

Structural Violence as a Cause of Naxalism in India

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Abstract

According to Galtung, rather than conveying a physical image, structural violence is an "avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs. . Johan Galtung refers to 'the type of violence where there is an actor that commits the violence as personal or direct, and to violence where there is no such actor as structural or indirect'. Direct and structural violence are interdependent forces and, although direct violence tends to be more visible and easily perceived, 'there is no reason to assume that structural violence amounts to less suffering than personal [direct] violence.

Maoist "People's War" has remained an inspiration for a large number of revolutionaries throughout the world. Revolutionary groups in Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Peru and Nepal have all, in varying proportions, modeled their struggles on a " People's War." . It is therefore not surprising that except for Vietnam and to a certain extent in Nepal, Maoist insurgents all over the world have been unable to achieve their political goals.

India is a country exemplified by diversity- over one billion people are spread over approximately 3.1 million square kilometers of territory. The people of the country speak 16 major languages, in over 200 dialects. There are about one dozen ethnic groups, seven major religion communities with several sects and sub-sects, and 68 socio-cultural sub-regions. When a sociopolitical and socioeconomic equilibrium is maintained in such a scenario, there is unity in diversity.

But if there is even the slightest imbalance, we have more diversity and less unity. This has been a hallmark of India's history and it has always been exploited by external elements. As 2008 drew to a close, Maoist movement had emerged as the single biggest internal security threat to India by all measures- level of violence,

area covered and complexity. It is bloody engagement for Indian security forces in the mineral rich heartlands, in the tribal and poorest region, stretching across states, and against armed insurgents who rise from the common crowd and disappear into it with ease. It indeed looks like India's Long War. .Naxalites have different names in different places, in Nepal-Maoist, in North East- insurgents .Naxalites are distinguish by spatial or relating to place where they belong to. Where ever they avoid, they try to use different methods of violence, that, they make them in limelight. . Naxalism is any ideology or political act far outside the perceived political Centre of a society, or otherwise claimed to violate common moral standards. In Indian democratic set-up, individuals or groups that advocate the replacement of democracy with a more authoritarian regime are labeled naxalites. Though Naxalite has different connotations, India is facing the highest threat to its national security through the rise of Left Wing Extremism.

Introduction

Structural violence is a term commonly ascribed to Johan Galtung, which he introduced in the article "Violence, peace & peace research" 1969. It refers to a form of violence where in some social structure or social institution may harm people by preventing them from meeting basic needs. Institutionalized, autism, ageism, classism, elitism, ethnocentrism, nationalism, racism and sexism are some examples of structural violence as proposed by Galtung (Galtung, Johan. 1969). As it is avoidable, structural violence is a high cause of premature death and unnecessary disability. Because structural violence affects people differently in various social structures, it is very closely linked to social injustice. Structural violence and direct violence are said to be highly interdependent, including family violence, gender violence, hate crimes, racial violence, police violence, state violence, terrorism and war. As a particular expression of direct violence, armed violence causes damage and promotes conditions for structural violence. It also weakens a society's capacity to resist or adapt to other life-threatening harm. Focusing on the impact that both types of violence have on the human security of individuals and communities, without prejudicing one over the other in terms of strategic, political or economic significance, allows a more effective focus on the basic needs of individuals, compared to the security needs of states as expressed in more traditional national security thinking (Ho, Kathleem, 2007).

However, most tend to ignore the specific structural conditions and political environment, which shaped and eventually led to Mao's success in China. The propensity to apply a successful model is often far too strong to resist and generally

leads to neglect Mao's implicit and in some cases explicit guidance to model struggles in existing social and cultural contexts.

In India Naxalism derives its name from Naxalbari, a small village in Siliguri district of West Bengal where in 1967 a few landless farmers supported by followers of the communist party rose against the exploitation of landlords. This movement started spread over among youth in India particularly in West Bengal and Bihar and later it spread other parts of country like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and south of Chhattisgarh and Orissa. In India, similar inaccessible areas constitute a thin piece of the total geographical space .They are confined to isolated pockets of backwardness in different states in north and West India, and concentrated in a slender passageway running from Bihar in the North-East, through Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh in the center, down to Orissa and Andhra Pradesh in the South, It is this corridor that has become operational field of the Indian Naxalites. It is hilly and forest belt, as well it is plains, which are marked by extremely distressing socio-economic conditions, favor them with a secure and popular base. The most affected territory is situated in the triangle of the bordering regions of northern Andhra Pradesh, Western Maharashtra and Orissa. This area stretches over 400

sq km and is largely cut off the state power. Figures concerning the controlled respectively affected areas vary. In India, the progress of socio-economic development among major states is not uniform. . Development is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Some of its major dimensions including the level of economic growth, level of education, level of health services, degree of modernization, status of women, level of nutrition, quality of housing, distribution of goods and services and access to communication etc. Economic disparities have created social tensions, urban unrest, rural upsurge and youth disenchantment. Problems of deprivation, poverty, hunger and food storage, lack of housing, degradation of basic amenities have given rise to anger and crime.

Naxalism initially arose from the basic factors of social inequality, economic injustice and the failure of the system to redress grievances of large sections of the society, socio - economic causes that have given rise to naxalite politics, disregard the essential humanism that motivates the naxalite endeavor, and dismiss it. Summarily as an "extremist" movement. However, simply extrapolating these structural reasons for causes of naxalism would be an oversimplification. At the politico-ideological level, Naxalism is also a reflection of an increasingly insensitive society, where ideals of equality and justice are being subverted for personal greed and power. The Indian Ministry of Home Affairs puts the number at 223 districts in 20 states, covering an area of 40,000 sq. km. in total with a combined population of 2.5 million

inhabitants. Left Wing Extremism became a threat to internal security with ever-growing violence and attacks on security forces and civilians. With the increased numbers of cadres, improved weaponry, and guerrilla tactics, the Maoists challenge to the state stretches across 16 of India's 28 states, affecting its economic growth. India's Naxalite movement has been described by the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as "the single biggest internal security challenge ever faced by our country." The year 2008 brought home the reality of Naxal threat in very bold terms- that the armed guerrillas are spreading across the states, many parts of country are under their firm control and it is a far more complex insurgency to fight than any that Indian security forces have fought until today. It is deeply entrenched in the socio-economic realities of the poor, enjoys wide support among the locals and is drawing strength from the inefficient government structures present in their areas of influence.

This movement is primarily spearheaded by a Maoist party, i.e. the CPI(Maoist) started in 1969. The Naxalite faced splits and fratricides almost for two decades (1970-1980). The two major Maoist blocks-MCC of Bihar and CPI(ML) of Andhra Pradesh. MCC which was once known as the Maoist Centre of Communist Revolutionaries, had also launched a parallel guerrilla movement in West Bengal in the early 1970s that later expanded to Bihar & Jharkhand. The two major Maoist blocks MCC of Bihar and CPI(ML) Andhra Pradesh, these groups merged to form a new unified Maoist group, the Communist Party of India or CPI(Maoist) in short, in 2004. The CPI (M) is the biggest & most violent LWE group in the country. A united revolutionary Maoist party has been a strong desire of the Maoist ideologues since the setbacks suffered by the Naxalbari uprising. In the decades since the late 60s uprising in West Bengal, the men and women who believe in the power of violence had split and splintered several times, but the 2004 merger has brought about cohesion among the Maoist ranks and improved capability.

The Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist), since its formation in 2004, has been responsible for majority of these killings, conventional analyses have mostly focused on big and small incidents that produced these victims. While such methods are useful in terms of attempting to grasp the growing or declining capacity of the outfit, it is also useful to analyse the unceasing violence as upshot of an ideology that has for decades underlined the necessity to shed the enemy's blood to bring about a change in social and political order.

Three leaders-Charu Mazumdar, Kanu Sanyal and Kondapalli Seetharamaiah dominate the discourse on Naxalism, which began in the 1960s. Mazumdar, in his

'Eight Documents' in 1965, exhorted the workers of the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) to take up armed struggle against the state. He underlined that action and not politics was the need of the hour. Such calls resulted in a number of incidents in which the CPI-M workers started seizing arms and acquiring land forcibly on behalf of the peasants from the big landholders in Darjeeling. These incidents went on to provide the spark for the 1967 peasant uprising.

Following the formation of the All India Coordination Committee of Revolutionaries (AICCR), that emerged out of the CPI-M in November 1967 and was renamed as All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCCR) in May 1968, Mazumdar further reiterated his idea of khatam or annihilation of class enemies. Although incidents of individual assassinations influenced by khatam resulted in repressive state action targeting the naxalite cadres, the Communist Party of India-Marxist-Leninist (CPI-ML), which was formed in 1969 breaking away from the CPI-Marxist, continued professing violence as the key tool of revolution.

While Mazumdar's preference for using violence to overthrow existing social order and seizing state power remained the CPI-ML's mode of operation till 1972, a counter ideology with a stress on agrarian consolidation preceding an armed struggle was reiterated by Kanu Sanyal following Mazumdar's death. Sanyal was not against the idea of an armed struggle per se. However, he opposed Mazumdar's advocacy of targeted assassination.

In the subsequent years, the CPI-ML split into several factions. Although Sanyal himself headed a faction, he gradually grew redundant to the extreme left movement and committed suicide in 2010. Towards the last years of his life, Sanyal maintained that the CPI-Maoist's reliance on excessive violence does not conform to original revolutionary objectives of the Naxalite movement. On more than one occasion, Sanyal denounced the "wanton killing of innocent villagers". In a 2009 interview, Sanyal accused the CPI-Maoist of exploiting the situation in West Bengal's Lalgarh "by using the Adivasis as stooges to carry forward their agenda of individual terrorism." (Sharvan 2001 March). In Andhra Pradesh, since the 'Spring Thunder' of Srikakulam in 1970, Kondapalli Seetharamaiah, was responsible for the growth of the Naxalite movement under the aegis of the CPI-ML. After leading a faction of the CPI-ML and forming the People's War Group (PWG) in 1980 Seetharamaiah oversaw a regime of intense violence, thus, earning the outfit the description of "the deadliest of all Naxal groups." Even after the expulsion of Seetharamaiah in 1991, the PWG and its factions remained the source of extreme violence targeting politicians and security forces in the state.

KanuSanyal's reluctant support for armed violence was, thus, somewhat an aberration. Playing down the importance of mindless bloodshed remained a peripheral of the Naxalite movement. Each transformation of the movement thereafter in terms of splits, mergers, and formation of new identities escalated the ingrained proclivity to use violence as an instrument of expansion and influence. The CPI-Maoist represented a natural progression of this trend. And as the fatalities data reveal, each passing year, since its 2004 formation through a merger of the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) and the PWG, it became more and more reliant on violence, rationalizing the strategy as a defensive mechanism essential to its existence.

In 2009 Koteswar Rao alias Keshenji, who led the outfit in West Bengal termed the violence as a "struggle for independence." Ganapathy, the CPI-Maoist general secretary, reiterated in his February 2010 interview that the violence is only a "war of self-defence" or a "counter-violence" in response to a "brutal military campaign unleashed by the state." Maoist Spokesperson Azad, who was later killed in controversial circumstances, rejected the appeal for abjuring violence by them Home Minister P Chidambaram in April 2010 indicating that such a move would allow the "lawless" security forces "continue their rampage." Azad also maintained that while the outfit generally avoids attacking he non-combatants, "the intelligence officials and police informers who cause immense damage to the movement" cannot be spared.

Thus understood, few conclusions can be drawn, in contrast to beliefs that a peaceful resolution of the conflict could be possible. Its current frailty notwithstanding, regaining capacities to maximize violence would be a priority for the CPI-Maoist. It will continue to reject other methods of social and political change and maintain an unwavering faith in the utility of violence. Even while realizing that a total victory vis-à-vis the state is unattainable, the outfit would remain an agent of extreme violence in its own spheres of influence.

In the context of Naxalism in Jharkhand, the social conditions of the dalits and the tribes are deeply conditioned by the agrarian and social structures. The agrarian structure is determined by the pattern of land holding, access to land and other productive assets and social relations evolved on that basis. Jharkhand is one of the poorest states in India, with a lack of basic facilities and infrastructure. It is located in the eastern part of India and north of Andhra Pradesh.

Jharkhand was carved out of Bihar on Nov 15, 2000. As compared to Naxalite affected states, the literacy rate is 41% and poverty is higher than 50% among the tribal in Jharkhand 59%. Jharkhand is rich in natural resources minefields. Naxalites are active in 18 out of 24 districts of Jharkhand and has a population of 32.96 million, consisting of 28% tribal people. Jharkhand has a total of 18 out of its 24 districts affected by Maoist violence. This can be traced directly to over 100 MoUs signed for exploration of minerals in this mineral rich state leading to large scale displacement of tribal population. In gauging the State's responses, in addition to a fundamental governance deficit, the main identified problem is a lack by the state and central government to diagnose the problem. Since 2001, however, the government has followed a two pronged strategy of carrot and stick. The stick end of this comprises police action in the worst affected areas while simultaneously deploying an inclusive development programme in the same. The area encompassed by the Red Corridor tends to have stratified societies, with caste and feudal divisions. Much of the area has high indigenous tribal populations, including Santhal and Gond. Jharkhand has caste and tribal divisions and violence associated with friction between these social groups. Jharkhand is a mineral rich area. Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Jharkhand account for approximately 85 percent of India's coal resources. Exploitation of the natural resources for the economic progress of the country with entry of the state and private/public sector companies in this area has been a source of tribal dissent, which has been exploited by the Naxalites.

Conclusion

In order to bring Naxalites into mainstream, the state Governments have their own surrender and rehabilitation policies. The Additional Central Assistance (ACA) for the Naxal affected districts, being implemented by the NITI Aayog and it plans to launch road requirement plan (RRP)-11, on the lines of RRP-1 initiated by the UPA government in 2009. RRP-11 will be for inter-state connectivity. I always believed that a two-pronged approach is required to end Naxal violence: one is security operations and the other is development. (The Hindu 26/9/2015)

Besides, two skill development related schemes, namely, 'ROSHNI'. (ROSHNI is a special initiative launched in June 2013 for training and placement of rural poor youth). Government should also implement schedule 5 and 9 in its bid to resolve Naxal problem. By this Government has resolved land distribution problem in West Bengal. Because Naxalites demand only for Jal, Jungle and Jameen. At the same time, a comprehensive socio-economic strategy must be evolved to treat the root causes of this malaise that is gnawing away at the nation's, sinner.

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