance. Below are the main elements involved:

- **Intelligence and Inter-Agency Coordination:** Effective intelligence, technological surveillance and coordination among state police, CAPFs and intelligence agencies are vital for the detection of extremism and increased efficiency in counter-insurgency operations.
- **Cooperation Among Police – CAPF & Inter-State:** Coordinated operations and intelligence sharing among police forces, CAPFs and inter-state administration is useful for preventing the exploitation by extremist groups of the administrative borders.
- **Public Cooperation through Community Policing & Civic Engagement:** The engagement of local communities in community policing, redressal of grievances and Civic Action Programmes will help increase public cooperation and decrease social space available to the extremist organizations.
- **Infrastructure and Development:** Road building, schooling, health care, telecommunications, employment opportunities and other infrastructure will assist in addressing governance deficits and reduce the likelihood of emergence of extremism.
- **Surrender & Rehabilitation of Extremists:** Well-designed surrender and rehabilitation schemes will offer former extremists' education, vocational training and employment, making it difficult for extremist organizations to function effectively and assisting in their peaceful reintegration.
- **Restoration of Civil Administration:** Ultimately, the goal is the restoration of effective democratic administration in the areas under consideration. Proper functioning of local institutions, welfare programs, education, health care and justice is crucial.

8. CHALLENGES, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION



Countering Naxalism is beset by both operational and socio-political issues. The efficiency of the police and paramilitary forces is not just dependent upon their offensive skills but on intelligence and coordination and also upon rebuilding of governance.

8.1 Major Challenges

- **Difficult Terrain:** These include dense forests, hills, and low connectivity.
- **The threat of IED and landmines:** The presence of explosives is a significant threat to the police and paramilitary forces.
- **The lack of intelligence:** This may limit the efficiency of anti-insurgent operations because of limited local intelligence.
- **Inter-agency coordination:** Coordination between state police, CAPFs, intelligence agencies, and civil administration is vital.
- **Resource limitations:** There are requirements for adequate manpower, logistics, communication, and special training in remote regions.
- **Alienation of the population:** This might lead to a lack of cooperation from civilians.
- **Human rights:** Operations must follow the constitutional and legal provisions.

8.2 Major Findings

- **Police Effectiveness:** Role of state police forces is very important due to their knowledge of the area, their intelligence and investigative skills.
- **Paramilitary Role:** CAPFs help in providing extra hands and special operations skills in challenging areas.
- **Need of Intelligence:** Early intelligence helps in making counter-insurgency operations more successful.
- **Citizen Involvement:** Public participation and community policing enhance security measures.
- **The Connection between Security and Development:** While security enables development, good development and governance lead to security.



8.3 Discussion

Security alone cannot solve the problem of Naxalism in the long term. While the police and paramilitary interventions are essential for controlling violence and maintaining order, development, good governance, employment, infrastructure, and participation by the people are also crucial.

A comprehensive counter insurgency approach involving the security forces, intelligence agencies, civil administration, and local community is thus needed. The decrease in LWE-related violence and impacted regions shows the significance of persistent security action along with development and good governance.

In the long run, the success of counter-Naxal strategies must be judged not only on the basis of decline in violent acts but also on the basis of reestablishing civil administration and sustainable peace.

9. CONCLUSION

the current study finds that police and paramilitary forces have been very important in responding to Naxalism and in mitigating the effects of the threat as an internal security issue in India. Local state police forces have been involved in intelligence collection, law enforcement, investigation, dominating of areas, specialized operations and community policing and rehabilitation, whereas central armed police forces have improved counter-insurgency through specialized manpower, joint operations, infrastructure protection and operations in difficult geographical areas. Challenges faced by the counter-Naxal operations include difficult terrain, IED and landmine risks, lack of intelligence, resource shortages, inter-agency coordination difficulties, community disaffection and human rights issues. The declining levels and geographic range of Left-Wing Extremism have shown how security measures, improved intelligence, inter-agency collaboration and developmental approaches are required for counter-Naxal operations. But it is clear that security measures alone cannot solve the problem of Naxalism permanently. Sustainable solutions would involve a coordinated policy involving security, intelligence, good governance, socioeconomic development and community involvement among others. Hence, the success of India's counter-Naxal policy should be measured not only in terms of decreasing levels of extremism but also in terms of reestablishing civil rule.

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