

# Left – Wing Extremism- A Threat Commination To India’s Internal Security

Sreerupa Basu

AMITY INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

**Abstract-** *Left-Wing Extremism(LWE) or Naxalism constitutes a significant threat to India's internal security, demanding the nation's stability and socio-economic enlargement. This abstract explores the origins, impact, and countermeasures against this phenomenon. Left-wing extremist groups, such as the Naxalites and Maoists, operate in various states, perpetuating violence, obstructing governance, and undermining economic progress. The government has implemented strategies like operational security, functional reliability, preparing drafts and formulating projects and inventiveness to address the rudimentary grievances and improve governance in affected areas. Mitigating left-wing extremism requires a comprehensive approach that combines security measures with socio-economic development to address root causes and promote peace and stability in the region.*

**Keywords-** Left-Wing Extremism, Naxalism, India, Internal Security

## I. INTRODUCTION

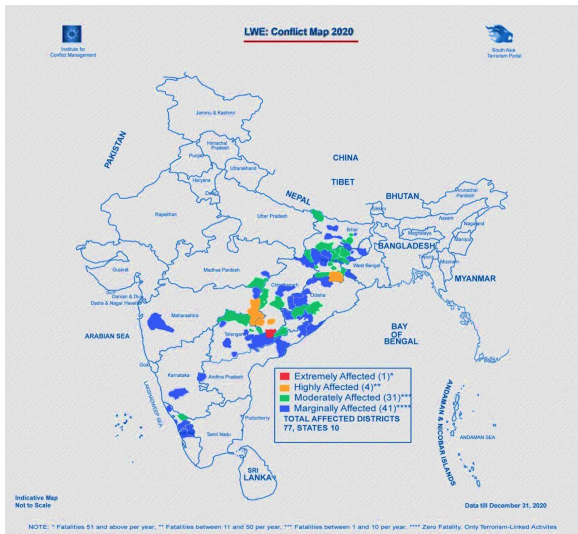
**“BondukerNol-I, KhomotarUtsa.” (Translation: Political power grows out of the Barrel of a Gun)** [1] – Charu Mjumdar, the contended leader of CPI(ML) founder. For the past decades the Left Wing Extremist militant organizations have been operating in the dims and depths of unquestionable strapped chokes of the country. The origins of Left Wing Extremism (LWE) in India can be traced back to the Leftist/Communist political retroflection, industrial toiling, agrarian dissentions, rabble-rousing societies, and subversive tribal insurgence that became apparent during various expansionary periods of colonial rule in the country. Throughout history, there have been numerous instances of violence perpetrated by the lower classes against the ruling elite, often influenced by leftist beliefs like Communism/Marxism, as espoused by influential German philosophers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. This ideology was further championed by figures such as Vladimir Lenin and Mao Tse-tung (Mao Zedong).Naxalism, also known as the LWE, which apparently depicts a significant challenge to India's internal security. The Maoist slogan of "power flows from the barrel of gun" serves as their leading proposition,

with Naxalites seeking to overthrow the government through violent set of tactics. They openly discard referendums and democratic elections as a means of accomplishing their desired objectives, as an alternative addressing to violence. Regions in India affected by Naxal occupations are frequently referred to as the "Red Corridor." The term "Naxal" originates from the village of Naxalbari in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, where the movement was established in 1967 under the leadership of CharuMajumdar, JangalSanthal, Ram Prabhav Singh and KanuSanyal. Naxals are defined as left-wing radical communists who align with Maoist (Mao Zedong, a Chinese Revolutionary leader) political ideology. The inception of the movement can be linked to the 1967 split of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), resulting in the formation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist).Maoism is a political ideology that advocates for the acquisition of state power through armed insurgency, mass accumulation, and purposive entente, a strategy referred to by Mao as the 'Protracted Peoples War'. The doctrine prioritizes the revolutionary struggle of the majority population against oppressive social classes and their governing institutions.[2] Initially concentrated in Naxalbari, Khoribari, and Phansidewa, the movement expanded over time to less developed rural regions in southern and eastern India, including Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh, through the efforts of underground organizations such as the Communist Party of India. The formation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) can be traced back to the establishment of the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries in 1969. However, by the 1970s, internal divisions had led to the fragmentation of the movement into conflicting factions. Between 1970 and mid-1971, there was a notable surge in violent activities carried out by the Naxalities. A coordinated effort by the police and army in 1971 targeted the most affected regions in West Bengal, Bihar, and Odisha, resulting in the apprehension and demise of the majority of prominent figures within the movement. The Naxalite movement suffered a significant setback during the state of emergency, with approximately 40,000 members being incarcerated.In 1975, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi proclaimed an open predicament due to country’s internal inconvenience. Indira Gandhi’s administration fell after a huge loss in 1977 election.[3]By 1980, it was estimated

that approximately 30 Naxalite groups were operational, boasting a collective membership of 30,000. On April 22, 1980, Kondapalli Seethramaiah founded the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) People's War, commonly referred to as the People's War Group (PWG). Former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh described the LWE as "the greatest internal security threat to our country" (2009)" and said the government was taking adequate steps "to deal with the menace". [4] Recognizing the LWE movement as a serious problem, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's first visit to the Maoist hotbed in three decades since Rajiv Gandhi in 1985 and told in a rally to "shun the gun" as "only plough on shoulders can bring development, not guns. Peace, not violence is the only answer." [5] He further asked the administration to "Stop the spread of Left-Wing Extremism" as there is a need for the development of strategies.

The Left Wing Extremism (LWE), also known as the 'Marxist-Maoist' insurgency, has expanded significantly in connection with systemic operational commensurateness and effective coordination creating a Red Corridor. The pervasive reach of LWE presence in various urban and rural areas along critical transportation corridors serves as an indication of a potential security threat. As a result, the Left Wing Extremism (LWE) movement presents a formidable obstacle to the progress of developmental endeavours in India. Over the course of several decades, the impact of the LWE movement has been observed in 40% of India's landmass and has affected 35% of its population. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in 2016, 106 districts in 10 states including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal were significantly impacted by the LWE movement. Of these, 35 districts have been classified as severely affected by LWE insurgency, with Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Bihar being noted as areas of intense concern. [6] The Government of India and state governments have implemented various measures to address this issue. While the presence of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) has increased, there is a focus on enhancing the capacity of State Police Forces. According to the most recent report, there has been a significant decrease of approximately 77% in violent activities related to Left Wing Extremism (LWE), with 2258 incidents in 2019 and 509 reported incidents in 2021. The number of civilian and security force casualties has also reduced by 85%, declining from a record high of 1005 in 2010 to 147 in 2021. [7] However, there has been a decrease in Left-Wing Extremism violence-related incidents in India from 2019 to 2021. Despite this, the death toll of security forces personnel has doubled in Chhattisgarh, as stated by Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai in Rajya Sabha on July 20, 2022. [8] The People's War (PW) and the Maoist

Communist Centre of India (MCCI) merged in 2004 to form the CPI (Maoist) Party, which is the primary Left Wing Extremist group responsible for a majority of violent incidents and casualties among civilians and security forces. This group, along with all its affiliated organizations, has been designated as a terrorist organization under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. The Peoples Liberation Guerilla Army (PLGA), affiliated with CPI (Maoist), has been established for the specific purpose of engaging in guerrilla warfare tactics. During the initial phase of the insurgency, the PLGA focuses on undermining existing governance structures at the local level by targeting and eliminating lower-level government officials, local police personnel, members of mainstream political parties, and representatives of the Panchayati Raj system. [9] The Naxal insurgency has spread to 17 states in India, including Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, among others. This spread has been a cause for concern for the Indian government as the insurgency has led to violence, instability, and the loss of innocent lives in these regions. Recently, the entrapment by the Maoist subversive revolutionaries commodiously subjected to security officers in Bastar, Chhattisgarh is another well-planned and ruthlessly executed attack in a long line of similar attacks in the Maoist-infested regions of central India. Nearly 22 jawans were martyred in the attack. This tragic incident is a major and embarrassing setback to the (internal security) capability of India at many levels and highlights the challenge that LWE (left-wing extremism) continues to pose. The Maoist insurgency in central India has claimed countless lives and caused immense suffering to civilians and security personnel alike. Despite concerted efforts by the government to curb left-wing extremism, attacks like the one in Bastar continue to occur, underscoring the resilience and adaptability of the Maoist insurgents. The attack in Bastar also raises questions about the effectiveness of the government's counterinsurgency strategy in the region. It is clear that a more comprehensive and nuanced approach is needed to address the root causes of left-wing extremism and prevent such attacks in the future.



Source: South Asia Terrorism Portal, Maoist-Insurgency conflict map 2020 [10]

### PHASES OF NAXALISM IN INDIA:

The Maoists methodically propagate their ideology by following a structured approach consisting of the following stages: [11]

1. During the **Preparatory Phase**, they conduct detailed surveys of new areas to identify key individuals and pertinent public issues that can be leveraged to mobilize the masses.
2. In the **Perspective Phase**, they mobilize support through front organizations and organize demonstrations against local administration in response to public grievances.
3. The **Guerrilla Phase** involves transitioning the public movement into violent guerrilla warfare.
4. In the **Base Phase**, the Maoists lays the foundation of their stronghold and transform the guerrilla zone into a disencumbered liberated area.
5. The final phase, i. e, the **Liberated Phase**, they tried to establish a government run by civil administration.

### EVOLUTION OF SPREAD OF NAXALISM IN INDIA:

The widespread escalation and germination of Naxalism in India can be predominantly classified into three phases, as follows:

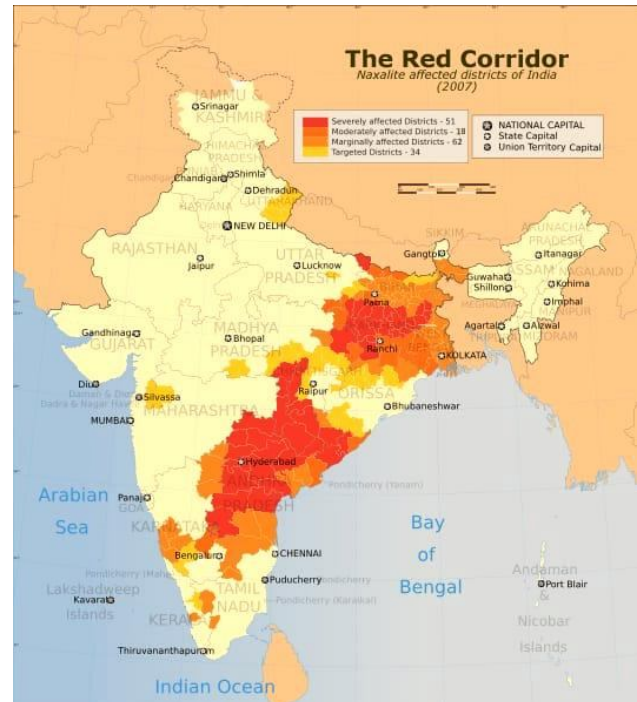
1. **First Phase (1967-1975)**-The inception of the Naxalite movement occurred in May 1967 within the precincts of Naxalbari, Khoribari, and Phansidewa (the three police station locales) in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal. Subsequently, in November 1967, the radical elements representing Left Wing Extremism (LWE) from across

the nation convened to establish the 'All India Coordination Committee' in Kolkata. By May 1968, the committee underwent a revision and was rechristened as the 'All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries' (AICCCR), outlining four key ideological objectives: i) protracted people's war in line with Mao's principles, ii) adoption of guerrilla warfare strategies, iii) creation of revolutionary bases in rural areas, and iv) encirclement of urban areas while refraining from participating in electoral processes.

2. **Second Phase (1975-2004)**-The movement experienced a resurgence in a more aggressive manner following the emergency period. It strategically expanded its influence, adopting a "protracted war" approach that facilitated the broadening of its support base from West Bengal to Bihar, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Chhatisgarh. In 1980, the CPI(ML) was transformed into the People's War Group (PWG), primarily operating in Andhra Pradesh and inflicting significant casualties on law enforcement personnel. Despite being banned by the Andhra Government in 1992, the PWG persisted in its activities. Concurrently, the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI) gained momentum in Bihar, conducting numerous attacks on landlords and other affluent social groups. The Naxalite movement steadily advanced across various regions of the country during this period.
3. **Third Phase (2004-2009)**-In a significant development in 2004, the merger of the PWG in Andhra Pradesh and the MCCI in Bihar and surrounding areas resulted in the formation of the CPI (Maoist). Presently, there are over 13 left-wing extremist groups active in the country. The CPI (Maoist) is the primary left-wing extremist organization responsible for a majority of the violent incidents and fatalities involving civilians and security personnel. It has been designated as a terrorist organization under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 [12], along with all its affiliates and front groups. Following the establishment of the CPI (Maoist), instances of Naxal violence have increased since 2005. With an estimated strength of 40,000 members, the Naxalites pose a significant challenge to national security forces and impede development in the mineral-rich eastern region of India referred to as the 'Red Corridor' [13] (A slender yet connected corridor traversing through the states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha, the estimation of area coverage frequently measures between the portions of central and eastern states of India. According to estimates from 2007, Naxalites were operating in approximately half of India's 29 states, covering roughly 40% of the country's total geographical

area. This region, commonly referred to as the "Red Corridor," was under their influence and control, spanning an estimated 92,000 square kilometres. [14]). The increasing Naxal violence since 2005 has further highlighted the complex socio-political and economic issues prevalent in these regions. The situation in the 'Red Corridor' remains dynamic, with on-going efforts to address the socio-economic grievances that fuel Naxalism, while also maintaining security and stability in the region.

- In a recent development, the Ministry of Home Affairs has engaged in a thorough examination of the affected districts in collaboration with state authorities to redefine the boundaries of the 'Red Corridor'. It has been observed that the Left Wing Extremism (LWE) situation in the nation has displayed consistent improvement and is now deemed well-managed. Due to this positive trend, the delineation of the Red Corridor was modified in April 2018. [15]
- In 2015, the total count of LWE impacted districts stood at 106 in 10 states within the Red Corridor. In subsequent years, various districts have been subdivided and new states have been established, resulting in the 106 districts' geographical span expanding to cover 126 districts in 11 states by 2017. [16]
- In the country, the government has identified that 44 out of the 126 districts previously affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE) have been removed from the list of Naxal-affected areas due to either a significant reduction in Maoist influence or the virtual absence of their presence. Among the districts that still remain on the list, only 58 reported incidents of violence in 2017. [17]



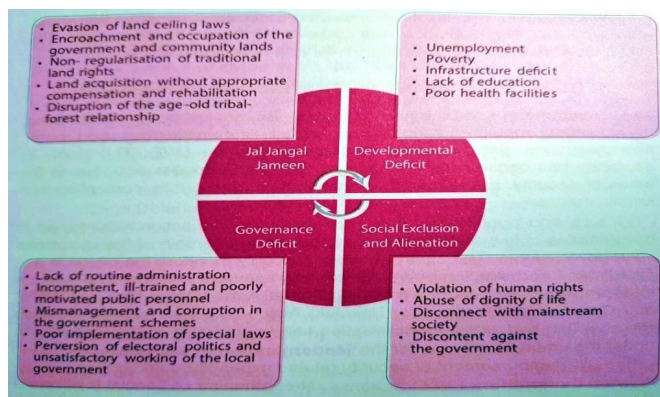
Source: India Red Corridor map [18]

#### FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE GROWTH OF LWE IN INDIA:

The primary factors contributing to the proliferation of Naxalism were identified by the 2006 D Bandopadhyay Committee as governance deficiencies and widespread discrimination against tribals in economic, socio-political, and cultural realms.

1. Disparities in socio-economic development, exacerbated by rising unemployment and limited job prospects in remote regions, are motivating young individuals to engage in violent activities. The disruption of traditional livelihoods and a dearth of alternative employment opportunities further contribute to this trend.
2. Weak governance structures in the hinterlands of Red Corridor areas have fuelled the spread of Left Wing Extremism. Widespread corruption and a lack of effective administration have resulted in neglect of development initiatives, exemplified by instances such as food security being compromised due to corruption within the Public Distribution System (PDS).
3. The political marginalization of tribal communities by dominant groups driven by self-interest has perpetuated feelings of disenfranchisement and powerlessness among marginalized groups. This exclusion from political participation has engendered a sense of despair and disempowerment within these communities.

4. Inadequacies in land redistribution efforts post-independence have resulted in instances where development projects and industrial land acquisitions have caused the displacement of local communities without proper compensation or rehabilitation. This issue has been a central point of contention in Naxalite protests.
5. The Fifth Schedule areas (Scheduled Areas encompass approximately 11.3% of India's total land area and are home to a diverse population of Scheduled Tribe communities, representing about 8.6% of the national populace. These areas are delineated in 10 states under the Fifth Schedule, namely Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Himachal Pradesh, as well as in 4 states under the Sixth Schedule: Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram) [19] have seen ineffectual enforcement of laws prohibiting the transfer of tribal lands to non-tribal individuals. Additionally, the refusal to regularize and abrupt denial of land grants for traditional land rights under the Forest Rights Act of 2006 have contributed to the escalation of left-wing extremism.



Source: Left-Wing Extremism- A War Upon State (Book: Challenges to Internal Security of India) [20]

#### NEOTERIC ASSESSMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA:

The government has recognized the significance of addressing issues such as good governance, development, the effective functioning of key institutions, and public awareness in combating Left Wing Extremism (LWE). Consequently, there has been a shift in the government's approach towards addressing Naxalite activities, encompassing security, development, administration, and public perception in a comprehensive manner. It is important to note that the maintenance of law and order falls under the jurisdiction of state governments, particularly in the areas of 'Police' and 'Public order'. Nevertheless, the central government plays a significant role in monitoring and supporting the efforts of

state governments in tackling the LWE issue. These efforts encompass the provision of various resources and support mechanisms such as Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Commando battalions for Resolute Action (CoBRA), approvals for India Reserve (IR) battalions, enhancements and reinforcements for the State Police under the overarching framework of the 'Modernization of Police Forces' (MPF scheme), reimbursement of security-related expenses through the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) scheme, strengthening of Special Intelligence Branches or Special Forces of the states and the reinforcement of police stations under the Special Infrastructure Scheme (SIS). Additionally, the provision of helicopters for anti-LWE operations, training assistance for state police through the Ministry of Defence, Central Police Organizations and Bureau of Police Research and Development, intelligence sharing, facilitation of inter-state coordination, community policing and civic action, and assistance in development projects through various schemes of different central ministries are being undertaken.

- The government has chosen to address Left Wing Extremism comprehensively by focusing on security, development, safeguarding the rights and entitlements of local communities, enhancing governance, and managing public perceptions. After extensive discussions with state governments, an integrated strategy has been deemed necessary to tackle the longstanding issue effectively, particularly in areas most impacted by extremist activities. A thorough assessment of the spread and patterns of Left Wing Extremist violence has been conducted, leading to the identification of 70 districts across ten states for special attention in terms of planning, execution, and evaluation of different interventions. The Central Government closely monitors the situation and supports and coordinates their efforts through 0 Reserve (IR) battalions, establishment of Counter Insurgency and Anti-Terrorism (CIAT) schools, modernization and improvement of State Police and their Intelligence systems, reimbursement of security-related expenses under the Security-Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme, deployment of helicopters for anti-LWE operations, assistance in training State Police through the Ministry of Defence, Central Police Organizations, and the Bureau of Police Research and Development, sharing of intelligence, promoting inter-State coordination, support in community policing and civic action programs, and more. [21] The fundamental objective is to strengthen the capability of State Governments in addressing the Maoist threat in a unified manner.
- Security Related Expenditure (SRE) scheme- The government extended the SRE Scheme, a sub-scheme of the Umbrella Scheme Modernization of Police Forces, on

27 September 2017 for a three-year period until 2020. This scheme involves the reimbursement by the central government to the state governments of eleven LWE-affected states for SRE costs related to training and operational requirements of security forces, ex gratia payments to the families of civilians killed in LWE violence, compensation for surrendered LWE cadres, community policing initiatives, security-related infrastructure for Village Defence Committees (VDCs), and the provision of publicity materials. Since 2018-19, a total of Rs. 1648.23 crore has been disbursed to LWE-affected states under this scheme, with Rs. 587.96 crore allocated specifically for Chhattisgarh.[22]

Sl. No.	State	No. of District	Districts covered Under SRE Scheme
1.	Andhra Pradesh	06	East Godavari, Guntur, Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, Vizianagram, West Godavari.
2.	Bihar	16	Arwal, Aurangabad, Banka, East Champaran, Gaya, Jamui, Jehanabad, Kaimur, Lakhisarai, Munger, Muzaffarpur, Nalanda, Nawada, Rohtas, Vaishali, West Champaran.
3.	Chhattisgarh	14	Balod, Balrampur, Bastar, Bijapur, Dantewada, Dhantari, Gariyaband, Kanker, Kondagaon, Mahasamund, Narayanpur, Rajnandgaon, Sukma, Kabirdham.
4.	Jharkhand	19	Bokaro, Chatra, Dhanbad, Dumka, East Singhbhum, Garhwa, Giridih, Gumla, Hazaribagh, Khunti, Koderma, Latehar, Lohardaga, Palamu, Ramgarh, Ranchi, Simdega, Saraikela-Kharaswan, West Singhbhum.
5.	Madhya Pradesh	02	Balaghat, Mandla.
6.	Maharashtra	03	Chandrapur, Gadchiroli, Gondia.
7.	Odisha	15	Angul, Bargarh, Bolangir, Boudh, Deogarh, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabrangpur, Nayagarh, Nuapada, Rayagada, Sambhalpur, Sundergarh.
8.	Telangana	08	Adilabad, Bhadradi-Kothagudem, Jayashankar-Bhupalpally, Khammam, Komaram-Bheem, Mancherial, Peddapalle, Warangal Rural.
9.	Uttar Pradesh	03	Chandauli, Mirzapur and Sonbhadra.
10.	West Bengal	01	Jhargram.
11.	Kerala	03	Malappuram, Palakkad, Wayanad.
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	

**Source: List of 90 districts in 11 States covered under SRE Scheme, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Govt. of India [23]**

- The Union Home Minister, The Home Secretary and The Additional Secretary assesses the LWE preconditions on a daily routine, the breakthrough development progression of the profuse course of action and schematic planners are frequently kept under surveillance by the Ministry of Home Affairs via a virtual mode of congregations and teleconferencing alongside the Central Ministries and departments and State Government.
- Special Central Assistance (SCA) [24] is allocated for the 30 most LWE (Left Wing Extremism) affected districts was officially approved by the government on 27 September 2017 as a sub-scheme of the "Modernization of the Police Forces" program, spanning a period of 30 years. This initiative aims to address crucial gaps in public infrastructure and services of urgent need within the most LWE affected areas. The scheme is scheduled to run for 3 years, running from 2017-18 to 2019-20, with a

total budget of Rs.3000 crore. The Government of India has already disbursed Rs.775 crore, while Rs.163.33 crore has been released to the Government of Bihar thus far.

- Special Infrastructure Scheme (SIS) wherein the Indian government allocates funding for the modernization of police forces in all states, as well as under the 'Special Infrastructure Scheme (SIS)' to enhance the capabilities of Special Forces and State Intelligence Branches (SIBs) in states affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE). Additionally, the scheme includes plans for the construction of 250 fortified police stations in LWE-affected states, with a total budget of Rs. 1006 crore. The implementation of the scheme follows a reimbursement basis. [25]

S. No.	States	Funds released (in crore)
1	Andhra Pradesh	103.76
2	Bihar	31.61
3	Chhattisgarh	29.24
4	Jharkhand	25.82
5	Madhya Pradesh	77.34
6	Maharashtra	22.81
7	Odisha	72.67
8	Telangana	103.11
9	Uttar Pradesh	194.26
10	West Bengal	95.87
11	Kerala	35.33

**Source: State-wise details funds released, PIB factsheet [26]**

- Scheme for Fortified Police Stations- A total of 604 Fortified Police Stations have been established in the LWE affected region, encompassing 10 States as a part of the program.
- The NITI Aayog's Additional Central Assistance (ACA) and the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways' Road Requirement Plan (RRP-I) are prominent developmental initiatives specifically targeting districts affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE). Originally covering 60 districts, these schemes now encompass 88 districts, including 76 LWE-affected districts in 10 states (Andhra Pradesh-04, Bihar-11, Chhattisgarh-14, Jharkhand-17, Madhya Pradesh-10, Maharashtra-04, Odisha-18, Telangana-04,

Uttar Pradesh-03 and West Bengal-03) affected by LWE. The annual fund allocation per district under the scheme was Rs. 25.00 crore in 2010-11, increasing to Rs.30.00 crore in subsequent years.

- The Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Labour and Employment are currently carrying out two Skill Development programs known as 'ROSHNI' and 'Skill Development in 34 Districts affected by Left Wing Extremism' respectively. ROSHNI is a specialized initiative falling under the PanditDeenDayalUpadhyayaGrameenKaushalyaYojana (previously known as Ajeevika Skills) which was introduced in June 2013 with the aim of providing training and employment opportunities to underprivileged rural youth residing in 27 districts affected by Left Wing Extremism across 9 States (Andhra Pradesh-01, Bihar-02, Chhattisgarh-08, Jharkhand-06, Madhya Pradesh-01, Maharashtra-01, Odisha-06, Uttar Pradesh-01 and West Bengal-01). To date, two ROSHNI projects for skill development of 1085 individuals in Bihar, at a total cost of Rs.16.82 crore, and eight ROSHNI projects for skill development of 3956 individuals in Jharkhand, at a total cost of Rs. 100.96 crore, have been approved. The primary objectives of the Skill Development Scheme in 34 Districts affected by Left Wing Extremism, implemented since 2011-12, include the establishment of one Industrial Training Institute and two Skill Development Centres in each of the 34 affected districts in nine states. These states include Telangana, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. The scheme aims to offer demand-driven vocational training courses, including Long Term training, Short Term training, and Instructor Training courses. Funds amounting to Rs.41.69crore and Rs.69.48crore have been allocated to Bihar and Jharkhand, respectively.
- The Ministry of Communication & IT additionally, is overseeing the implementation of the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) supported Scheme of Mobile Services in LWE affected areas across the 10 states. The project, approved by the government on 20th August 2014, intends to provide Mobile Services (Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited) in 2199 locations spread across the affected states such as Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana respectively. The projected expenditure for the implementation of the project is reported to be Rs.3567.58 crore, a disbursement of Rs. 596.51crore has already been allocated to BSNL as part of this initiative.
- The Union Home Minister has organized meetings with Chief Ministers of states affected by Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) on specific dates, namely February 09, 2015, May 08, 2017, August 26, 2019, and September 26, 2021. In addition, the Union Home Minister conducted visits to LWE affected states in May 2018, March and August 2023 to assess the LWE situation. Furthermore, the Minister of States (Home) also visited LWE affected states to review the LWE scenario. A Review Group meeting chaired by the Cabinet Secretary took place on December 15, 2016, August 03, 2017, and July 23, 2018. [27]
- Regular meetings are held by the Union Home Secretary with the Secretaries of Central Ministries, Chief Secretaries, Directors General of Police (DsGP) from Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected States, and Directors General of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs). Additionally, visits are made by the Union Home Secretary to LWE affected States to assess and review the LWE situation. The Union Home Secretary conducted a review of the LWE situation in Chhattisgarh in the months of October 2019 and August 2023. [28]
- Civic Action Programme (CAP) is a scheme being executed as a subsidiary initiative of the broader 'Modernization of Police Forces' program, with the aim of fostering closer relationships between Security Forces and community members through face-to-face engagement, thereby humanizing the Security Forces in the eyes of the local populace. The program has proven to be highly effective in accomplishing its objectives. Funds are allocated to the Central Armed Police Forces operating in regions affected by Left Wing Extremism to carry out a range of community-focused initiatives for the benefit of the local residents. As of the 2017-18 fiscal year, a total of Rs.121.32crore has been disbursed to the Central Armed Police Forces under this program.[29]
- Media Plan acted subserviently as a subsidiary initiative of the overarching 'Modernization of Police Forces' program. The Maoists have been deceiving and attracting the vulnerable tribal/local communities in areas affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE) through their presumed people-friendly revolution by offering meagre incentives or employing coercive tactics. Their misleading propaganda is aimed at undermining the security forces and the democratic structure. [30] Thus, the government is implementing this program in LWE-affected regions. Activities such as Tribal Youth Exchange programs facilitated by the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), as well as the dissemination of radio jingles, documentaries, pamphlets, etc., are being carried out under this initiative. A total of Rs.44.61crore has been disbursed under this program since the fiscal year 2017-18.
- SAMADHAN Initiative an acronym representing eight strategies for addressing Left Wing Extremism (LWE)

Smart Leadership; Aggressive Strategy; Motivation and Training; Actionable Intelligence; Dashboard-Based KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and KRAs (Key Result Areas); Harnessing Technology, Action Plan for Each Theatre and No Access to Financing, aims to enhance the capabilities of security forces and shift towards intelligence-driven counter-Maoist operations. This doctrine was promptly introduced in response to the tragic attack on 24 April 2017 in Sukma, where 25 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel lost their lives. Sukma has been repeatedly targeted by Maoist attacks, including incidents such as the ambushes in March 2021 and October 2018, as well as encounters in May 2020 and March 2020, resulting in significant casualties among security personnel. In a recent incident that took place in the Sukma District of Chhattisgarh in April 2021, 22 CRPF and State police personnel were tragically killed in an ambush carried out by the Naxal insurgents. This event stands as one of the most significant attacks since the Dantewada incident in 2010, during which 76 CRPF members lost their lives in a similar assault by the Naxals. [31] It exemplifies the ongoing presence of Naxalism as a formidable threat, despite indications of a diminishing Naxal-controlled territory. This is particularly evident in the persisting stronghold of Naxal activities within the three districts of Chhattisgarh - Dantewada, Sukma, and Bijapur - as well as in the Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra and the adjacent regions of Odisha.

#### WAY FORWARD:

The issue of Naxalism cannot be simply addressed through law enforcement measures alone, as it is intricately linked to the broader issue of underdevelopment. Factors such as exploitation, low wages, lack of employment opportunities, limited access to resources, underdeveloped agriculture, geographic isolation, and insufficient land reforms all play a significant role in fueling the Naxalite movement. Merely targeting Naxalite leaders, detaining their followers, or facilitating mass surrenders will not suffice in eradicating this phenomenon. It is imperative for the government to address the underlying socio-economic grievances that drive individuals to join the Naxalite movement. A comprehensive and sustained strategy integrating developmental programs, security measures, psychological operations, and other effective interventions is necessary to combat Naxalism effectively in the long term. Key takeaways from the development strategies include placing a special emphasis on political stability and accelerated socio-economic growth in a comprehensive manner, improving infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and communication in heavily impacted areas through the utilization of specialized government

agencies like the Border Roads Organization, promoting decentralization and participative democracy, coordinating and implementing various development programs including flagship initiatives and the distribution of land titles under the Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forests Rights) Act of 2006, as well as ensuring collaboration among different central ministries for the effective implementation of schemes such as the Integrated Action Plan for 82 districts and Road Requirement Plan for 34 districts. It is crucial to engage with peace-loving civilians to detach them from extremist groups like the Naxalites, who exploit underdevelopment and governance deficiencies for their own selfish motives rather than seeking genuine development. For instance, the Andhra Pradesh Police established the specialized 'Greyhounds' forces to combat naxalism within the state. It is imperative for the government to prioritize the security of law-abiding citizens as well as the development of regions affected by naxalism. The effectiveness of the 'Greyhounds' Naxal fighting force, in addition to infrastructure development and a successful surrender and rehabilitation policy, has been demonstrated. Key components of the Andhra Pradesh model include an efficient surrender and rehabilitation policy, a culture of strong police leadership, infrastructure development, a comprehensive understanding of local terrain, community involvement in anti-naxal operations, incentives for police performance, superior intelligence, coordination, and assessment, and operations based on local intelligence. The key components of the security strategy include enhancing the professional capabilities of security forces, fostering collaboration between the central and state governments, and improving command and control coordination among security forces. The Naxalism movement has significantly impacted the prospects of many young individuals. Addressing this issue requires ongoing psychological operations targeting Maoists, increased cooperation between civil society and the government to uphold the rights of villagers, and the implementation of reforms, agricultural policies, and job creation programs to counter the militant group. Additionally, development projects are being carried out to support disadvantaged communities and contain the spread of the movement. It is essential to launch sustained and effective psychological operations to undermine the legitimacy of the Naxalism movement. The persistent threat of left wing extremism presents a significant challenge to India's domestic security. By deeply analysing its methods and addressing the underlying causes, it is feasible to mitigate the influence and consequences of left wing extremism. Additionally, enhanced security operations, intelligence sharing, and collaboration among states are vital. Over the past five years, there has been a notable decrease in incidents of violence related to left wing extremism nationwide, with a 36% decrease in 2022 compared



to 2018. The number of fatalities, including both security forces and civilians, has also decreased by 59% during this time. The government's efforts have yielded promising results in combating extremist ideologies. Through a comprehensive approach, a safe and prosperous environment can be established for all residents in affected regions.

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