

Indigenous Politics in Jharkhand: A Perspective of Naxalist-Maoist Insurgency

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Abstract: *A revolution started from Naxalbari which was called from time to time with Naxalism, Maoism, insurgency and so many names, but the facts are related to this revolution have always been sidelined. Neither the government nor any people support, for whom which is fighting for this movement. The answer to this question will be to find the peoples himself. In the exploited class of society, when consciousness develops, it will fight for its rights and this fight will continue until the exploitation of society is over. Raising voice against the oppressive policies of the state can never be illegal, so looking at equally Naxalism, Maoism and extremism will be a political mistake. In the long run, there is a complete India in the grip of Naxalism, which has a large extent seen in present time in Jharkhand. In the struggle of the security personnel and the Naxalites, the people have always suffered losses, from the state's political system to the development process is being interrupted. Identifying those problems due to the resentment of the Maoists and their problems, the problems of those problems should be the first priority of the government and by increasing their interaction, political awareness will be increased only then the common people and Naxals can be linked to the mainstream of society.*

Keywords: Naxalism, Insurgency, Maoism, Naxalist Movement

1. Introduction

Jharkhand emerged as a new state of India on November 15, 2000, from the present state of Bihar. Bihar had always adopted a dual policy with this region, due to which it became a backward state. As a result of the struggle for the demand for its rights, it came into existence as a separate state, but due to the instability of the government, the status of the region remained as it was. The Instability of the government led to Unemployment, Starvation, Poverty, Illiteracy, in the state and as a result, a large number of youth became unemployed, due to unemployment and illiteracy, the Naxalites benefited from it unlimited. Naxalism was widespread in the area even before the birth of Jharkhand in the then state of Bihar. Presently 18 districts out of 24 districts in Jharkhand are affected by Naxalism. Hazaribagh, Lohardaga, Palamu, Chatra, Garhwa, Ranchi, Gumla, Simdega, Latehar, Giridih, Koderma, Bokaro, Dhanbad, East Singhbhum, West Singhbhum, Saraikela, Kharsawa, Khunti, Ramgarh are Naxalite affected areas. Since the division of the state of Bihar into Bihar and Jharkhand, and the birth of Jharkhand on 15th November 2000, Naxalite violence, especially that of the MCC, has shifted to Jharkhand, which is rich in mineral and forest wealth. Jharkhand provides a higher prospect for raising funds for Naxalite activities. Some of the important reason for increasing Naxalism in Jharkhand is as follows.

1.1 Political Causes

Naxalbari has been the source of inspiration for Naxalism. The emergence of the Naxalite movement coincided with the formation of the first United Front Government in West Bengal (1967) with the Communist Party of India. Arms oriented movement The Naxalbari movement became the symbol of armed peasant uprising and of Maoism in India and evolved as a new political movement deriving its name from it. It has taken the path of violence and aggression by the use of arms and terror.

The external political factor was the influence of the Chinese Communist Party and Mao Zedong. The Naxalites were deeply influenced by the two. Their slogans were: China's path is our path; China's Chairman is our Chairman. This summarizes their ideological inclinations up to at least 1971. Later the image of China in general and that of the Communist Party of China faded considerably and at present, the various Naxalite groups hold different perceptions of China. Their commitment to Maoism, however, remains intact.

The movement has been further given momentum by the insensitive nature of the political system. The system is non-responsive to the needs of the tribal's. Tribal's, have received little from the Indian state after independence. The Indian state has always taken the land and alienated the tribal's for 'progress' that must be put up with. They remained exploited and do not have opportunities to progress. The governance is poor or in certain places it is non-existent. Popular schemes take long to devise but longer to implement. The benefit always reaches those who are the 'haves' and not those who actually need them. The failure in formulation and implementation of the right schemes at the right time, and targeting the right people is the major problem. Despite the rise of the Naxalite problem, the state failed to tackle it effectively by providing the needed economic and political measures. Poor governance in these areas is a primary reason for the growth of the Naxalite problem.

1.2 Economic causes

The problem of poverty and economic inequality can be identified as vital in accelerating the pace of movement. The absolute numbers of the poor have increased over the decades. The poor in the area feel condemned to one's fate quite another. Rising incomes in the post-reform India have created a rapidly growing aspiring class but these have also contributed to an army of socio-economic orphans who have been rejected by all mainstream political parties. In addition,

a contractor-politician nexus controls the wealth of the forests and pushes tribal's to the margins. A repressive state apparatus, represented by the police and the black laws they use to their advantage, helps keep this exploitative system going. The situation has further worsened by the opening up of the Indian economy to trade and investment; the entry of the companies in Jharkhand poses a threat to the livelihoods of tribal's and their way of life. Economic exploitation of the tribal's remains unattended by the political system thus creating fertile grounds for the Naxals.

The indigenous tribal population of the Jharkhand has been deprived of their lands. They have been uprooted from their traditional source of livelihood. This problem has further increased with the impact of globalization. Several multinational companies have started making inroads in the tribal areas owing to their resource-richness. These resources are exploited and the benefits accrued thus are not passed on to the tribal's. Tribals are well aware of this. It is because of this that they are not interested in any developmental activity as it facilitates the further exploitation of their areas.

The slow implementation of land reforms is the main reason for the growth of Naxalism. Landlords frequently moved the court to delay the implementation of these reforms. They also settled with local politicians and bureaucrats, making the land reform process slow and cumbersome. Land reforms failed in the end. The Naxalite groups have been collecting levies from the local population. They collect funds from individuals, groups, and even government officials as commissions for letting them function in areas that are under their control. This money is used by the Naxalite groups to buy arms and recruit new members, especially from the unemployed youth in rural areas. Youth do not have any scope and means or opportunities and Naxalites provide them aim, a monthly salary and uniform. Hence they have become popular amongst the unemployed youths.

1.3 Social Causes

1) Dissatisfaction among people

The emergence of difference between perceptions or expectations of the past or future situations of individual creates dissatisfaction among them. This kind of situation emerges when the individual develops a feeling that the rewards he is getting are inadequate.

2) Failed expectations:

They may have some hope in the future but it may so happen that in the future they do not receive any benefits from growth and further their situation worsened by a sudden change. All these make them feel that their present situation is worse than in the past.

3) Comparison with others

The tension can be further aggravated when they see that relevant reference groups make disproportionate gains in comparison with their own groups. All these provide the ground for the rise of psychological tension which erupts in the form of protest activities and thus enables people to establish a link between the real world and their expectations.

4) Aggression in people

Aggression is a product of frustration. In situations where the level of aggression is low, men express it through minor ways by, say, attacking the scapegoat or by sublimation into socially modified behaviour whereas in situations where the level of frustration is high, the level of aggression will also be high for men would find the cost less compared to the relief that they would get by attacking the primary cause of frustration.

5) The social structure of society

There is a poor section of society, with no resources to meet their daily requirements. Their poverty and lack of ability to improve their lot due to financial constraints, lack of education, the unhelpful government machinery or even legal remedies remain an important factor for their supporting the Naxalites.

6) Lack of adequate knowledge and education

The younger generation wants to have the facilities that are available in urban areas, which remains a distant dream given the poor infrastructural and the failure of governments to perform. Schooling is poor or nonexistent; hence the rural youth fight a losing battle against their urban youth counterparts. This forces them to return to rural areas, still aspiring for urban facilities.

7) Lack of leadership

The Naxalite movement continues to persist in terms of spatial spread, the intensity of violence, militarization and consolidation, ominous linkages with subversive/secessionist groups and increased efforts to elicit mass support. The Naxalites operate in vacuum created by absence of administrative and political institutions, espouse the local demands and take advantage of the disenchantment prevalent among the exploited segments of the population and seek to offer an alternative system of governance which promises emancipation of these segments from the clutches of 'exploiter' classes through the barrel of a gun.

8) Lack of support from Centre

The Central Government, left it to the young CM to fight the difficult battle, Mired in political troubles within his own party, the CM soon lost his enthusiasm for the policy of confrontation with the Extremists. The morale of the state police dipped once again, and it lost the will to fight the Naxals. On 7 May 2002, fifteen police personnel were killed in a landmine blast in the Koderma district. On 20 November, eight security force personnel were killed in the Palamu district. On November, eight security force personnel were killed in the Latehar district. On 20 December, fourteen police officers were killed in an ambush in Saranda forest in East Singhbhum district. The extremists also torched seven police vehicles and looted all the arms and ammunition the police party was carrying. On April 2003, as many as 150 Extremists attacked Chenarapura railway station in the Bokaro district and looted twenty-three rifles and seven hundred rounds of ammunition from the armed guard posted there.

9) Lack of Coordination with the Other States

The Naxalites have also consolidated their presence in areas bordering Orissa and West Bengal and have been

responsible, to a substantial measure, for escalation of Naxalite violence in the neighbouring States. Taking advantage of poor coordination among law enforcement agencies between two States, the Naxalites commit a crime in one State and slip into the borders of neighbouring States.

10) Lack of Decent Life

Most of the youth are affected towards Naxalism due to lack of resources in inaccessible; Lack of essentials like education, employment, water electricity employment roads, bridges, health facilities, human rights violation and redressal mechanism lead people to Naxalism.

11) Large Tribal Population and its Backwardness

Jharkhand is a large tribal population state – twenty-seven per cent of the state's population is tribal. They are marginalized and deprived, with large-scale unemployment and poor wages, much below the minimum wages prescribed under the law, especially in the coal mines area and the industrial belt.

12) The Terrain

The terrain and the forest area provided an ideal ground for hiding and using guerilla tactics against police. Though the untrained and ill-equipped state police suffered heavy casualties in their battle against the Naxals in the first two years of the formation of the new state, they did succeed in driving them out of their hiding places.

13) Bad Law and Order

Extortion from the mining industry became one of the main sources of funding for the Extremists. They wield so much power that some of the major corporate houses in the country find it prudent to give in to their extortion demands. The transporters also 'contribute' heavily to the raided the Indian Aluminium factory in Lohardaga district and looted a huge amount of cash. The annual estimate of extortion money runs into crores of rupees from Jharkhand alone.

14) Low Police Morale

Naxals ability to hit the police and security personnel repeatedly leads to a decline in police morale. But the ambush on the 150 strong CRPF and state police party armed with Light Machine Guns (LMGs) and automatic weapons under the command of an SP on the eve of the parliamentary elections on 7 April 2004 at Baliwa under Gua police station in West Singhbhum district was one of the more sensational cases in Jharkhand. By attacking the Extremists demonstrated their dominations of the rich mining area, security personnel in the ambush without much resistance. The rest commanding the police contingent also ran away from his life leaving the hapless policemen and the CRPF personnel to their own fate. The SP was untraceable for twelve hours. The tragic incident reflected poorly on police morale and its leadership in the state. The fact that no action was taken against the IPS officer, who ran away, only goes to show how deep the malady of Corruption and Nepotism in the state administration was. The state government postponed the enquiry. In fact, the SP was rewarded with a posting to a bigger and 'more lucrative' district in the state. There was an open talk that this had been done because of his political connections and that punishing him would have exposed the police-politician nexus for

illegal mining in the area. This is the main cause of police apathy against the Maoists. The apathy has gone so deep that when a police post was attacked in broad daylight in the heart of a town in the same district, West Singhbhum and all the weapons looted from its Armory on March 2004, no senior police officer from this capital Ranchi even visited the scene of the crime. People who feel marginalized see Naxalism as an alternative to continues exploitation at the hands of politicians, local landlords, officials etc. Lack of redress in the system leads them towards Naxalism.

The strategy of Naxalism in Jharkhand:

- Hit and Run: They resorted to as "hit and run" tactics so that they may create panic in the police force and can run away with their arms and ammunitions.
- Release of Comrades: Attack is organized when some important comrades are to be released from the police custody or from jails.
- Peoples court: The Maoists also deliver Kangaroo justice through their "Peoples' Court", Jana Adalat. Here the cases pending are solved on the spot and decisions are made.
- Barbaric justice: Maoists reportedly killed one John Hembrom, chopped off the hands of two other persons and an ear of another, all of them hailing from different villages in Giridih district, following their convictions in the Jana Adalat conducted by the Maoists somewhere in the adjoining Jamui district in Bihar.
- Indoctrination: The new technique of the Naxalites in Jharkhand is to indoctrinate kids, who would constitute cannon fodder for the revolution. Target the young is the new buzzword among the top brass of the Maoist extremists in Jharkhand these days. They have decided on roping in the kids by deep penetration into schools in the rural pockets of Jharkhand and indoctrination of revolutionary ideals in the young minds.

Characteristic of Naxalism in Jharkhand:

The intensity of Naxalism: -The Naxalites are most active in Jharkhand. They make more destruction in Jharkhand when compared to states like Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Maharashtra and other states.

- **Naxal clampdowns:** In Jharkhand, the Naxalites announce the most number of clampdowns. When compared to other states which are affected by Naxalites. Jharkhand faces a far number of clampdowns (Naxali bandi). Almost, every two months, there is a Naxal clamp.
- **Tough to infiltrate:** Compared to other states like Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand is a plateau and the geographical features here don't allow the armed authorities to penetrate deep into jungles, infiltrate it and fight Naxals. Whenever they tried to do so, most of the times, they lost their lives.

Fight against Naxalism-Maoism

Naxalism, like many other leftist revolutionary movements around the world, draws its ideological inspiration from Marxism and Maoism. The Maoist guerrillas seek to capture state power through a so-called people's war, and their military strategy is somewhat based on the teachings of Mao Zedong. India's southern state of Andhra Pradesh witnessed the first seeds of the radical Marxist movement being sown just after India's independence. In 1967, the first armed

uprising took place in the remote Naxalbari village in the Indian state of West Bengal. The uprising was suppressed soon after, but not before it inspired other Maoist revolutionaries across India and gave Naxalism its name. Many civil society activists working in Maoist-affected areas are similarly finding themselves under assault from both sides. The Maoists claim to be fighting for the poor and the marginalized, demanding loyalty and shelter from villagers, while government forces seek public support in protecting those same villagers from the Maoists. But the activities of civil society activists on behalf of the impoverished and vulnerable local population put them at risk from the Maoists and government security forces alike. The Indian prime minister has described the fight with the Maoist insurgents as India's "biggest internal security challenge." According to the Home Ministry, over 3,000 people have been killed in the Maoist conflict since 2008. In recent years the Maoist movement has spread to nine states in central and eastern India. The Maoists have a significant presence in the states of Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Bihar, and West Bengal, and a marginal presence in Assam, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The Maoists assert that they are defending the rights of the marginalized: the poor, the landless, Dalits, and tribal indigenous communities. They call for a revolution, demanding a radical restructuring of the social, political, and economic order. The Maoists believe the only way marginalized communities can win respect for their rights is to overthrow the existing structure by violent attacks on the state. Various state governments have responded to this challenge by carrying out security operations to defeat the Maoist movement, provide protection for local residents, and restore law and order. The police in these states receive support from central government paramilitary forces. Various state and national forces often conduct joint operations, in part to deny the Maoist's sanctuary in other states. Because of the ineffective response by states, in 2009 the central government started to coordinate security operations. The situation in Jharkhand is undoubtedly deeply distressing to any reasonable person. What was doubly dismaying to us was the repeated insistence that the only option for the State was to rule with an iron fist, establish a social order in which anyone speaking for human rights of Citizens is to be deemed as suspect, and a Maoist. The Naxalite threat is the biggest security problem for India's future as its effects are multi-layered. The Maoist movement highlights India's interior weaknesses, which makes India also vulnerable to external threats. As part of globalization, threats such as the Naxalite movement can no longer be viewed as simply internal as it also affects external security. The Naxalite movement is also the biggest threat to India, in terms of the effects on its citizens and what it means for democracy and rule of law. Not only has there been a great loss of life since the conflict between the guerrillas and the military, but addressing the problem through violence risks polarising people further and driving them to subservience. Guerrilla warfare is a threat not only to citizen's lives but their properties. Too impatient and desperate to wait for government intervention, civilians such as landlords are taking matters into their own hands. So many Scholars' noted, by portraying the Maoists as a menace and separating the movement from socio-economic causes, it "allows the rich and poor divide to impose itself on a formal democratic

structure". Scholar's gives the example in Jharkhand where Naxalite groups are banned under the Prevention of Terrorist Activities Act, yet a majority of the massacre was committed by landlord armies which were not considered an act of terror under the law. Such treatment for the upper class only serves to threaten the rule of law, state legitimacy and democracy as the political norm.

Evolution of Naxalism in Jharkhand

The Naxalite insurgency has been a major problem for India, but it has been made to look like a problem, which needs to be fixed at the state level rather than at the national level. By not exposing the Naxalite insurgency as a problem in mainstream national media, this low-level insurgency is pushed under the rug in order for the national government to appear legitimate and in control of the chaotic state. The Naxalite insurgency has been in Jharkhand and Bihar for over 50 years and shows no signs of relenting in the near future because significant evidence points to the fact that there is too much profit and opportunity to be reaped in keeping this insurgency alive. This can be further evidenced by the fact that the insurgency has remained confined to the Red Corridor and has not galvanized the rest of India. Galvanizing the insurgency would mean a reduction in opportunity and profits for the insurgents and their friends who are also government functionaries. Due to the profit and greed-based incentives in being part of the Naxalite insurgency, a once- ideology based movement has moved far from ideology and its principles of armed revolution. The insurgency has not seen any resolution because even the government and its functionaries profit from keeping the movement alive. Politicians can garner votes through Naxalite muscle, and low-level bureaucrats serve to keep their pockets warm through keeping mum about the many policies that the government has put in place. When asked about the Naxalite situation in Jharkhand, a journalist by the name of Haribans Sharma was pessimistic about any type of resolution. He aptly described the situation akin to a spider web, so full of intricacies and details that any type of resolution is merely an idea, but far from reality. The intricacies are endless in this particular insurgency, but if there is a greater effort towards monitoring the implementation of government benefits, there may be a chance to improve.

2. Conclusion

To end Naxalism from Jharkhand, youth will have to be connected to the mainstream and provide employment. Therefore the state must start to fight the conflict legally, minimize collateral damage, strengthen the leadership of the security forces and abstain from any human rights violation. The security forces should better start protecting the population living within the area of conflict instead of merely confronting the Maoists on a large scale. The Naxalite movement must be challenged politically by presenting better alternatives to the Maoist approach and offer new perspectives. In this regard, the state should start addressing the basic needs of the poor and fulfilling its main responsibilities to deliver human development to these disadvantaged areas.

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