

NAXALISM

Naxalism, the far-left radical communist organization though trace its origin to West Bengal in the early 1960s, gradually spread its wings towards the less developed areas of southern and eastern parts of the country. The Ministry of Home Affairs has been trying its hand in weakening the strength of the naxalites and other extremist groups who in the name of welfare for the downtrodden have done many heinous crimes resulting in deaths and harassment. Min of Home Affairs has recently declared that it takes twenty more years with an additional functioning of more than three lakh security force companies to completely eradicate the problem of Naxalism (It is also a known fact that the govt has merely lost its grip over the naxalites capture). Intelligence sources revealed that the South Asian Maoist parties have organized a secret meeting on strengthening the power of naxalite movements across. Intelligence also cautioned the ministry of Home Affairs that the naxal groups are seeking the help of Militant groups of Kashmir in order to strengthen their power in the regions they operate (training and weapons)

The naxalite groups have spread themselves in the dense forests of North, North-East unto the South region. The entire locality in these regions is a free zone for their organization and operations they carry on. They undergo strenuous training and motivation under the guidance of few activists and are supplied with powerful weaponry which they believe is the only source of justice. The strength of the entire naxal groups is around fifteen thousand and the weapons they train under are very much latest when compared to our own security forces, and the training our security forces undergo is far low to counter the naxalites.

The spread of Naxalism is an indication of the sense of desperation and alienation that is sweeping over of large sections of our nation who have been not only systematically marginalized but cruelly exploited and dispossessed in their last homelands...the central Indian adivasis have been described as “the original autochthonous people of India” meaning that their presence in India pre-dated the Dravidians, the Aryans and whoever else settled in this country...

these are the real swadeshi products of India, in whose presence all others are foreign. These are ancient people with moral rights and claims thousands of years old. They were here first and should come first in our regard... Unfortunately like indigenous people all over the world; the India's adivasis too have been savaged and ravaged by later people claiming to be more 'civilized'.

The main hurdle is that the State govts have taken their own stand on the counter strike towards Naxalism which is definitely interference to the action plan the central govt has made for curbing the naxal operations. The abduction of Mr. Vineel Krishna (IAS of Odisha Cadre) has raised several questions on the way the State govts are acting towards these extreme groups.

On record, it is evident that in the 2010-11, the highest number of civilians and police forces have been killed by Naxal groups all over the country (over 1200 people were killed in Operation Green Hunt). The number is more than that of the deaths caused by the militant groups in Northern borders.

The need of the hour is effective training facilities to the security forces and increase in their number. It is advisable for the security forces to get immense training under the Army forces to meet the extent of operations that the extremist forces carry.

The only solution to the problem of naxalism is in the hands of the regional political will. These regional political heads need to cooperate with the central govt action plan and work for the welfare of the people and try to reach deep into the rural and downtrodden areas by making them aware of their basic rights and govt initiatives that take them forward in their life.

The recent elections in the left wing extremist areas of Chattisgarh have seen deployment of more than 600 companies of security forces (in addition to the already existing security forces are 22 companies).

Here are some of the initiatives taken by the individual states:

1. States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal will share information and coordinate with one another in adjoining border areas (to stop the Naxals from escaping across the borders after launching attacks).
2. The Jharkhand government is setting up a state industrial security force on the lines of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) to protect industries as the Naxalites (who operate in 18 of the 24 districts in the state) often destroy equipment of business establishments if they are not given extortion money.

3. The Orissa State government will be getting 10000 extra personnel for fighting the Naxals – long term deployment of two battalions of CRPF in Orissa and an additional five India Reserve Battalions.

4. In Tamil Nadu, a 10-day guerilla warfare training programme has begun for 320 cops in the seven districts falling under the Central Zone. The commandos of the elite STF will provide specialised training such as (1) sophisticated arms training (2) combing operations in reserve forests (3) setting up of temporary tents and bunkers to the 320 cops.

5. The Kerala govt is now surveying labourers from other states as the Maoists are using the state as a hide-out.

6. The Maharashtra government and the state police is setting up with a special force.

While the Centre has ruled out deployment of the Army as the forces' hands are already full, the government has the following plans:

1. The central government will be investing Rs 500-crore to fight the Naxals. This money will be used to provide Critical-mobility to the police
 - (2) secure camping grounds and helipads at strategic locations,
 - (3) build basic roads for the forces so they have mobility in otherwise inaccessible areas.
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1. India's Interior Ministry has set up an anti-rebel cell to ensure periodic review and close monitoring of rebel activities.

The government has proposed a three-pronged strategy to combat Naxalism:

1. Gain confidence of local people by taking up more welfare related activities.
 2. Build up infrastructure in naxal-affected areas and generate employment.
 3. Launch joint security operations with neighbouring states to eliminate left wing extremists.
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Few policy recommendations on the problem of naxals

The army can only treat the symptoms through arrests or killings without treating the root cause of the problem. Similarly, the use of the Salwa Judum is highly counterproductive and has made things worse.

- The villagers are not against the state per say but against corrupt officials, politicians and contractors. It is corruption, which is one of the main problems.

Unless the state is able to identify and punish people, who are stealing money meant for development of these areas, it is not going to be able to deal with the problem.

- Development should come simultaneously with counterinsurgency measures. Grouping of public health, education, public works, agriculture and irrigation to form cohesive multi-disciplinary task force and efforts to generate employment opportunities for people will send a message of the government seriousness in addressing the basic problems of the people. Moreover, it is important provide good and sophisticated weapons to the security personnel and to train them in all aspects including networking with the local population, intelligence gathering, sharing, combat operations and coordinated developmental activities.
- “Locate, isolate and eradicate” – Locate the insurgents, isolate them from the local population and their channel of communication and then finish them
- Contrary to popular perception it is not all about guerrilla warfare but about revolutionary politics, which accounts for 70 percent of the strategy. Revolutionary politics is a combination of information warfare and political warfare. More than armed fighting they use propaganda. Unless the politicians recognise what revolutionary politics is they cannot hope to defeat the naxals.
- The naxals have declared that the armed rebellion is nonnegotiable. Talks should be there only for a short time but not for such a long duration that it provides an opportunity for the naxals to consolidate themselves.
- The government expenditure is mostly limited to the fortification of the police stations and procurement of arms and ammunition. The coordination among the forces on the ground is clearly missing and their mobility has been curtailed due to geographical constraints.
- In order to tackle the problem, there is a need for simultaneous and coordinated action on all the core fronts of credible governance including development, security, perception management and political form. The state must re-establish connectivity with local and tribal people as this can hit the Maoists the most where it matters.

The process of development must also have a human face to prevent tribal alienation. Moreover, displacement without compensation should be avoided. The government must device a public-private partnership to ensure implementation of developmental projects and utilize the media to spread awareness of its good intentions.