

Naxalism In India

[UPSC Notes]

What is Naxalism?

Naxalism is one of the biggest internal security threats faced by India today and is a form of armed insurgency against the State motivated by leftist ideologies. Some people and organizations use the term "Naxalism" to describe violent actions taken by tribal people and landless laborers against landlords and other people. The Naxalite rebellion was initiated in 1967 at Naxalbari, West Bengal, under the leadership of Kanu Sanyal and Jagan Santhal. The movement's objective was the rightful land redistribution to working peasants. Naxalism, since then, has been India's most significant danger to law and order.

Naxalism, or what we call Left-Wing Extremism, is now spread to over 150 districts directly and to many hilly and forested areas of eleven different states also. Although Naxalism is often cited as the most prominent issue facing Adivasi communities, many other social and economic injustices, such as poverty and unemployment, are considerably more widespread. The Naxalite group mainly consists of the Guevarist armed cadres of the Communist Party of India (Maoist). These areas span parts of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana, and West Bengal.

Background of Naxalism

The village of Naxalbari in West Bengal is where the word Naxalism gets its name. It began as an insurrection against local landowners who had beaten up a peasant because of a land dispute. The goal of this revolt, which began in 1967, was just allocating land to working peasants.

The Communist Party of India (CPI) was founded in 1925, solidifying the spread of Communist doctrine across the nation. The CPI stoked the fires of proletarian-led national revolution against British imperialism, drawing inspiration from the Communist movements worldwide. The political environment at the time was advantageous for the CPI. First, peasant uprisings against imperialist landowners have consistently happened throughout British India's history. According to reports, between 1783 and 1900, at least 110 violent peasant uprisings were reported to have taken place. Although these uprisings were put down, they laid the groundwork for later proletariat mass demonstrations against the state.

Contemporary Maoist

The Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPIML) and its armed branch, the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA), were formed in 2004 as a result of the merging of the People's War Group and Maoist Communist Centre, which also led to an increase in the

violence associated with left-wing extremism (LWE). Even though this is the largest operating group, many Naxalite factions are still in the nation's eastern states along the famous "red corridor." Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Jharkhand, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, or some states where the Maoist have a significant presence. Maoist groups control small pockets of land in remote, underdeveloped regions in these states.

2019 saw the upgraded, more sophisticated weapons of the outlawed Communist Party of India-Maoist, also known as Maoist or Naxalites, being used against coal and other companies and capital projects that tighten the drive indigenous tribes from their ancestral homelands to exploit the soils mineral resources. The Maoists' goal of transferring land to the populations after capturing it from the pressures has not changed despite the time. As of 2018, this violent conflict has led to at least 12,000 deaths, massive displacement, and breaches of human rights.

Causes of Naxalism

The term "Naxalite," formerly known as left extremist, refers to a variety of Maoist-inspired, militant insurgent and separatist groups that have existed in India since the middle of the 1960s. While the emergence of left-wing extremism (LWE) in the country goes back to the Telangana peasant rebellion in 1946-1951, the movement took off in the nascent public in 1967.

The major causes of the rise of Naxalism in India are:

- **Inadequately managed forests:** Poor forest management is a significant contributor to the growth of Naxalism. The British government was the first to do it. With the implementation of numerous Forest regulations, the monopolization of the woods began. A new class of moneylenders enters society due to engagement with the outside world. Not at a functional level, the administrative apparatus became more exorbitant and exploitative.
- **Poorly implemented tribal policies:** Even after independence, the government was powerless to halt the process of tribal alienation and the direction brought on by significant projects. Even the problems with food security were not entirely resolved. As a result, Naxalism spread to places like Orissa.
- **The widening inter-regional and intra-regional disparities:** Naxalization draws individuals with meager means of substance, such as farmers, fishers, daily wage laborers, and bamboo cutters. The increasing regional and intra-regional gaps have not been in stock by the government policies. The underprivileged and poor believe that Naxalism can solve their problems.
- **Lack of adequate industrialization and lack of land reform:** The government's haphazard implementation of land reforms has had an M negative impact. Due to the lack of competent survey and proper settlement implementation, the agronomic system has not been well-defined. This further harmed the rural economy and agricultural output. Rural residents' inability to find a job due to improper industrialization has caused them to feel unsatisfied with the functioning of the government. Additionally, this contributes to Naxalism.
- **Geographical terrain:** Forest places are favorable for Naxalism. Engaging in guerrilla warfare, it eats them in their struggle against the police and the army.

The landscape and demographic of the naxal-affected areas, in addition to the politics, add to the complexity of the internal security situation.

- **Working class youth:** Most of the young people active in the Naxal list movement are all graduates of the medical and engineering fields, have educated youth, and have been the movement's devious supporters. Universities have emerged as a breeding ground for extreme beliefs and radical ideologies.
- **Tribal resentment:** The Forest conservation act of 1984 bars tribal people from even harvesting apart, even though their livelihood depends on forest products. Massive tribal population relocation as a result of mining activities, development projects, and other factors in the states devastated.
- **Easy targets:** It always recruits anyone without a means of substance into Naxalism. These individuals receive money, weapons, and ammo from Maoists.
- **Gaps in the nation's social-economic system:** Instead of focusing on the progress made in the naxal-affected areas, the government measures its accomplishment by the number of violent strikes.
- **Lack of solid technical intelligence:** When combating Naxalism, there is weak technological intelligence. Infrastructure issues, such as the fact that some villages are still not wired up to any communication network, make it challenging to take action against Naxalites.
- **No follow-up by the administration members:** It has been seen that even when the police had control over the region, the administration failed to offer the local population necessary assistance.
- **Lack of Understanding of Naxalism:** Uncertainty on whether to address Naxalism as a social problem or a security threat. State governments view Naxalism as a problem of the federal government and or not making any efforts to combat it.

So, we can say that while Naxalism originated from exploiting the relationship between landlords and peasants, it has since grown to be the biggest security threat to India's future.

Tackling Naxalism: Government's Stand

The government has laid down a clear plan to tackle the Naxalism problem in India. It has formulated a three-pronged strategy to solve the problem of Naxalism. The strategy adopted by the government are:

Aiming for Law and Order

- **Modernization of security forces:** Under several programs, the federal government offers financial assistance to the state government to upgrade their police forces' tactical care, including the newest communications, transportation, and infrastructure.

- **Paramilitary force deployment:** To assist the state governments in their struggle against the Naxals, the federal government has long-term stationed central paramilitary forces. The Shahastra Seema Bal (SSB) has been posted along the Indo-Nepal border to stop Nepalese waste infiltrations.
- Strengthening intelligence channels. This involves continuous intelligence sharing via state multi-agency centers (SMAC) and multi-agency centers (MAC) and the central and state levels, respectively.
- **Dedicated forces:** To combat Naxalism in every state, the central government established the COBRA, a special force. States have also created specialized security forces, such as Andhra Pradesh Greyhounds.
- **Offensive measures:** Security forces frequently engage in operations against Naxalites, such as “Operation Green Hunt,” a full-blown onslaught by the paramilitary forces of the Indian government and the forces of the states.
- **Steadfast doctrine:** SAMADHAN philosophy is the only comprehensive approach to the LWE issue. It includes all aspects of governance strategy, from short-term to long-term decisions made at various levels.
- **Counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy:** Several COIN programs have combined law and order mechanisms and development tools using enemy and population-centric methods.

Social Integration

- **Outgrowing the social and economic inadequacies:** Governments have launched several initiatives to overcome nationalism-affected communities' social and economic inadequacies. For instance, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, aspirational districts program, special central assistance for naxal-affected areas, and special infrastructure initiatives.
- **Incentives for surrendering Naxalis:** States like Jharkhand and Orissa have provided significant incentives to Naxals who turn themselves in. In addition, the government has provided money equal to the cost of the returned firearm. Additionally, they offer them life insurance production, career training, agricultural land, and facilities for their children's education and health needs.

Legislative Actions

- **Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) act of 2006:** The Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights Act) of 2006, also known as the Forest rights act, supports the rights of the scheduled Tribes and forest dwellers whose people have lived in the forest for many years but whose rights have not yet been acknowledged.
- **Unlawful Activities Prevention Act:** This act has provisions to outlaw antisocial groups and deals with Naxals. CBI me West, for instance, is a prohibited organization per the statute.
- **National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy of 2007:** The 2007 National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy were created by the Department of land

resources, Ministry of rural development. Reducing large-scale displacement as much as feasible is one of the primary targets of this policy.

Naxalism in India: Way Forward

India has tried to abstain from Naxalism, but the root causes have not been addressed yet. The central and the state governments should continue to follow the strategy and take initiatives to combat Naxalism in the red corridor areas. Some of the steps that can take are:

- Remove economic disparity between the rich and poor, which is one of the main problems contributing to Naxalism's growth.
- The Naxal-affected states should be equipped with modern artillery to combat any adverse situation.
- The government should initiate sincere dialogue with Naxalites. A common ground should be sought.
- The Central Government should incorporate a coherent national strategy to end Naxalism.
- The state and the Central Government should find ways to generate more employment and increase wages in the Naxal-affected areas. One of the main reasons why youth is diverging to Naxalism is unemployment.