

Maoism in india essay

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The maoist problem in India has a long history. It is one of those movements which over the years have changed color from a pristine white to a dark shade of black.

The roots of the problem lie not in some terrorist movement and neither is it the product of the state funded cross border terrorism. The roots of this problem lie in the Freedom struggle of India. Back in the heydays of the freedom struggle, the naaxals were a band of outlaws in and around the West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa border. They lived in the jungles and made military style guerrilla attacks on the British sponsored East India Company. They were the cowboys, who much like the Robin Hood of fables, took from the rich and gave to the poor.

Their ranks were full of idealists and although they did not have a very literate cross-section within them, they made enough idealistic speeches to please the literate factions of the freedom movement. In fact in a lot of sections of society in India, they are still looked upon as the saviors! But the noble nature of the naxal movement became tarnished as the “ maoist” problem took shape. After the freedom movement the various factions of the naxals receded into the jungles where the reach of law was poor. They wanted their own world and the lack of a functional police force in recently freed India – afforded them the opportunity to create ranks of foot soldiers from the rural populations. As India matured as a country – the police force became more and more corrupt (reasons for that will be explored in a later article).

This created a general dissatisfaction among most Indians and more so among the rural populations. Their lot was neglected totally in terms of infrastructure development projects and amenities never reached their homes. Moreover the police personnel became like small dictators – brandishing a vile incarnation of the law.

They used the law to ruthlessly oppress and exploit the poor rural populations. This lead to a potent breeding ground for the “ maoist” movement. Small factions from the naxal cadres joined to form the maoists and together they wreaked havoc on the police force. However as was the case with the police, the maoists gradually became more and more violent and authoritarian in their approach. And now they have become a national problem.

Comprising a group of ragtag criminals and other anti-social elements, the maoists in their existence have proved that in many outlying areas democracy has totally failed in this country. The most important component of any solution to the Maoist problem has to be an effective police force in the affected areas. Without the effective implementation of the law, any attempt to rehabilitate the affected populations will fail. That is because the inefficiency of the laws is what the Maoists use as a tool to sell their way of life. The frustration of the rural populations with the local policemen and the judiciary is what fuels this fire called maoism. Another important concept in the fight against the insurgency is infrastructure development. Most of the outlying areas do not have good roads or other basic infrastructure. This leads to an accessibility problem of immense proportions.

Aid cannot reach these areas in case of an emergency or calamity. A lot of times because of the bad roads the maoists are able to stop security forces in their tracks. Also the lack of basic infrastructure is the cause of frustration among the rural populations, and lend credence to the Maoists point of view – that the Indian government has forsaken the rural populations. Education is the third most effective tool to use. The fight against the Maoists cannot be won in a day. Nor can they be removed after a military exercise of any sort. The illiteracy among the rural populations will ensure that the maoists keep receiving fresh recruits, who can easily be brainwashed with tall stories and promises.

Also education helps to make the weaker sections of the rural population to feel more comfortable while interacting with the government and its representatives. They become more open to the idea of seeking help through due process rather than using the violent ways propagated by the Maoists. One essential dimension to any solution will have to be an openness on the part of the government to abandon its inflexible stance and give some thought to creating special regulations to speed up the pace of development in these areas through private players. Things like tax discounts for companies setting up offices in these areas is one such method. Another method could be to give special relaxed norms for small industries in these areas.

The strict licensing structure that is prevalent in most of India has to be relaxed in these areas to bring more of the entrepreneurial initiative to the front. The maoist problem has reached alarming proportions in most of

central and east India. They are spreading their roots now to the south and to the west.

If they are handled with the same foot dragging that the government is generally known for, then very soon we will have a full fledged war on our hands. On the one hand will be the maoists with their cadres of the illiterate poor and on the other a lethargic administration with their legions of corrupt and inefficient police personnel. Such a situation is a potential breeding ground for a long terms disaster which may not be fixable in the near future!

“ It is neither a local law and order problem, nor a problem of a single state. It is a national challenge that demands a comprehensive strategy.

This strategy must take into account not only the policing or the military aspects, but also the economic, social and cultural dimensions,” Reasons for failure earlier of naxalite movement In a methodical study Dr. Sailen Debnath has surmised the consequences and reasons of failures of the Naxalite Movement organised by Charu Majumdar and Kanu Sanyal. He writes “ The Naxalite movement, though continued intensively from 1967 to the middle of 1970s and resurfaced after some years, could not go a long way achieving anything commendable because of the following reasons:- . The Naxalites wanted to surround the towns and cities by the villages, i. e. they wanted to encircle the urban centres with organized peasant forces of the villages.

If the peasant militia could have occupied the cities, according to Majumdar, the so-called bourgeois government would fall making the passage to the coming of a socialist government; but the Naxalites could not and did not

come up to a stage capable of organizing the peasants and thereby encircling the towns. Majumdar gave sole importance to secret organization and armed training of its members for the purpose of eliminating the class enemies. As the Naxalites did not have mass level organization, they lacked mass support.

Only with select few armed elements not properly educated in political line no big thing could be done. 3. “ Khatam” or the action of eliminating the so-called class enemies in villages was a wrong principle of political mobilization by individual murder of select few people whose political class- character was never adjudged by their socio-economic conditions, and the properties they possessed, but very often only by their political affiliation or by the name and colour of the party or parties they directly or indirectly belonged to for a long or a short period of time. As for example in Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar they killed some petty jotdars who otherwise could have been comrades in action against the capitalists or could be friends in a revolution for radical change. 4. Recruitment in the Naxalite party was never done on proper judgment and scrutiny of the political characters and behaviours of the recruits. It so happened that many people only to feast on their animosities with their personal enemies got recruited in the Naxalite party only to utilize the help of the Naxalites to have their personal enemies in the neighbourhood killed on the basis of pseudo-identification of them as class enemies. 5.

In many cases dreaded criminals too enrolled themselves in the Naxalite party with the objective of getting fire arms and to train themselves in the

manufacture and use of fire arms. Thus very soon the party turned to be an organization of professional criminal outfits who soon deserted the party after their training period had been over or the cherished objective of owning armaments had been met or realized. Many of these criminals with fire arms soon turned to be dacoits and in many cases they informed the police all about the hidden training centres of the Naxalites and their main purpose in doing so was to have the original Naxalites arrested or else they themselves might fall victims of the Naxalites' targets as approvers in favour of the government.. .

The ruling Congress party inserted their supporters inside the unguarded and porous Naxalite organization for the purpose of knowing and finishing its secret bases and arresting its supporters, and in the same way, the personnels of the government intelligence branch and police too in disguise of Naxalite sympathizers got into the party's inner organization and rounded most of its leaders including Charu Majumdar into the jail. Thus police had information all about the movements of Majumdar after he had gone underground in 1970, and he was nabbed in Calcutta in July, 1972. The end of his life came in the jail in some days after his arrest; and how he had to pass through the gate of death, most probably in the night of 27th or 28th July, 1972, nobody except the police and the government could know properly, of course, it was told from the side of the government that he died of heart attack. 7. Ordinary people in villages were terrified at the brutal and gruesome ways they killed the fellow villagers vilifying them as class enemies.

As for example, at Bholardabri in Alipurduar they killed Rajen Pandit who was a refugee from East Pakistan and arduously was running a family of 12 dependents. By any means he was no class enemy at all. In another case they killed a person, chopped his head off the torso and hanged the head and the torso down the branches of trees with ropes in two separate places, the horrible sights of which cast a gloom on the faces of bemoaning villagers.

Certainly after that they could count no support from the villagers at all. 8. Unbridled repressive measures of the government proved to be more than capable in exterminating the Naxalites in the Districts of Northern Bengal as well as in the whole of West Bengal. Hundreds were slaughtered by the police and paramilitary forces in fake encounters, in jails and in police custody. Many perished because of third degree punishment. The suppression of the Naxalites did not mean to be a heavy task for a government whose objective was to run things smoothly with the help of the British penal code of colonial era under the command of the bureaucrats, police and military who inherited the attitude of their predecessors under the British imperial Government”.

(Ref. Sailen Debnath, West Bengal in Doldrums, Lalgarh violence In late May, 2009 in Lalghar, West Bengal the Naxalites threw out the local police and staged attacks against the ruling communist government. The region came under assault by Maoist guerrillas. The state government initiated a major operation, with central paramilitary forces and state armed police, to retake Lalgarh in early June. Maoist leader Kishenji claimed in an interview that the mass Naxalite movement in Lalgarh in 2009 was aimed at creating a “

liberated zone” against “ oppression of the establishment Left and its police”.

He stated this had given the Naxalites a major base in West Bengal for the first time since the Naxalite uprising in the mid-1970s and that “ We will have an armed movement going in Calcutta by 2011”. Salwa Judum (meaning “ Peace March” or “ Purification Hunt” in in gondi language) was initially an uprising of local indigenous people in Chattisgarh, to fight the Naxalite insurgency in India. Later, the Chhattisgarh state government recruited some of them as SPOs or ‘ Special Police Officers’. These SPOs consisted of local tribals(including Ex-Naxalite) who were familiar with local terrain. Many of these civilians were children (just like naxalites), who were trained with point 303 rifles. The formation of Salwa Judum in the state witnessed a substantial rise of Naxalite activity in the Chattisgarh state. As a result in 2008, over 65% of the total naxal violence in the country was seen only in Chhattisgarh along with neighboring state of Jharkhand.

The Chhattisgarh government on February 5, 2009, told the Supreme Court that the Salwa Judum was slowly disappearing in the State.