

The 'Good' Legitimacy; The 'Bad' Legitimacy

*A Study of Conflict Prolongation through the prism of State
Responses towards Maoism in India*

Inaugural-Dissertation

zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde

der

Philosophischen Fakultät

der

Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität
zu Bonn

vorgelegt von

Suparna Banerjee

aus

Bally, West Bengal, Indien

Bonn, 2022

Gedruckt mit Genehmigung der Philosophischen Fakultät der Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn

Tag der mündlichen Prüfung: 25.02.2021

Zusammensetzung der Prüfungskommission:

Prof. Dr. Maximilian Mayer
(Vorsitzender)

Prof. Dr. Andreas Heinemann-Grüder
(Betreuer und Gutachter)

Prof. Dr. Conrad Schetter
(Gutachter)

Prof. Dr. Wolfram Hilz
(weiteres prüfungsberechtigtes Mitglied)

ABSTRACT

2017 marked the five decades of the Maoist conflict within the central heartland of India. Its participants primarily include the marginalised and deprived sections of the society like the Adivasis¹ and lower castes² who have faced structural neglect and systematic discrimination for decades. Despite myriad attempts by the government in the last fifty years to address their demands, the conflict does not seem to be drawing to an end any time soon.

The aim of this study is to find the reasons for this prolongation of conflict and through it understand the clash of legitimacy between the conflicting parties to win over the support base of those participating in it. In this process, the study attempts to underline the role of central government responses in this prolongation. Data has been collected both from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include interviewing respondents on the field for a period of eight months and secondary sources comprises various government reports, Maoist literature and literature on Maoism for references. This study has used thematic analysis to analyse the data and draw inferences.

This study has contributed to understanding the role of the central government responses in prolonging the conflict by drawing some distinctive conclusions. Government responses towards dealing with Maoists suffers from some fundamental structural maladies. Over the period, central government has gradually centralised the authority in such a way that the decision making powers in case of implementing responses towards Maoism rest with it. The various state governments merely follow the framework within which the responses have been designed. This schism has resulted in securitising the conflict which often overlooks grassroots issues like good governance and basic facilities to the most marginalised section of the society. The plethora of social, political and economic aspects of the Indian government at the centre cultivates the kind of responses government has been directing for the last fifty years. Therefore the responses are a reflection of the deeply embedded socio-political and economic inadequacies which are strongly intertwined with each other.

Besides, this study has also demonstrated, how the Maoists are using the government responses and its plethora of inadequacies as sources of legitimation, thereby challenging the

¹ Indigenous population will be referred to as Adivasis in India context.

² Caste is the oldest form of social stratification where Hindus are hierarchically divided into four broad *varnas* – Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras - depending upon their occupation. Under each of this Varna there are numerous castes and sub-castes with elaborate rituals assigned to various aspects of their social life which governs marriage, inter-dining and even socialising. For details refer, Gupta, Dipankar. (2000). *Interrogating Caste-Understanding Hierarchy & difference in India society*. New Delhi: Penguin.

steps taken by government to bridge the divide. This conflict is a clash of legitimacy between the conflicting parties – government at the centre and the Maoists. And it is in this, that the government responses have consistently failed to win the hearts and minds of the marginalised where the latter finds safe haven within the Maoist fold instead of government and administration.

This study highlights the clash between two kinds of legitimacy where the idea and definition of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ becomes ambiguous. The idea of legitimacy argues whose legitimacy the parties in a conflict are fighting over. This opens a space where the marginalised supporting the Maoists applies their own agency to decide which side they would want to continue. And for this the government responses have not been adequately successful in bridging this gap for the last fifty years. Government responses might have helped the conflict to be contained for the time being, but its continuation will remain unabated, sometimes with renewed vigour and at other times with waning passion. Without this active and conscious participation of the people the conflict would not have been possible to continue for decades. Therefore it eventually rests upon the participating people to decide which legitimacy is good and which is bad for them.

Keywords: Conflict, Maoism, Naxalism, India, Adivasis

KURZFASSUNG

Das Jahr 2017 markierte den 50. Jahrestag des Maoistischen Aufstands im zentralen Kernland Indiens. Zu den Anhängern dieser Aufstandsbewegung gehören vorrangig die marginalisierten und sozial benachteiligten Bevölkerungsgruppen des Landes wie beispielsweise Adivasis³ und Angehörige niederer Kasten⁴, die seit Jahrzehnten struktureller Vernachlässigung und systematischer Diskriminierung ausgesetzt sind. Trotz der unzähligen Versuche, welche die Regierung im Verlauf der letzten Jahrzehnte unternommen hat, um den Forderungen der Aufständischen nachzukommen, scheint ein Ende der Auseinandersetzung in weiter Ferne zu liegen.

Ziel der vorliegenden Studie ist es, die Gründe für das Anhalten des Konflikts zu rekonstruieren, um dadurch zu einem vertieften Verständnis des Legitimitätskonflikts zu gelangen, mit dem die involvierten Parteien die Basis ihrer Unterstützer zu gewinnen versuchen. In diesem Zusammenhang wird auch die Rolle der Regierung in der Fortsetzung des Konflikts herausgearbeitet. Die Daten, auf die sich die Untersuchung stützt, stammen aus Primär- und Sekundärquellen. Zu den Primärquellen gehören Interviews mit lokalen Akteuren, die während eines achtmonatigen Forschungsaufenthalts durchgeführt wurden. Die Sekundärquellen setzten sich hingegen aus Regierungsberichten, maoistischer Literatur und Literatur zu Maoismus zusammen. Das Datenmaterial wurde mittels der *thematic analysis* analysiert und ausgewertet. Ich habe mit mehr als einem Konzept gearbeitet, um zu verstehen, wie die Maßnahmen der Unionsregierung im Verlauf des Konflikts umgesetzt wurden.

Die Studie leistet einen Beitrag zum Verständnis der Rolle, welche die Regierung bei der zeitlichen Ausdehnung des Konflikts gespielt hat, indem sie zu einer Reihe wichtiger Schlussfolgerungen kommt. Sie zeigt, dass der Umgang der Regierung mit den Maoisten an einigen grundlegenden strukturellen Schwächen leidet, die wiederum ein Spiegelbild der indischen Gesellschaft darstellen. Die Fülle der sozialen, politischen und wirtschaftlichen

³ *Adivasis* ist die Bezeichnung für die autochthone Bevölkerung Indiens.

⁴ Das Kastensystem ist die älteste Form sozialer Stratifikation des Landes. Sie unterteilt Hindus je nach Beruf in die vier hierarchisch gegliederten *varnas* Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas und Shudras. Jede dieser Varna gliedert sich wiederum in zahlreiche Kasten und Unterkasten mit elaborierten Ritualen, die verschiedenen Aspekten ihres sozialen Lebens gewidmet sind und die Eheschließungen, das Zusammenleben und sogar die Pflege von Kontakten regeln. Für Einzelheiten siehe Gupta, Dipankar. (2000). *Interrogating Caste: Understanding Hierarchy and Difference in Indian Society*. New Delhi: Penguin.

Aspekte des indischen Staates kultiviert die Art von Maßnahmen, welche die Regierung in den letzten fünfzig Jahren in die Wege geleitet hat. Sie spiegeln damit die tief verwurzelten sozio-politischen und wirtschaftlichen Probleme des Landes wider, die stark miteinander verflochten sind. Dies macht die Antworten der Regierung zu einem Mikrokosmos der indischen Gesellschaft.

Darüber hinaus zeigt die Studie auch, wie die Maoisten die existierenden Schwächen als Legitimationsquelle nutzen und damit die von der Regierung unternommenen Schritte zur Überbrückung der Kluft in Frage stellen. Der andauernde Konflikt ist somit durch unterschiedliche Legitimitätsansprüche der beteiligten Parteien gekennzeichnet. Dabei wurde von seitens der Regierung immer wieder versäumt, die Herzen und Köpfe der Marginalisierten zu gewinnen, da sie das Produkt derselben diskriminierenden und ausgrenzenden Strukturen ist, welche der indischen Gesellschaft zugrunde liegen.

In dieser Studie wird daher die Auffassung vertreten, dass eine Gesellschaft (hauptsächlich durch die dominante Kultur beherrscht), die das Problem nährt, keine Lösung herbeiführen kann, um selbiges zu beenden. Solange keine grundlegenden Veränderungen in die vorherrschende dominante Kultur eingeführt und verankert werden, wird der Konflikt nicht durch oberflächliche Wohlfahrts- oder strenge Sicherheitsmaßnahmen beenden werden können. Eine vorläufige Eindämmung des Konflikts ist so zwar möglich, wahrscheinlich ist aber, dass er - ob mit neuem Elan oder schwindender Leidenschaft - unvermindert anhalten wird.

Keywords: Konflikt, Maoism, Naxalism, Indien, Adivais

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| AICCCR | All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries |
| AP | Andhra Pradesh |
| APDR | Association for Protection of Democratic Rights |
| APSIB | Andhra Pradesh Special Intelligence Bureau |
| CAPS | Centre for Air Power Studies |
| CI | Counter Insurgency |
| CIO | Counter Insurgency Operations |
| CLAWS | Centre for Land and Warfare Studies |
| COIN | Counter Insurgency Operation |
| CPI (ML) Liberation | Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation |
| CPI (M) | Communist Party of India (Marxist) |
| CPI (Maoist) | Communist Part of India (Maoist) |
| CPI (ML) | Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) |
| CPI | Communist Party of India |
| CPI PU | Communist Party of India Party Unity |
| CRPF | Central Reserve Police Force |
| FRA | Forest Rights Act |
| GD | Group Discussion |
| GOI | Government of India |
| HM | Home Minister |
| HRW | Human Rights Watch |
| IAP | Integrated Action Plan |
| IAY | Indira Awas Yojana |
| ICM | Institute of Conflict Management |
| IDSA | Institute of Defense Studies and Analysis |
| INC | Indian National Congress |
| IPS | Indian Police Service |

| | |
|--------|--|
| IPTA | Indian People's Theatre Association |
| LPG | Liberalisation Privatisation Globalisation |
| LWE | Left Wing Extremism |
| MCC | Maoist Communist Centre |
| MHA | Ministry of Home Affairs |
| MISA | Maintenance of Internal Security Act |
| MNREGA | Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act |
| ND | New Delhi |
| NSS | Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti |
| OBC | Other Backward Classes |
| ORF | Observer Research Foundation |
| PB | Politburo |
| PC | Planning Commission |
| PESA | Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act |
| PLGA | People's Liberation of Guerrilla Army |
| PUCL | People's Union for Civil Liberties |
| PWG | People's War Group |
| RGVY | Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana |
| RSS | Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh |
| SR | State Responses |
| STIR | Strategy and Tactics of the Indian Revolution |
| UAPA | Unlawful Activities Prevention Act |
| UPA | United Progressive Alliance |
| VSS | Virtual Snowballing Space |
| WB | West Bengal |

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Human beings are thinking individuals. The entire life is a classroom which provides us with an opportunity to not only learn but also unlearn those lessons. The process of questioning and criticising what we have observed, learnt, taught, and imbibed throughout this life journey is the biggest teaching that we human beings can avail. Research is nothing but an extension of this process which provides a systematic and methodological avenue to explore the critical bent of mind. It provides with a sense of independence to indulge in those privileges which had always been inimical to us.

What drew me towards this research is the perpetual invisibility of its presence. It means that the romanticism around Maoism was always present, it was only marred by its invisibility. We heard about Maoism as disparate events unfolding in some corner of the vast country but due to its tabooed nature, could never witness it within the institutionalised framework of things. This provoked me to re-evaluate my positionality in the social strata which subsequently inspired me to shape the current study. However, as with every journey and with every process there are an army of people without whom the process may not have reached the end of the tunnel. Their contribution is equally and sometimes even more than the person undertaking the research.

I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Andreas Heinemann Grüder and Prof. Dr. Conrad Schetter for their supervision and guidance. I thank my tutor Dr. Girma Kelboro Mensuro for his advice. My sincere thanks is extended towards Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) which through its scholarship provided me with the financial liberty to undertake this project with a focussed mind without having to consider additional options of survival. The next in line is my department Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung (Centre for Development Research), University of Bonn with special thanks to the coordinator of the Doctoral program Dr. Günther Manske and Ms. Maike Retat Amin, whose constant administrative support was unconditional without which a considerable amount of time would have been wasted in bureaucratic hurdles and administrative impediments.

Although it was a bit difficult to explain to my parents, Dipak and Manisha Banerjee, as to what exactly I was aiming to achieve. They continued, despite all unfamiliarity, to provide their emotional and mental support. Staying away from home could be a challenging task. However, my parents never for once led me to feel disheartened or discouraged. The one person without whom I would have never finished my study is my husband and friend Nabarun. Being

an engineer with a scientific bent of mind, he was my constant audience and critique. I knew if I am able to explain the nuances of social sciences to someone whose job revolves around codes and numbers, I must have progressed in the right direction. And believe it or not, his constant questioning which might appear naïve or simple actually contributed towards my reasoning, argument and language thereby pushing the final product towards its much avowed quality destination.

In the end I would express my sincerest gratitude to my respondents for allowing me to make their conditions a subject of my study (Adivasis), for indulging me in attempting to reach the core of the ideology (the Maoists), for sharing their valuable time in explaining me the fundamentals of State and its behaviour (the policy makers and security personnel) and reasoning with me the wisdom of positionality and privileges (activists and the academicians). The life lessons these people have provided me with will outlive the sojourn I had with my thesis. To be honest many a times I struggled and felt a tinge of guilt for looking at them simply as data who are in it for their survival. However, it is these people who inspired me to tell their stories across with an objective mind, letting history judge the good and bad of legitimacy which both the parties are struggling to achieve.

Before I forget to mention there are some other individuals who may not have directly contributed to my work, but it is their services which has facilitated the process and made my life easier during the course of this work. I can never forget the librarians in Delhi, Bhubaneswar and Kolkata who went out of their way to help me pick the right kind of materials for my work. I still remember the coffee shop employee who allowed me to finish my notes despite the rush in the shop. The man at the road-side stationery shop in College Street could not calculate the prices of the items bought. He went to the nearby shop and requested the owner to help him with his calculation. Thanks to the auto drivers who safely drove me to my destination in the conflict areas even during the evening with utmost care. It is their constant and unhindered services which ensured that I complete my work with integrity and sincerity and often inspired me to persistently continue despite moments of helplessness and hopelessness.

1. EXTENDED INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Every country is known by its unique characteristics and built around certain fundamental ideals, values, or beliefs. These qualities which constitute the core of the country is subsequently disseminated through political, social, and cultural institutions. It is not that these qualities are specific to one country alone. Rather it can be shared by more than one nation. When we are talking about India, there are certain imageries which immediately come to mind to any person talking or working in the country. The most common ones being India has been a successful example of a democratic country for the last 70 years. It is celebrated for its diversity in cultures, language, religion, and ethnicity. These characteristics remain unchanged no matter which government is in power unless that power desires to change the core of the country by challenging its fundamental ideals and values. For example, the ideals of Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS)⁵ directly challenges the secular nature of the country by trying to convert India into a Hindu nation. Within such a paradigm it is not only positive core elements but also the not so desirable ones which form the fundamentals of the country.

1.2 The Conflict

Maoists have lost faith in the way current state of affairs are run. Their objective is to establish their own political system by uprooting the current democratic governance which they claim have failed to be a representative for all. There is a gap between what the Indian government's claims in terms of being a legitimate authority and what their functions represent. It is at such a juncture that the Maoists come to the picture where they have been fighting on behalf of those whom the government has failed to work for.

The Maoist conflict in India began as an uprising in the village of Naxalbari in the state of West Bengal (WB) in 1967. In the official parlance, the conflict is termed as Left Wing

⁵ RSS is the militant Hindu organisation which believes in racial purity. It admires the philosophy of Adolf Hitler. The current ruling political party, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is the political wing of RSS. BJP is, therefore, working towards realising the philosophy of its religious wing. Oftentimes it has used riots between Hindus and Muslims as political tool to gain power.

Extremism (LWE). Charu Majumder, a member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI (M)) became the leader of this uprising. Although there were other prominent leaders like Kanu Sanyal and Jangal Santhal but Majumder became the face of the uprising who is still revered and celebrated by the Maoists groups currently in operation. The first phase of this uprising (1967-1972), till the death of Charu Majumder focussed on issues like land rights; and intended to capture political power at the ‘barrel of a gun’ instead of the parliamentary path. After his death in police custody in 1972, the conflict continued in various forms and divided into many factions. This trend continued, until all the factions formed a united front in 2004 and named its political party as Communist Party of India (Maoist) (CPI (Maoist)). Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) of the Government of India (GOI) had set up the LWE division in 2006 to specifically deal with matters related to Maoism. As per the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), 1967 Schedule of Terrorist Organisation, CPI (Maoist) is a banned organization.⁶ The current geographical reach of the Party (as on 5th February, 2019) is in 11 states (out of 28) and 90 districts (out of 736) of India as per 2011 Census.⁷

1.3 Central Research Question

- How are the government responses towards Maoist conflict in India contributing towards the survival of the Maoist movement?

1.4 Research Problem

The central government has identified Maoism as a law and order problem which is a state subject. The role of the central government is therefore limited to an overarching supervisory role and coordination among the various states. While the states can plan and implement responses to deal with Maoism depending upon specific socio-political and economic conditions of its respective state, it does so within a structured framework of the central government. The government responses towards Maoism over the last five decades incorporated not only security measures to deal with the Maoists but also the related aspects of development, welfare and management of public perception to prevent the consolidation of various Adivasi groups, disgruntled population and marginal communities who form the cadre

⁶ Refer, Ministry of Home Affairs, Left Wing Extremism Division https://mha.gov.in/division_of_mha/left-wing-extremism-division

⁷ For details refer, ‘Naxal Affected Districts’ Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs available at <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=188075>

strength of the Maoists in various regions, largely dominated by the Adivasis and the lower caste population. The aim of all these government responses is twofold: to bridge the gap between the disgruntled population and the administration subsequently establishing its legitimacy and ; securitise the movement by using central reserve forces and engage with them in a violent conflict. First and foremost we have to accept that Indian society is inherently unequal because of the caste system which legitimizes and institutionalizes the hierarchy. This hierarchical system is unlike economic inequality which can be addressed through policy interventions or where vertical mobility is a desirable option. Caste is a permanent hierarchical system which carries within it the seeds of discrimination and social prejudice against people of lower castes. Although caste based politics and reservation system have brought about certain changes in the institutional framework of caste dynamics, the overall social and cultural prejudices still looms large in the psyche of Indian people. It is a kind of caste mentality which has less to do with visible forms of entitlements owing to one's membership in a particular stratum of the caste hierarchy; but has more to do with invisibilised forms of discriminations which manifests as norms, cultures and sometimes as rights. Along with this, the development discourse adopted by India, post 1990 economic reforms have failed to create a more economically inclusive society. The Adivasis have been at the receiving end of these development drives because of their locales which coincide with the location of rich mineral resources of the country. The government responses towards Maoism may not necessarily be able to address this structural marginalization specially the caste mentality, despite its legal provisions banning discriminations based on caste affiliations. The prevalence of this decade long structural neglect has created a sense of alienation and lack of trust in the authority. It is people like them who form the cadre strength of the Maoists. The government responses, which needs to be studied within this socio-cultural background, have failed to bridge this chasm and therefore any response by the government is inherently presumed to be against them. Government has failed to establish adequate legitimacy by addressing the demands of these people which will sway them away from the Maoists and repose faith in the government.

For example, the welfare measures as adopted by the government to bridge the gap has serious implementation issues thereby failing to reach to the disgruntled population for whom it was meant. Therefore the Maoists have been using this gap to create their bases among these disgruntled population. They were able to establish themselves as the saviours of these people from the government apathy and alienation. Hence it is the combination of failure of government responses to establish legitimacy and the (mis)use of government responses by the

Maoists to establish their legitimacy which are contributing towards the Maoist survival. In either way, the government responses have contributed towards prolonging the conflict by failing to win the hearts and minds of those affected. Therefore the usual reasons like poverty, discrimination, inequality, and lack of development have periodically contributed towards the aggravation of this conflict. However, instead of looking at this conflict from the perspective of its causes (which have been adequately dealt with, by many of the previous researchers)⁸, I shall attempt to study it from the perspective of the solutions (attempted government responses) and how, in fact, it is the inadequacies of these solutions itself which are contributing towards the prolongation of this conflict for the last five decades by failing to establish the necessary trust to win the people over.⁹

1.5 Objectives

- To unpack the gradual change in the central government responses towards a more centralizing tendency in response to Maoist conflict
- To analyse how the government responses are contributing to the Maoist survival
- To examine the processes by which the Maoists are using the government responses to their advantage.

1.6 Sub Research Questions

- ✓ What has been the changes over the period in the government responses towards dealing with Maoism?
- ✓ How do the responses reflect the dominant socio-political structure of the country thereby contributing towards exacerbation of the conflict rather than addressing it?
- ✓ How do the Maoist subsequently use the same government responses for legitimizing their position among their cadres and supporters?

1.7 Chapterisation of the Thesis

Chapter 1 is the **Introduction** chapter which introduces the topic and points what this research aims to achieve in the next few pages. Although it has a section on significance of the

⁸ I have provided a detailed account of the previous works in the Conceptual Framework chapter. I have also clarified the reason for including it in the Conceptual Framework chapter of the research, instead of a separate Literature Review chapter.

⁹ The specific reasons for focussing on government responses has been discussed in detail in Methodology chapter while discussing the positionality debate.

research, this section becomes clearer as one moves forward in the research. Over the length of the thesis the research gaps will be highlighted and will explain how this research helps in filling that gap. This is an extended introduction which also has two more sections. The first is a detail on the origin of Naxalism and its later metamorphosis into Maoism. The second deals with the functions of federalism and its limitations subsequently emphasising the role of the central government in executing and planning of the responses towards Maoist conflict.

Chapter 2 deals with the **Conceptual Framework**. It is subdivided into two sections. The first section deals with contextualising literature on Maoist studies. The reason for including the contextualisation portion here is to highlight the relationship of Maoism with the concepts that will be studied. This is important because in my research we have to understand not only about the specificities of government responses but also about the particularities of Maoism for which each response is planned. Therefore to apply the concepts for understanding the government responses it is necessary to contextualise the specifics of Maoism in relation to the concepts. The second section deals with the various concepts used for the research and the reasons for their use. It highlights what is currently lacking in these concepts and what this thesis entails to contribute.

Chapter 3 is **Methodology** which is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the process of data collection. The second deals with analysing the data. The data, mostly based on semi-structured interviews, is collected over a period of 8 months (July, 2017-Feb, 2018) travelling over five cities in India. I have detailed about the challenges I faced because of the sensitive nature of the topic. I have introduced a concept called Virtual Snowballing Space which provides opportunity for interaction for like-minded individuals while dealing with similar research topics. For data analysis I have relied on thematic analysis.

Chapters 4-6 are results and analysis. The aim of all the three chapters is to collectively answer the central research question. These chapters will explain how the responses are contributing towards the conflict prolongation and at the same time failing to establish its legitimacy despite efforts to address the same. Each chapter in this section answers a particular sub-question, together which answers the central research question.

Chapter 4 **Government Responses towards Maoism – A Framework of Dominant Strategic Culture** traces the government responses-planned and implemented-over the period since Naxalism and later Maoism. The aim of this chapter is to trace the changes in terms of centralising tendencies of the central government where the jurisdiction of the state governments are often compromised under the rationale of law and order or national security.

This chapter will help us to understand how this is playing a role in formulating such responses towards Maoism which are failing to address the root causes.

Chapter 5 **Government Responses towards Maoism – A Reflection of Structural Inadequacy** delineates the challenges and complications within the responses. This chapter aims to identify the relationship that the responses have with the structural aspects. Each of the designated response will indicate how it is a reflection of the dominant structure that has systematically excluded certain groups and ideas. It is a broad chapter which is divided into three main sections covering the three major trends in government responses. These sections are further sub-divided into a number of sub-sections where each is discussed as a reflection or extension of the societal structure that nurtured the idea of Other, thereby fostering the conflict for decades. The objective of this chapter is two-fold : first to understand how such responses are not just failing in its designated role of addressing the conflict (discussed in chapter 4) but also contributing towards its further exacerbation. Second, it brings to the fore the conscious and active participation of the marginalised people over whose legitimacy both the conflicting parties are fighting for.

Chapter 6 **Government Responses towards Maoism – Sources of Legitimation for Maoism** comprises the perspectives from the Maoists. It analyses the strategies and methods used and applied by the Maoists to use the government responses to its advantage. The Maoists are using the inherent problems within the responses as a source of legitimation among their supporters and cadres. This chapter helps to understand the government responses from the perspective of the Maoists and how it is helping them towards sustaining their struggle. For this chapter I have mostly relied on secondary literature of the Maoists which are banned in India but can be accessed via online from Germany.

Chapter 7 is the **Conclusion** which summarises the contributions made by this research in unravelling the layers of this conflict. It narrates the exclusive contributions of this research towards the already vast oeuvre of literature on Maoism.

Finally, it is pertinent to clarify, at this juncture, a term which will be used throughout the thesis. Based on diverging responses from my field work, I shall address Maoism as a conflict instead of using terms that identify its nature. It has been variously termed as insurgency, terrorism, movement, struggle, and extremism from different respondents. While it is definitely a conflict between two antagonistic parties, respondents were divided about the nature of the conflict. This is because there are differences among the experts and the respondents regarding the nature of Maoism itself. Although I have argued that Maoism is the

result of exclusionary politics in India where a large section of diverse communities felt alienated, it would be too far-fetched a claim to attribute any kind of righteousness to the Maoists themselves (and which I have tried to consciously avoid as much as possible in my research). They suffer from their own glaring ideological and structural imperfections. The prominent among which is their failure to incorporate more Adivasis to the leadership position for whom they claim to fight. Hence to avoid the impression of partisanship in this context because of an absence of unanimity, I will address Maoism as conflict and not indulge in any labelling. The other reason being, this confusion over classifying the conflict under different categories by various actors involved in it also reflect confusion in comprehending the nature of Maoism. This results in uncertainty surrounding the government responses which adds to the quantity of the already numerous responses but suffers from specific directions to address such inherent problems. This will be discussed in detail in the results chapter (particularly chapter 6) because this becomes one of the reasons behind the prolongation of conflict.

1.8 The rise of Naxalism

Indian historian Ramchandra Guha paints a picture of Bengalis while reading Oxford historian Sudhir Hazareesingh's book "How the French think" "*The great historian, Jules Michelet, once wrote of the French: "We gossip, we quarrel, we expend our energy in words; we use strong language and fly into great rages over the smallest of subjects." This is a characterization that fits the Bengalis too. For the French, writes Hazareesingh, "ideas are believed not only to matter but, in existential circumstances, to be worth dying for". Much the same could be said for Bengal through the 20th century, when - as in their involvement in violent anti-colonial movements and later in the Naxalite rebellion - they showed themselves even more willing to die for their ideas than the French.*"¹⁰

On its 50th anniversary The Week magazine in its July, 2016 issue wrote this about Charu Majumder, the undisputed leader of the Naxalbari struggle and ran a story titled, "The Man India loves to forget."¹¹ To a large extent this might be true specially because of the violence and mayhem created in the late 60's and early 70's that led to unprecedented death of

¹⁰ Guha, Ramchandra. "Changed Histories- Why Bengal Is To India What France Is To The World." *The Telegraph*. 5th September, 2015. Available at <https://www.telegraphindia.com/opinion/changed-histories/cid/1443438>

¹¹ Banerjee, R. "The Man India loves to forget." *The Week*. 3rd July, 2016. Available at <https://www.theweek.in/theweek/cover/charu-majumdar-naxalbari.html>

young people. And this trend is still continuing with people getting killed on both sides of the conflict. However, it would be unwise to forget it because of its contributions towards highlighting the plight of the downtrodden and the marginalised which broadened the scope of democratic space in India by inculcating inclusion as a plausible political objective.

There is one more reason to remind ourselves of this part of History. Edmund Burke once remarked, “Those who don’t know history are doomed to repeat it.” So, it puts one in a dilemma whether by not knowing one suffers from historical amnesia or by knowing one makes effort to caution every next generation against repeating it. Charu Majumder’s contributions towards raising the issues of land and rights of the marginalised has led to the best land reforms in Bengal (Operation *Barga*) among all the other states of India. His portrayal of analysing history for the first time accounted for the subaltern voices which had lost in the mainstream history. His capacity to question the Bengal renaissance and its stalwart leaders like Vidyasagar and Rammohan Roy (which would later be accepted as partial assessment by the Naxalites and hence wrong!) opened new discourses in the study of marginality. And finally, in the words of a senior Indian Police Service officer who had interrogated Majumder in disguise and whom I had the fortune to meet said, “no one can doubt and question the sacrifice that he made.”¹²

More than fifty years after the uprising began, when we turn back to look into history, it is incumbent upon us to approach the historicity with some openness. As rightly pointed out by Abhijit Majumder, son of Charu Majumder during our discussion that “Naxalbari did not happen suddenly and neither did it happen over-night.”¹³ However, when we study History we should have in mind that, *“THE 'truth' about the past changes with every present, influenced by the particular biases of the respective succeeding generations. But while approaching the past with the preconceptions which originate in our own present historicity, it is essential to retain a certain 'openness' to the past.”* (Banerjee, p.1197)

There were agitations and events (both national and international) which were taking place at regular intervals throughout the period leading upto 1967 since 1947. A cohort of all these taken together form the background of the Naxalbari protest from the prism of politics of exclusion. What transpired at Naxalbari was the penultimate episode in the history of the revolution as envisaged by Charu Majumder. I shall limit to the origins of the conflict.

¹² Met him in Delhi in August, 2017.

¹³ Interview with the researcher in January, 2018.

Charu Majumder, a middle class Bengali man had been part of the Communist movement in Bengal and not in any way a less *Bhadrolok*. He belonged to those class of Bengalis who as Ram Guha has described was ready to die for a cause or an idea. His strongly worded and inspiring eight theses which later would become the bible of the radical Communists, were written while he was still a member of the CPI(M).

The Communists formed government in WB in coalition with Bangla Congress (a breakaway faction of the Indian National Congress (INC)), in 1967. By this time the Marxists, which comprised the comparatively radical members have already parted ways in 1964 forming Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI (M)). However, their decision to join the government in 1967 was not particularly preferred by the even more radical members like Charu Majumder, Sushital Roychowdhury and Kanu Sanyal. Majumder was in charge of the Siliguri branch of the party where he had begun radicalising the youth through his writings and speeches. However, with the passage of time, not quite satisfied with the functioning of the party, the radical members within the CPI(M) segregated themselves and formed the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCCR) in 1967. While CPI(M) had split with CPI opposing revisionism, the even more radical elements within the CPI (M) accused the latter of not fulfilling its promises which had formed the basis of its separation.

AICCCR, later formed Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) in 1969 and further got subdivided into numerous splinter groups like People's War Group (PWG), Maoist Communist Centre (MCC), Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation and Communist Party of India (Party Unity) over the next three decades. These groups led by PWG from the South and MCC from the North finally combined to form Communist Party of India (Maoist) in 2004 which has been listed as a terrorist organisation under the MHA.

Although the position of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in history as an individual whose death brought the world to a brink of war remains incomparable, Bigul kisan of Naxalbari village possess kind of similar status in the history of Naxalism. He was beaten up by the *jotedar*¹⁴ and his goons when he went to cultivate his land. As the news spread, there was anger all over the village. On the next day, 22 May 1967, a meeting of the villagers was organised where the police fired. That led to the death of a police officer named Sonam Wangdi and 11 other women and children. That was the beginning of the Naxalbari uprising. For few days, the

¹⁴ The rich landlord class as was called in Bengal

jotedars began to be attacked. All the papers related to land mortgage of poor peasants were distributed among them by the Naxalites. The *jotedars* were ordered to surrender their arms.

Bengali *Bhadroloks* known for their intellectual inclination left no one in doubt about the romanticism of Naxalbari. They used their creativity to highlight various debates within the movement. For example, hardly can one find such moving portrayal of a mother who has lost his son in the police firing as has been attempted by Mahasweta Devi in her novel “*Hazar Churashir Ma*” (Mother of 1084). Similarly, Samaresh Majumder had taken the responsibility of portraying the life of an ordinary motivated Naxalite and what his life turns out to be at the end of the path that they had so dared to change. The three novels – *Uttaradhikar*, *Kalbela* and *Kalpurush* follow the journey of the protagonist Animesh who plunges into the Naxalite rebellion. On the other hand, Mrinal Sen who had directed the movie *Padatik* had raised the pertinent questions and confusions surrounding the practicability of the ideology through the portrayal of foot soldiers of the movement. These are only a handful of examples from the oeuvre of popular culture on Naxalism in Bengal.

An interesting aspect of this phenomenon is the participation of a large number of youths from middle class, elite Bengali communities who were far off from the objective conditions that inspired the peasants. At the call of Majumder, the youths of Calcutta left for villages to gain first-hand knowledge of the agrarian situation in India. Santosh Rana, Ashim Chatterjee, Dipanjan Raychoudhury – with whom I had the opportunity of interacting and unravelling the layers of the phenomenon – belonged to the elite and prestigious institution of Presidency college.

India has been experiencing Maoist inspired uprising since 1967. There have been particularly three events which are interconnected by its inspiration from Maoist ideologies since the time of Indian independence. Although it cannot be classified as three separate events. Rather the current phase of the Maoism draws its lineage from the earlier two. The first is the Telangana uprising (1945-51) followed by Naxalbari (1967) and now Maoism.

| | Dates | Main revolutionary party | Main states affected |
|--------|----------------------|--|--|
| First | 1948 (1946)* to 1951 | Communist Party of India (CPI) faction | Erstwhile Hyderabad state (now Andhra Pradesh) |
| Second | 1969 (1967)* to 1971 | CPI (Marxist) faction. Became CPI (Marxist-Leninist) in 1969 | West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. But also Bihar, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh |
| Third | 1990 (1980)* to date | People's War Group and Maoist Communist Centre. Merged into CPI (Maoist) in 2004 | Began in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. Now concentrated in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Orissa, and West Bengal |

Table 1: The three waves of Maoist insurgency in independent India (Source: Gleditsch et al. 2002 in Kennedy & Purushotham, p. 833)

Note: *The UCDP/PRIO dataset only takes into account years when the state was party to the conflict and when there were over twenty-five battle deaths. The dates in parentheses indicate when, irrespective of these criteria, the insurgents first engaged in significant violent activity.

I shall refrain from engaging in a normative discussion about the validity and capability of the responses in successfully dealing with the conflict (to be dealt with in the subsequent chapter). However, it is pertinent to make one observation - the fact that, what started as uprising in one small village in one state in WB and has subsequently spread to more than 100 districts of the country spanning over 12 states suggest that the responses have not yielded the expected results.

All the Maoist inspired uprisings have certain common elements in terms of their structural organisation. Below is a framework of an ideal typical structure of a Maoist insurgency in India. Maoism works at three levels – macro, meso and micro. Depending on the level of functioning, the actors, constituencies, contribution and objectives, change. This helps to create a democratic yet pyramidal structure of organisation enabling it to function in a systematic manner.

| | Macro-Level | Meso-Level | Micro-Level |
|---------------------|--|---|---|
| Actors | Political leaders and ideologues | Guerrilla squads (dalam) and village committees (sangham) | Rural inhabitants |
| Constituency | Section of the middle classes often from outside the base area | A combination of macro and micro level actors | Sections of rural inhabitants in the base area |
| Contribution | Ideology and organisation of modern revolution | Operational doctrine of guerrilla warfare | Mass support and access to local resources |
| Objectives | Seize state power | Seize local power | Improve local economic, political and social circumstances. |

Table 2: Ideal Type Structure of Maoist insurgency in India (Source: Kennedy & Purushotham, p. 834)

This structure is important to understand not only to acquaint oneself with the Maoist organisation structure in India but to frame the responses according to the various levels of actors' involvement. The organisation is highly decentralised with each group assigned specific function all directed towards the ultimate aim of capturing power. More often than not the treatment meted out to a top level Maoist ideologue is similar to a lower level cadre from the village who is merely a supporter or sometimes not even a supporter but have been falsely accused such by the administration. A large section of this society are systemic victims of these institutional injustices over prolonged periods of time. This has created frustration and anger among the supporters against successive governments. Such treatments have often faced criticism from members of intellectuals and civil society. This particularly reflects the indignity meted out to the lower class people who are often treated by the administration as invisible sub-human beings.

There are three levels at which the Maoists function: at the macro level are the top level leaders who are the hard core ideologues belonging to the middle class and upper caste. They primarily, therefore, often do not belong to the group for whom they claim to be fighting for. They provide the strategies for war and translate theories into action. Their role is important to understand by the policy makers. They translate their ideologies in a manner which is

appropriate to the Indian socio-economic culture. It is this translation which helps them to garner support because the affected communities find the situation relatable. Hence the often cited allegation by the government that imported ideology has no place in Indian democracy loses its essence because it no longer remains alien if it has been appropriated as per the host country.

The next is meso level which is a combination of macro and micro actors. They form the armed backbone of the organisation and seize local power. It is here that propaganda of the Maoists assumes importance where they begin to apply their theories into action.

The third in this pyramidal structure are the villagers and supporters who form the large scale support base. They are mainly concerned with their social, economic, and political rights at the grassroots levels and seek Maoist support for its realisation.

1.9 The Focus on Central Government

For a very long time Naxalism began to be approached as a Law and Order problem. The Constitution of India in its Seventh Schedule has divided the responsibilities of the central government and state governments. It comprises three lists – Union list on which the central legislature has exclusive power to legislate, the state list on which the state governments legislate and the concurrent list on which advice of both the central and state government is solicited.¹⁵ So the question remains what happens in case of conflict between the two centres of powers – centre and state governments. According to Part XI of the Indian Constitution, “No law made by Parliament shall be deemed to be invalid on the ground that it would have extra-territorial operation.”

Additionally, “Nothing in articles 249 and 250 shall restrict the power of the Legislature of a State to make any law which under this Constitution it has power to make, but if any provision of a law made by the Legislature of a State is repugnant to any provision of a law made by Parliament which Parliament has under either of the said articles power to make, the law made by Parliament, whether passed before or after the law made by the Legislature of the State, shall prevail, and the law made by the Legislature of the State shall to the extent of the repugnancy, but so long only as the law made by Parliament continues to have effect, be inoperative.” (Ministry of External Affairs)

¹⁵ For Details refer: <https://www.mea.gov.in/Images/pdf1/S7.pdf>.

Therefore Part XI clearly states that it is the central law which holds more authority under any circumstances in comparison to the state laws.

There is a flourishing of literature on every region's specific analysis of the conflict separately (Singh, 2016; Meher, 2012; Sinha 1990; Venugopal, 2013; Navlakha, 2012; Choudhary, 2012; Sundar 2016; Kunnath, 2017;). What is lacking is a comprehensive account of the response mechanism adopted by the central governments over the period to deal with the conflict. In this thesis, I shall be particularly focussing on the central government's approach to the conflict and how the reins of control has been gradually taken over by the latter.

Prof. Chakrabarti argues that *“The tendency on the part of the ruling elites in South Asia has, however, been to approach insurgency primarily as a law and order problem. Attempts to seek a solution only through the application of force often lead to an overt securitization of the problem.”* (Chakrabarti, p. 73) The adverse impact of such a characterisation is neglect of the issue of governance and reduction of the multi layered aspects of the conflict into simply a law and order issue. This reductionist tendencies have oftentimes featured in the responses adopted by the GOI in case of Maoism as well. *“Overt securitization of social or political problems has often led to the neglect of the governance issues involved, as establishing the state monopoly on the use of violence (often through the adoption of extraordinary measures) becomes the main counter-insurgency strategy. This has unfortunately led to the fracturing and proliferation of conflicts rather than to their resolution.”* (ibid, p. 74)

This theorization allows the government enough space to apply force to deal with the conflict thereby producing immediate results than dealing with long term structural issues that allowed the conflict to originate at the first place. This trend continues with each successive governments finding easy route by securitising the conflict than dealing with the governance issues which has systematically excluded a vast majority of the people and who has subsequently joined hands with the Maoists. Central government therefore legitimises its failure of governance by securitising the Maoist conflict as law and order over which it has total control.

Although involvement of state governments is part of the whole scheme of dealing with the Maoists, Central government has a framework within which most of these state responses are generated. Centre plays a coordinating role among the various state ministries responsible for dealing with Maoism.: *“There is a chain of consultative bodies which look into policy*

coordination and decisions on measures to deal with the problem on the security and development fronts. These are:

- Standing Committee of Chief Ministers (Chairman: Home Minister)
- Review Group (headed by Cabinet Secretary)
- Coordinating centre (headed by Home Secretary, other members being Chief Secretaries and DG police of states)
- Task Force (headed by secretary internal security and includes senior officers of intelligence agencies, CPO's and state police)
- Inter-ministerial groups (headed by Additional secretary to coordinate development schemes in Maoist affected areas)
- Consultative Committee of Parliament (This has met on few occasions to discuss the Maoist threat)" (CLAWS report, pp. 128-129)

Theoretically speaking, central government provides the supervisory structure within which the various state governments frame its ways to deal with the conflict.

Apart from this, the efforts by the central government to specifically deal with the Maoists came into establishment in 2006 when the LWE division within the MHA was opened. This division helped in formulating policies keeping the specific issues of the Maoists in mind instead of grouping it with other insurgencies like that of the North-East or Kashmir. The three broad areas as designated by the central government within which the various state governments are mandated to implement rules are security, development/ welfare alongwith the rights of the marginalised and managing public perception.

Through such an initiative "*The LWE Division has been instrumental in changing the government's approach in dealing with the problem from that of a law and order perspective, which would make it a state subject, to an insurgency, which makes it a central subject. This effectively means that since the formation of the LWE Division, no state can deal with this insurgency in an isolated manner. Intelligence sharing has become easier and so has using combined resources.*" (Shapiro et al, p.9) This shows that with the creation of the division within the MHA, central government aimed to have the controlling and decision making authority by treating it as an insurgency while labelling it as law and order.

However, it is important to mention here the problem with such an initiative. "*While institutional mechanisms exist to coordinate action between the centre and the state governments, it is difficult to achieve consensus due to political consideration and exigencies.*

The central government has been treating the problem as that of 'law and order' and has assumed an advisory role rather than a pro-active one. This is possibly due to the deficiencies and constraints of constitutional mandate. The affected state governments too have not displayed a pan-Indian sensitivity in addressing the problem." (CLAWS report, p. 129) Thus while the law and order classification remain unchanged, the manner in which decisions are made and implemented rests on the central government. This allows the central government to circumvent the political complications with various state governments while at the same time assuming total control over dealing with the conflict. A framework is thus created by the central government within which the various state governments function. Subsequently the question remains despite such shortcomings, why is the central government overtly, still classifying it as a law and order problem There is another explanation for such a framework: Any failure with this system can be easily and quite conveniently passed onto the state governments and its myriad political dynamics. There is an escape route ingrained within such a system which allows the central government to honourably withdraw without losing public support, in case of any failure.

LWE division bridged the much needed gap of coordination among the various agencies, particularly aiding in intelligence gathering and sharing. To make the system more centralised where the control of supervision rests with the central government, such a coordinated and integrated framework was created. For example regarding intelligence gathering *"In the context of internal security, where Naxalism has assumed priority, the inadequacies of the central and state intelligence apparatus became apparent in the most active hubs of Maoist activity in remote tribal areas of Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar and parts of south-west Bengal. Some superficial political inputs may be available, but they are not enough to provide access to hard-core operational information for storming their hideouts. On the other hand, Maoists more often than not have a string of local informers giving them advance information about troop movements and plans of operations."* (CLAWS report, p. 22)

Other than providing coordinating role, central government *"supplements their (states) efforts in several ways. These include CPMFs, Commando Battalions for Resolute Action (COBRA), sanction of Indian Reserve Battalions, setting up Counterinsurgency Anti-Terrorism (CIAT) schools, assistance in training of state police"* (CLAWS report, p. 129)

However, there appears to be a shift in the approaches employed by the government to deal with this conflict. *"Having tried the options of purely kinetic means in the 1970s and predominantly economic means in the 1990s, the Indian government has now graduated to the*

EBA (Effects Based Approach) focusing on the whole of government approach.” (Gahlot, p. 13)

So, what does EBA mean and how does it function?

“The EBA is influencing the perceptions and thinking of an adversary by to win the battle of wits and compel him into subjugation while avoiding attrition to one's own forces. EBA primarily relies on the second and third-order effects of calculated attacks or actions undertaken to achieve specific, operational and strategic effects. EBA entails the synergized application of all instruments of national power to cripple the critical components of the enemy's war-waging machinery and shape the environment to one's advantage. The application of all possible national resources for EBA warrants the involvement of the highest political leadership in planning, and to an extent executing the Effects Based Operations (EBO). EBO may involve political, diplomatic, military or economic actions to influence the enemy's physical, information or cognitive domain and gain advantage that may be outside the ambit of conventional means. Some strategic gains possible with EBO, which may not require any fighting, are affecting the surrender of the enemy, causing defection in enemy ranks, gaining the support of the neutral population, and gaining access to superior intelligence.” (ibid. p. 12)

It is characterised that *“The Indian Government's undertaking of an Effects Based Approach, which encompasses region specific tailor made politico-military options have brought in a welcome change. Professionally trained and well equipped security forces are undertaking intelligence based surgical operations to provide safe and secure environment, while inclusive development is being undertaken by comprehensive development packages to improve the living standard of the affected populace. The EBA is not only countering the insurgency, but also empowering the affected populace with education and multiple self-help employment opportunities to make them invulnerable to the exploitative feudal elites and supportive of the government's cause.” (ibid, p. preface v)*

This approach explains the addition of development/ welfare response with the aim of empowering the marginalised in the already existing response strategy of the LWE division. These region specific features were need of the hour because of the fast spread of the conflict across various states. These reactions of the government were intended to address the conflict once it was confronted with newer dimensions to the conflict. This is not any substantial change in its response mechanism. This is simply an addition to the existing dimensions. Once the conflict began spreading across various regions, central government had no other option other

than providing tailor made response mechanisms applicable to each region. However, the main reason for pointing this out is the inherent absence of addressing the root causes which led to the origin of the conflict at the first place and at the same time keeping the reigns of control in the hands of the central government.

The overarching role of the central government in dealing with Maoism has brought in another dimensions to the responses. The most important being that of providing a structure within which various regional governments deal with the conflict. This aspect of centralising the management is significant to understand. It aims to reduce the role of the state governments which probably could have played an active role in dealing with the conflict in its region in a manner specific to its socio-political need. With the current approaches as designed by central government sufficient enough to carve specific responses tailor made for each region, the role of the state governments hardly exists beyond implementation. *“The Central Government before late 1990s merely allocated funds to the state governments and distanced itself from the conflict citing Naxalism to be an internal problem of the states. Whereas the present Effects Based Approach (EBA) features direct involvement of the Central Government in planning and to a certain extent in execution of the various policy directives.”* (ibid, p.11)

Advice rendered by MHA to various states in this respect are as follows:

- Time bound action for augmenting the police force to improve the police to population ratio.
- Suitable incentives for persons posted in Maoist affected areas
- Improvement of infrastructure for the police forces, special commando/jungle warfare related training for selected personnel and strengthening of intelligence gathering system. (CLAWS report, p. 129)

Indian army’s manual on sub conventional warfare was released in 2006 which details about dealing with the new trends of conflicts also highlights the increased role of the central government. “This manual defines “*sub-conventional warfare*” as a generic term encompassing all armed conflicts that are above the level of peaceful coexistence among states and below the threshold of war. It includes militancy, insurgency, proxy war, and terrorism, whether employed as a means in an insurrectionist movement or undertaken independently. Border skirmishes also fall within this category. (p.1) The manual defines counter-insurgency operation as involving “*the use of all measures of government activity to combat insurgency, including operations by the military, central paramilitary forces, economic development,*

political reforms and perception management aimed at winning the 'hearts and minds' of the people.” (Appendix A, p. 65)

What is important to note here is the fact that LWE division and publication of this manual happened in the same year with emphasis on management of public perceptions highlighted both by LWE and in the manual. EBA takes the fight to another level where battle will also be fought at the level of wit. Level of wit particularly stresses where fight will also be psychological. Hence it is important to understand how the Maoists are using these responses and the changes to their advantage by relating the situation to the cadres and adapting the ideology according to the Indian context (this is addressed in chapter 6).

The framework of the plan and the coordination of activities among the various departments and among the various state governments take place under the constant supervision of the central government. This is definitely a change from its earlier position. The reins of control simply passed from the state to central government using the façade of identifying Maoism as law and order while dealing it in a more centralised manner. This rather securitised the conflict to a much higher level because of the avoidance of bureaucratic hurdles in terms of dealing with state governments and its political realities on the ground. Now instructions directly come from the centre within which the state governments merely perform its designated role. And it is here that laws like UAPA comes into the picture which places immense power in the hands of the executive agencies to arrest people often without warrant and keep in custody without bail. It has a more centralised approach allowing the central agencies to bypass the state governments' jurisdictions in the name of national security.

With the ultimate aim of dealing with counter insurgencies,

“it has been argued that the Indian Army’s counter-insurgency operations employed both political measures and military force. Though each iteration of these combinations of efforts looks messy and sui generis, there is a common underlying grand strategy. On the other hand, it is difficult to say whether this is a conscious strategy or whether it has evolved out of the deep background of Indian strategic culture. The essence of this strategy is the willingness to compromise with rebellious sub-nationalities on all issues with one exception: secession is taboo. In order to permit such compromises, it was essential that military force be kept carefully limited – though force was used, and frequently. This grand strategy was evident in all the major counter-insurgency campaigns, and it has been effective in avoiding defeat, a major objective in guerrilla wars.” (Rajagopalan, p. 84)

While secession has been decided upon as a taboo, what is proving to be insurmountable challenge in case of Maoism is the fact, that the latter strives for uprooting the current political system and replacing it with their version which does not fall into any specific categorisation arrived at by the Indian Army. Hence negotiation becomes impossible with these groups whose ultimate aim is to remove the current system of governance. What makes Maoism different and insurmountable to be addressed is the basics of their ideology which centres around the belief that parliamentary system of governance is not the path to forming a government. Their idea of New Democratic Revolution (NDR) challenges the current system where power has to be captured through the barrel of a gun and not through voting.

This makes study of the central government approach more timely and significant as it is gradually moving towards centralising tendencies. To understand the framework within which the various state government has been functioning, this thesis will focus on the central government approaches and its role in the conflict prolongation and subsequent survival of Maoist phenomenon

1.10 The Question of Party Politics

The sudden rise of the Hindutva led national political party Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) should not surprise political and social scientist working on India. The elite and *Brahmanised* version of society with hierarchies that institutionalise discrimination stands at the core of such a philosophy. It would be wrong to direct the blame to any particular political party. BJP is implementing the ideology which many of the other political parties simply hid under the garb of liberalism or secularism, when in reality they were followers of similar if not the same ideas (Jaffrelot, p 2). The politicisation surrounding minority politics has often put the so called liberal and secular parties under doubt (Raina, p. 23). Ethnic voting is still considered to be of priority over issue based voting (Jaffrelot, p. 1090) With certain groups always assuming entitlement and pursuing policies trying to appease those in minorities-this position has been reinterpreted to construct a new narrative by the right parties. This narrative is directed towards the majority, for its failure to embrace inclusivity and blame them for their appeasement policies.

As this current political frame of reference unfolds in multi-diverse country like India, it is important to understand this structure that has been nurturing within it the seeds of majoritarianism, the milder version of which is the dominant socio-political discourse catering

to the demands and needs of the elite few. While in the previous version of dominant politics as has been unfolding in India since the time of independence the authority was in the hand of the same group of elites and confined to only the coterie of few (Soikham, p. 25). The current version (Hindu majority), while retaining the same old inherited structure of dominant version, claims to include those who have been cast as outliers within the fold of majority. But remains cautious to blame for this exclusion the appeasement policies to address the needs of the minorities in the newly constructed narrative (Gupta, p. 37). Hence for the majority the anger is directed towards the minorities than towards the failure of the dominant structure that systematically denied the minorities their rightful place in the society.

INC which has been ruling for the most part of post independent India is party to similar faults that the current BJP is being accused of (Basu, p. 36 & Berglund, p. 1064-65). The only difference being the former had a more sophisticated approach that eluded the eyes of the ordinary and appealed to the elite, the latter is more open about its politics and has succeeded in creating narrative that remains appealing to a larger audience which has happily embraced it without question. Hence it is not the question of one political party or a single unit of governance that can help us understand the socio-political framework of the country in totality. It is the kind of politics that has found safe embrace by the elites of the country who had considered this as their entitlement to continue this politics without any challenge across political parties. The nature and character of the government which had been moulded within this framework remains beyond the characteristics of any particular political party.

However, there is no doubt that such dominance has faced challenges like in the formation of identity based political parties or caste based politics but with its numerous other challenges in the form of catering to sub-identities (Dam, p. 914). So long all of these unfolded within the constitutional framework, it remained acceptable to the political class. With Maoism, things were different. They began to challenge the Constitution itself. Within such a structure Maoism needs to be understood. The government, therefore, needed a story to challenge this rise instead of reflecting upon its own responsibilities that might have caused such a scenario. Such a story of the government began to paint the Maoists as the enemy whose only intention is to destroy the fabric of the country. Every successive rule began to embrace this story without challenging the premise on which it was woven. Changes, definitely began to be made, but the essence of looking at the Maoists as the 'Other' remained unperturbed.

The question of which political party is in power and what their ideologies are (as is normalised in western democracies), remains inadequate in the discourse of Maoism. Rather in India the context to understand how politics unfolds across various strata of societies and which social class assumes power helps to understand the Maoist phenomenon in a more holistic manner. The narrow and reductionist approach of categorising political ideologies according to political parties necessarily is not the point of departure. Rather the analysis focuses on the social classes which have remained in power, what their shared ideologies are and how their common behaviour shape the ruling politics, make Maoism more complex yet significant to understand. This thesis, therefore, aims to contextualise Maoism within this broader understanding of a dominant social class and the ‘others’ across ruling parties.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Fifty years is a long time to produce myriad literature on varied topics related to Maoism in India. While going through this vast array of literature what has really surprised me is the fact that despite the duration of this long time period, people's interest has not waned. There are lesser instances of literary fatigue among the readers as well as the writers. Another reason for the steady production of writings on this topic is the romanticism associated with the conflict among the people from all walks of life- academicians, participants, politicians, policy makers, students, and ordinary readers. People's interest is stirred by the manifestation of supreme sacrifice of death for a cause led by the Maoist leaders, has found a permanent place in the imagination of a common man. This persistent remembrance became an important hurdle for the government to declare war on one of the longest internal conflicts in India.

This chapter is divided into two sections and a number of sub-sections to try and understand the following objectives: the first section will analyse the available literature on Maoism in general. The aim of this section is to highlight the gaps in the existing literature on Maoism and what this thesis entails to contribute.¹⁶ The subsequent section will focus on the existing literature on the key concepts used to understand the government responses towards Maoism and the contribution of this thesis to the knowledge.

2.1 Contextualizing the Thesis in Literature on Maoism

The aim in this thesis is to search for the causes of conflict prolongation through understanding the government responses which has failed to secure legitimacy for itself and challenge the legitimacy of the Maoists. The following are the sub-sections which provides a detailed account of the existing literature which puts the current study in context. The common theme connecting all the sections are the reasons for conflict prolongation.

2.1.1 Conflict Prolongation

Any such long term conflict is defined by social scientists, in general, as protracted conflict. However, the term protracted is an adjective. Its primary function is to characterise a conflict. The term 'prolong', on the other, as defined in English dictionary is a verb. It has

¹⁶ The reason to include this section here is to contextualise the specificity of the Maoist study that will be attempted in this research. It is important to understand this specificity because it will validate the use of particular concepts to explain the responses in the conceptual framework chapter.

elements of action and intention within the term. It helps to identify action and their intention behind the conflict instead of just defining its characteristics. Therefore the term prolong is more action oriented. For my thesis, instead of a passive term of protracted, I will be using prolong to negotiate the legitimacy among various actors and its role in conflict prolongation.

In order to understand the prolonged nature of conflict, time becomes an enduring factor. “Any analysis which reduces the causes of extensive social conflict to a single determinant should be treated with caution” (Power, p.489). Therefore, in addition to focussing on time this thesis aims to contextualise the prolonged nature of the conflict to understand the additional factors that have been contributing towards the conflict prolongation.

Protracted social conflict was first defined by Lebanese Professor Edward Azar in the 1970’s. He indicated two characteristics of such conflict – intractability and longevity. International Committee of the Red Cross (August, 2016) ¹⁷ points out that such conflict can be marred by one singular conflict or a series of multiple conflicts with tangled history. The other reason for such prolonged nature of the conflicts is its constant mutating and fragmentation. As opposed to that while most such protracted conflict survive on fragmentation which comes with different conflict points, ideologies, objectives and goals. Maoism, despite being fragmented since 1970’s to early 2000, decides to bring the factions under one umbrella creating CPI (Maoists). As two bigger groups joined from north and south of India, the conflict gained strength thereby contributing to the continuing spirit of conflict. While longevity is an intrinsic characteristics when defining a protracted conflict, the primary focus of measurement should not fall on time axis only.

John W. Burton (1990) explained that conflict arises from unsatisfied universal human needs, for example independence. It gives identity, recognition and opportunities and as per Burton this is the cause behind conflict in Central America and the Middle East. It is the elite power structure that imposes their norms and institutions on the society thereby stifling individual needs. Any attempt to control their behaviour would create an unstable system. Conflict analysis will suggest ways to modify the system as per the demands of its constituents.

Randall Collins (1975) explains symbolism and emotion to conflict prolongation. As causes of conflict he attributes it to scarce resources but the mobilization will take place on both emotional and material ground. A person must be able to establish identity with the group

¹⁷ ICRC 2016, Protracted conflict and humanitarian action: some recent ICRC experiences, International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva.

and consider its actions as morally right. Only then can the people be mobilised. And it is this sense of moral superiority that may be used to commit acts of any nature. For example even the hijackers of the plane that dashed into the World Trade Centre considered themselves to be committing a rightful act. So resources for which the conflict emerges must have symbolic value. But it is also true that to sustain the conflict both these factors must equally contribute till the end.

Morton Duetsch (1973) commented that conflict occurs whenever incompatible activities occur. He develops a cooperative-competitive model based on interdependence of goals of the parties in conflict. They will be ready to cooperate if their goals are positively interdependent, where success and failures are co-relating with each other. In the negative interdependence it is like win-lose situation where one party must lose for the other to win. It is the first one with which he was more concerned. The conflicting parties must identify their shared goals and help each other to reach them. Accordingly, the parties will display more friendly attitudes and their willingness to cooperate.

Johan Galtung discusses it in terms of structural violence. In the late 1960's Johan Galtung produced an influential model of conflict which could be viewed as a triangle with contradictions (C), attitudes (A) and behaviour at its vertices. Contradictions refer to the actual or perceived incompatibility of goals between the parties. Attitude includes parties' perception and misperception of each other and of themselves which generally in a violent conflict include demeaning stereotypes of others which in turn are influenced by fear, anger, bitterness and hatred. Behaviour includes either cooperation or coercion depending on the nature of relation. Violent conflict features threats, coercion and destructive attacks. Galtung is of the opinion that all three components must be present in a full conflict. Conflict is a dynamic process where all the three elements change and influence each other. Thus as the conflict formation begin to grow and intensify widening the parties, scope and spread, drawing in outsiders. It is here that addressing the core of the conflict becomes complicated.

Another key concept which he later developed (1990) is the difference between direct violence, structural violence and cultural violence. Direct violence kills the victim by engaging in violence. In case of structural violence the society's structure being asymmetric ensure negatively affecting the victim. For example children dying due to malnutrition is a failure on the part of the government to provide adequate mechanism that will ensure balanced and sufficient food to the children. Third in line is the cultural violence. It makes the government,

media and the citizens indifferent to the plight of the victims and attempts to justify their actions.

Direct violence can be brought to an end by changing the conflict behaviour, structural violence through removing the underlying contradictions and cultural violence by changing attitudes. Galtung also defined negative and positive peace. While the former is the cessation of direct violence, the second overcomes both structural and cultural violence as well. It is closer to legitimation and justice. To achieve positive peace injustice must be removed.

However, conflict might also occur protesting against years of injustice.

“Deterrence strategies, based on threats and punishments, are unsuccessful, or inoperative, when the accumulation of deep resentment by the oppressed group seeks an outlet for violence. Fear does not always suppress human behaviour.”(Laszlo, Yoo, Pauling (eds), p 3)

“Moreover, in the medium term, this form of delivery (conflict related humanitarian aid) tends to undermine production, perpetuating the humanitarian emergency, while often contributing to the prolongation of conflict. (Stewart, p.561) As Kathleen Newland also observed: 'Not only have humanitarian interventions failed to protect people adequately from terrible suffering and death, but they have in many cases seemed to exacerbate or prolong that suffering.' Aid channelled through illegitimate authorities may strengthen them and enhance their capacity to dominate their societies. It can be argued, then, that humanitarian action may prolong or strengthen socially unjust power relations in target societies. Large-scale assistance to conflict-ridden societies may undermine local productive capacities and impoverish local producers, laying the basis for further conflict. (MacFarlane, p. 539). Due to inadequate accountability in conflict zones, welfare packages have often face severe misappropriation and providing undue power in the hands of those actors who have consistently been able to exploit the vulnerable and the situation to their advantage. About the prolonged wars in African continent, Gershoni writes, “The prolonged wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone have similar features to other wars which are taking place in various parts of Africa such as Somalia, Rwanda, Angola and recently Zaire. One of their common features is that prolonged wars signal a process of state collapse (ibid. p.55). For the World Bank, for instance, 'greed' for diamonds and other lootable commodities has 'fueled' war, and little additional explanation is deemed necessary. Other economists talk of the 'belligerent investment in the continuation of war' or represent war in the country an 'incremental addition to sunk or past costs' (Cilliers, p.2). In a variety of important ways Angola is being drawn increasingly into the orbit of

dominant economic ideological discourses of neoliberalism with implications for the way in which Angola's colonial past/post-colonial present is understood and accounted for (Abrahamsen, 2001).

There are other understandings of conflict prolongation like that of Karl Magyar and Donald Snow. “Karl Magyar (1994) suggests that time is not the only measurement for prolonged war. "Scholars in the field do not define prolongation within a purely temporal context only. Rather, observers should focus on the failure of the conflict to come to a head in an early decisive battle-which would eliminate at least one of the major protagonists" (Magyar, p.192) While it is true that the Maoist conflict in India has been in continuance for the last fifty years which is a significant duration to classify the conflict as prolonged, what is even more important to study in this case is to understand the inability of the successive governments to come to a battle with the Maoists and end the continuous conflict once and for all. This understanding will contextualise the prolonged nature of the Maoist conflict beyond the paradigm of time as the sole measurement.

Besides, regarding the reasons for conflict another important segment highlighted by Snow is the omnipresent influence of politics in these conflicts. He explains,

“The heart of most conflict in the Third World is political, "based on deep social, economic, and political antagonisms, and as such their outcomes hinge on political objectives. These political problems manifest themselves both internally and externally. Internally, they tend to cluster around the general scarcity of virtually all forms of resource, making the struggle for survival among groups an everyday fact of life. Fragile economies and polities are most susceptible to the world around them; for instance, increases in the price of petroleum attendant to the Iraq-Kuwait situation had their most devastating effects in the developing world. Externally, disputed borders, minority groups trapped in countries where the majority do not share their nationality, and ethnic and religious differences form some of the more obvious sources of dispute.” (ibid. p.16) As probable causes for continuation of conflict, Magyar and Snow continues. *“These are: foreign debt and its service; growing population and its associated demographic impact; problems of food quantity and distribution; grinding poverty for the vast majority; economic underdevelopment and maldistribution; educational and infrastructure deficiencies; political stability; and, most recently, environmental degradation.”* (ibid, p. 17)

Additionally, *“Economic development is a necessary but not sufficient condition for political development and stability. Political stability is grounded in governmental legitimacy, the grant by the people of the right to govern. When governmental authority is based upon willing participation, the result is likely to be political democracy and stability. When it is not, the alternative base of authority is coercion, which has within it the seeds of instability.”* (ibid, p. 23). Continuing *“The problems suggested above are not military problems in the orthodox sense, nor is their solution military in any traditional sense. Occasionally, they will manifest themselves in military terms such as insurgencies or terrorism for which military force may provide the short-term palliative. What these situations represent is a new, and significantly different, national security agenda.”* (ibid. pp.25-26)

Summing up the current study where Snow’s analysis of conflict prolongation becomes accurate, he reiterates, *“First, these “wars of the third kind” (Rice: 1988) are more highly and obviously “political” than conventional wars. Particularly in the case of internal wars, the struggle is only partly military in the sense of winning by defeating the enemy’s armed forces. Instead, achieving the “better state of the peace” (an outcome where our political objectives are achieved) (Drew & Snow:1989) requires gaining or regaining the loyalty of the population, an inherently political act which may be actually undercut by military actions that make sense on purely military grounds. The real objective is “the functioning and legitimacy of a government”, (Greentree: 1990) and, in these circumstances, political means and ends may actually contradict one another.”* (ibid, pp. 28-29).

Snow highlighted two particularly important aspects of conflict prolongation in his discussion which is useful to understand the current Indian scenario of Maoist conflict. Firstly, he highlighted the structural factors like economic underdevelopment and resources conflict as some of the underlying causes of continued conflict in the third world. Secondly the absence of political legitimacy is key to understanding the eroding of political values defined by the government and replaced by other values which in this case is that of the Maoists’.

Prolonged conflicts as explicated by Magyer and Snow allows the space to explore other factors behind the continuation of conflict. This helps us to understand how the structural factors could equally be contributing factors behind conflict prolongation. However, all these existing analysis is inadequate in understanding the participation of the people who have been a steady force in the cadres base of the Maoists thereby making it impossible for the Indian government to declare a war. As Snow explained (mentioned in the first para), the inability of the governments to declare war could be a reason for prolonging the conflict and here the

structural factors are not the sole criteria. The role of the indigenous population in providing a continuous source of cadres thereby creating a chasm between government's direct declaration of war is a significant variable. And this participation of people has been possible for the last five decades because the Maoists have been able to carve out a legitimacy for themselves which is more relatable and acceptable to the Adivasis than the successive welfare efforts of the government. The inability of the government to portray itself as a viable alternative to the Maoists which is capable of delivering justice and governance, has resonated among the affected people who have found the Maoists as a reliable alternative.

This participation of the people would not have been possible for five decades on the basis of threat and fear alone. Without the conscious and willing participation, the cadres would have easily defected thereby making it easier to declare war on the Maoists. Therefore this thesis expands the existing idea of conflict prolongation beyond the confines of structural injustices to understand the role of active people's participation also contributing to conflict prolongation. The constant battle over gaining the legitimacy of the Adivasis between the Maoist leadership and the Government and the subsequent agency applied by the Adivasis to side with the Maoists are explored through this thesis. This brings us to broadening our knowledge on Legitimacy which will help us to understand the reasons behind the choice made by the Adivasis in favour of the Maoists and the subsequent failures of the government responses for decades. In addition, this understanding of conflict prolongation will also take into account as to how the very responses (like welfare for the marginalised) through which governments have attempted to address the conflict, have in fact actively contributed towards the survival of the Maoists instead of bridging the gap between the government and the marginalised

2.2 Maoist survival in India and the role of Legitimacy – Identifying the Gaps in the Maoist literature from India

2.1.1. Causes of the rise and sustenance of Naxalism/Maoism

Simply understanding conflict prolongation through western theories is inadequate in Indian context. The following sections, therefore, have highlighted the existing Maoist literature in the context of conflict prolongation in India and the possible gaps that this thesis aim to address. The study of Maoism by the Indian authors highlights some key factors that

have consistently played a role in the Indian socio-political and economic context thereby explaining the survival of the Maoists for such prolonged period.

Adivasis form the primary group participating in the current phase of Maoism. Hence it is necessary to study the reasons for their consistent support to the Maoists as opposed to the government. For example, Sumanta Banerjee (1980) in his classic book “In the Wake of Naxalbari: Four decades of a Simmering Revolution” gives a detailed account of the rise of the movement in the 1960’s. He traces the path from the break-up of the Communist Party of India and the eventual parting of leaders like Charu Majumder and Kanu Sanyal who led the revolt. It is a historical account and a contextual analysis of the Naxalism in the early decades. Yet another classic book on the study of Maoism has been penned by Ray (1988). In his book ‘Naxalites and their Ideology’ he takes a critical stance on the overarching importance given to ideology by the Maoists. He has criticized the excessive use of violence and the institutionalization of it in their philosophy. In an interesting take he has evaluated the role of the *Bhadroloks* (Bengali gentleman) society during the period of the uprising. He has particularly written about the socio-economic and intellectual contribution of the *Bhadroloks* in Calcutta and how it caused a sense of alienation among those in the lower category. While the *Bhadroloks* began dominating the social and cultural space of the Bengal society, a section of it began to feel deprived.

Maoists’ emergence in rural Maharashtra from an anthropological standpoint has been studied by Desai (2009). Basu (ed) (2010) deals on a number of topics from history to gender in the 1960’s Naxalbari uprising and brings to light the resource conflict in the Maoist dominated areas. The development agenda which focusses on resources and illegal mining have a particularly important role to play in the study of sustenance of the conflict for longer periods. With the popularity of subaltern literature, books related to the participation of the Dalits and the indigenous population in Maoism began to appear.

Choudhary (2012) narrates the condition of the most affected state of Chattisgarh and analyses the causes behind Maoism in the state. Studies on areas like Chattisgarh (Sundar, 2012) are abound due to the sheer extent and gravity of the conflict in these locales. There is a version in the discourse of the Maoist which speaks for the Adivasis. For them Adivasis are caught in the cross-fire between the Maoist and the state. Bhatia (2005) and Nandini Sundar through her books, “The Burning Forest: India’s War in Bastar” (2016) have extensively dealt with the issue along these lines. Both of whom are often framed by the Indian government as

‘Urban Naxals.’ Dutta (2015) in the book “Rights ‘Left’ and the West Bengal 1977-2011” very interestingly evaluates the rule of the thirty-four years of the parliamentary Communist party in WB from whom the erstwhile Naxalites parted ways and its involvement in the ‘war on terror’ against the Maoists. This book throws light on the state responses in WB during this period and how the Communist parties dealt with it. Although this book has traces of history, it does not concentrate on the Naxalites. Rather it evaluates the role of the Communist government which was in power at that point in time. It has chapters on civil society and human rights which help to understand the role of the intellectual class in this entire deliberation. This aspect helps to understand how the persistent violation of the human rights of the marginalised groups had actually eroded the government’s legitimacy among these people who turn towards the Maoists for redressal. This is the reason, why in my study it isn’t sufficient to understand the lack of legitimacy of the government. It is also pertinent to simultaneously understand the systematic and concerted legitimacy efforts practiced by the Maoists to win over their cadre base.

Manoranjan Mohanty, a well-known name in the study of Maoism in India has written extensively on the topic. In particular his book “Red and Green- Four Decades of the Indian Maoist Movement” (2015) not only traces the historical path of Naxalism till Maoism but also gives a detailed account of the ideology, strategy, and organisational character of the Maoists. At the end he also brings in the role of China and the Bangladesh war of independence to paint a detailed picture of the political situation of the country and the contribution of the foreign powers in the making of the uprising. His account is more related to contextualising the Maoist politics in the frame of bigger politics of the country. Prakash Singh, an officer with the Indian Police Service (with whom I had an opportunity to interact), (2016) in a comparatively recent account has emphasized on the inception of the movement from the Naxalbari till its metamorphosis into the current stage of Maoism from the eyes of a police officer particularly involved with implementation of these responses. Bhattacharyya (2016) in his book through a historical journey, instead of focusing on the rise of Naxalbari traces the impact the uprising had on history and culture of the society. People began historical research going beyond the realms of the perspective of upper caste and elite. Interestingly, he talks about an alternative model of development in line with the Maoists. He has dedicated a chapter, not commonly dealt with, to the various radical organisations which are not necessarily frontal organisations of the Maoist party.

George J. Kunnath (2012) on the other hand traces the rise of Naxalism in Bihar. In this book the rise of the private militias supported by the upper castes against the Maoists supporting the lower castes and the peasants have been sketched in detail. The specificities of the Dalit (the lower caste) participation has been particularly highlighted. This is yet another cause of the prolongation of the conflict because of the Maoists' participation in the caste wars supporting the lower caste against the atrocities of the upper caste. The structural problem associated with caste has taken deep roots in Maoism thereby preventing successful implementation of the responses without addressing the caste issue, in particular

In this section, it is important to highlight the cultural space in terms of movies and fictional literature (both in vernacular and English), that Naxalism or Maoism occupies in Indian context and the role it plays in influencing the government measures. This shows the persistent romanticism associated with it which makes it difficult to be erased from public memory, thereby making it even difficult for the government to attempt extreme steps. The democratic space provided for cultural expression has been utilized by filmmakers and authors to weave stories around the struggle and sacrifice associated with this conflict. Due to the prevalent narrative of romanticism, government has oftentimes restricted itself from declaring war or take stringent measures against people associated with Maoism, for fear of tremendous backlash and severe criticism. While I am not claiming that this has prevented the government from implementing security measures often flouting constitutional provisions like assassinating Maoists without giving them the option of due process of law. The point is that adverse public opinions on stringent government responses have often made the government resort to illegal measures which are hidden from the scrutiny of public opinion. This has increased the frequency of unconstitutional measures and secrecy to deal with the conflict over the period specially in the era of an ever expanding social media and thereby further creating chasm between the local Adivasis and the government administration.

Following are only some of the examples related to the topic. Let us take for instance the movie, *Padatik* (The Guerrilla Fighter) by acclaimed director Mrinal Sen which was released in 1973 immediately after the death of Charu Majumder. It deals with the confusions that an ordinary cadre faces with the ideology and reality. Oscar Award winning director Satyajit Ray has dealt with the theme in his movie *Pratidwandi* (The Adversary). The movie is based on the novel written by Sunil Gangopadhyay and the film was released during the height of the Naxalbari uprising in the year 1970. It revolves around the story of a young boy in Calcutta in search of jobs and his frustration with the current socio-political system. The

narration blames this socio-political and economic system for the increased frustration among the youths of the city, which indirectly makes Naxalism seemingly justified. As late as in 2017, a black comedy named *Newton*, in the Hindi language was released. It sarcastically dealt with the Indian election system in a Maoist dominated village, thereby highlighting the failure of democracy in these regions.

Similarly the 1974 novel, *Hazar Chaurashi ki Maa (Mother of 1084)* by Indian highest civilian award winner, *Padma Bibhushan*, Mahasweta Devi interestingly deals with previously neglected topic of the role of Bengali upper middle class boys and their participation in the movement. The upper class boys who were not directly affected by the current socio-economic system but was inspired by the ideals to change the lives of the others. Fictional accounts by acclaimed Indian authors writing in English, Jhumpa Lahiri dealt with Naxalism in her book “The Lowland” (2013) and Neel Mukherjee in his book “The lives of Others” (2015). The recurrent theme in these accounts is the victimisation of the people associated with Maoism where State becomes the aggressor. This persistent romanticism by the intellectual class for decades has not only made it extremely difficult to erase it from the public memory but made it impossible for the government to declare war on the Maoists.

Biographical accounts are a rich source of information not only on the subject but the socio-political, economic, and cultural life of the society during the period of the subject’s lifetime. Another important aspect of biographical account is the personal reflection of the subject on the sustenance of the ideology despite the intra party conflicts and subsequent break up into numerous factions. This account helps to understand the specific reasons for the persistence of the conflict from the perspective of its willing participants to the conflict which may have been overlooked by the government responses. In such an eventuality, the resultant government responses have not addressed the loopholes thereby helping the Maoist to strengthen their bases over the period. Let me explain this with an example, one of the aims of these responses as espoused by the government is to counter the Maoist ideology. But the government’s countering of the ideology is based on an understanding of the Maoist literature which has nothing to do with the objective conditions of the society like poverty or indiscriminate mining which is actually influencing the Maoist ideology. Government analyses the Maoist ideology as an imported one which is based on violence and hence has no place in the Indian democracy. But on deeper level it is understood how the Maoist have in fact acclimatised Mao’s ideas within the Indian context thereby rendering it the much needed local essence for its continuation. One such biography is on one of the party members and the leader

of Naxalbari uprising, Kanu Sanyal. Bappaditya Paul's book, "The First Naxal: An authorized biography of Kanu Sanyal" (2014) was published after Sanyal committed suicide in 2010. It traces the journey of the man from his childhood. It deals with the socio-economic context which inspired Sanyal to participate in the uprising. The recent uprising in the Lalgarh area of WB by the Maoist was led by its leader Kishenji. Bhattacharya (2016) who was present during the period in Lalgarh writes not only on the context but on the players, primarily the role played by Kishenji.

The biographical accounts from the perspective of the Maoist leadership of two of the most influential figures shed light on the context which helped them to garner support from the people. The number of books in English on biographies are limited. Vernacular languages have used this opportunity to construct hagiographic accounts and create legends around their leaders which has enhanced the readers' base as well as disseminate inspiring struggles to motivate the cadres. Publishing writings in vernacular has its share of advantages by propagating ideas in languages easily understandable by a large section of the locals who can relate to the context. Apart from these, although no autobiographical account has been written on Charu Majumder, there are numerous writings on his leadership and its shortcomings which could well be combined into a biography. Interestingly Arun Ferreira's "Colours of the Cage: A Prison Memoir" (2014) is a biographical account of his years in jail and the tortures he faced during the period. He was later released acquitting him of all charges against him. In this book he highlights the condition of other political prisoners facing terms in jail sometimes falsely accused of such crimes, thereby contributing to the already existing frustrations towards the government administration. This book throws light on the judicial system of the country and the management of its political prisoners. Another book deals with the case of Binayak Sen, a doctor by profession serving in the Maoist heartland accused of being a Maoist. D'Souza (2012) pens down the judicial procedure of the case against Dr. Sen simultaneously highlighting the role of various players in the executive branch of the country. These accounts help to highlight fight of common people against the injustices of system which has directly helped the Maoists to mobilise people by garnering support and establish their legitimacy among the poor and marginalised.

This section is a combination of authors who are journalist or activist by profession and has been covering the conflict for decades. They have inhabited the regions and mingled with the Maoists thereby detailing the lives of an ordinary cadre deep inside the forest. The connection of this section with responses lies in government's oftentimes immediate reactions

against civil society and journalists who paint a pro-Maoist image in their accounts. These narratives have once again widened the gap between the government and the local population. Governments (both the central and various state governments) have blamed these people of fomenting the violence by supporting these groups but not suggesting any constructive alternative to deal with the situation. The writing style in these books are narratives, based on factual accounts of the conflict. Satnam (2010), Pandita (2011) and Navlakha (2011) largely falls within this genre. Chakravarti (2008) through individual case histories has dealt with the issue of absence of governance in the areas dominated by Maoists and the impact it has on the lives of ordinary inhabitants. This has been a persistent phenomenon which has not only abolished the legitimacy of the government but has helped the Maoist to establish their legitimacy as a viable alternative to that of the government's. Arundhati Roy's (persistently labelled by the Central Government as urban Naxal) account "Walking with the Comrades" (2011) throws light on Indian government's battle against its own citizens. She highlights the role of the security forces in the areas leading to atrocities committed on the indigenous population. But her story is important for the current research to understand how the drawbacks within these security approaches are actually contributing towards prolonging the conflict by creating a gap between the affected people and the administration of the area.

There have been myriad studies on the responses implemented by the GOI to deal with Maoism in the country. An interesting work has been published by Mukhopadhyay (2006), titled, "The Naxalites Through the Eyes of the Police-Select Notifications from the Calcutta Police Gazette: 1967-1975." It provides a day to day account of the activities of the Calcutta police during the peak of the uprising and disturbance in the streets of Calcutta. It is rich in information and guides me into looking for conflict management strategies instead of conflict resolution of the Kolkata police during the tumultuous period of the five years (1967-1975). Puroshotham & Prasad (2009) has classified Naxalism as terrorism and has raised the question of India's urgent need of a counter terrorism policy. Chakrabarty & Kujur's (2010) work is based in the state of Odisha. However, it provides in detail the development strategy adopted by the state government and questions its impact on ordinary lives. It attempts to find answer, if the kind of development adopted by the state is actually an adequate strategy to deal with Maoism.

Chakrabarti (2010) calls India's counter insurgency operation as fourth generation warfare as elaborated by U.S Marine Corps Officer, Thomas X. Hammes which has evolved in the post-World War II period. He analyses the global counter insurgency strategies as

implemented in civil wars and insurrection. Finally, he details about the Indian context where he argues that Indian counter insurgency strategy is a combination of political measure and military forces. Chenoy & Chenoy (2010) have criticised both the security centric approach to deal with the conflict as well as humanist developmentalist approach. They have argued in favour of a paradigm shift towards handling this complex conflict and suggested a human security approach, instead. They have highlighted the problems with the national security approach of the country coupled with draconian laws like Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act. Kanwal & Katoch (2012) evaluate the policies like Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 and criticizes it for its inadequate implementation. Additionally the debates about development or security first has been discussed. Finally, the role of the security forces and their lapses, bureaucratic hurdles, absence of adequate intelligence inputs and lack of coordination among the chief ministers of various states in dealing with the situation has been discussed in detail. Kennedy & Purushotham (2012) have classified Maoism as insurgency. In an interesting approach the researchers have used Weber's ideal type model to recreate an ideal typical structure of Maoist insurgency. They have classified three waves of the insurgency and have dealt with the social, economic, and political circumstances of each wave. The three waves have specific areas of geographical concentration thereby allowing it to take an all India level perspective to evaluate the strategies and the policies adopted to deal with the situation. Bhambhri (2015) has taken a critical stand against the government functionaries accusing it of systematically delegitimising the Maoists. It makes a contextual analysis of the conditions of the marginalised sections of the society who form the cadre strength of the group. He uses Maoist literature to study the presence of objective conditions where Maoism thrive and the resultant 'contradictory' policies of the government which fail to address the inadequacies of those objective conditions.

While the issue of governance and legitimacy have been highlighted by the academic fraternity in their earlier studies as the cause of the conflict, what remains overlooked in these discussions is the gradual erosion of legitimacy of the government consistently, over the period. This in turn not only becomes the cause of the rise and subsequent spread of Maoism, but also helps the Maoist in establishing their legitimacy as a viable alternative. Therefore in this study legitimacy works in two ways-absence of government legitimacy and presence of Maoist legitimacy, where one does not necessarily guarantee the other. On one hand, absence of trust in the administration force a large section of the people to support the Maoists, these responses as a result of such support further aggravate the conflict by helping the Maoists in creating a pro-Maoist support structure which is impossible to challenge at the current stage. Moreover

most of the studies have dealt with state-wise responses. However, this thesis fills the gap by using the central government's responses as subject of investigation.

Secondly, this study attempts to broaden the analyses of government responses by examining its role not simply in terms of its failure to address the mitigation of a conflict but in fact its proactive contribution towards its aggravation. It is in this way that the Maoists are engaged in twin purposes of not only challenging the government's legitimacy but carving out a legitimacy for themselves. This pro-Maoist legitimacy is also a contributing factor in the conflict prolongation.

2.2. Legitimacy

In this thesis, legitimacy acquires the image of the Greek God Janus, with two faces “*We maintain that it has a Janus-faced denotation. One face denotes as referents: actors who need and seek legitimation (for instance, states, IOs) or; ideas, ideologies, norms, rules, policies or actions (for instance, neoliberalism, reciprocity, use of force) for which legitimacy is claimed by actors who are not necessarily seeking it for themselves. The second face simultaneously denotes those who bestow it (or do not), for instance, the relevant domestic, international, or transnational constituencies, audiences, or 'dispensers of legitimacy' in Steffek's apt phrase. Taken together, the dual denotation underscores the sense in which legitimacy refers to a kind of social relationship between those claiming it and those conferring it. The most common use of legitimacy arises in a domestic political context wherein governments (the first face) seek legitimacy from their citizens, some of whom (the second face) believes that their national government is the rightful source of authoritative rules and laws.*” (Rapkin & Braaten, p. 117)

Therefore in this thesis, legitimacy is to be viewed partially, where a section of the population remains absent from the whole political process, due to alienation and government apathy. The discussion cannot limit itself to only around those who are claiming it and those who are conferring it. The discussion in Indian case must also include the diverse composition of the population who are conferring this legitimacy. This is because Indian society is not a homogenous group of people sharing largely common characteristics of language, race, or religion.

The most common form of measuring a legitimate government is through election or more accurately free and fair election. “*Liberals claim that legitimacy consists in the consent of the governed, while deliberative democrats typically claim that legitimacy consists in the*

soundness political procedures. Despite this difference, both traditions see the legitimacy as arising from the coercive enforcement of law and legitimacy as necessary for law to have normative authority.”(Garthoff, p.669)

Carl Schmitt’s understanding of legitimacy throws some light in this respect. *“While if one looks at Schmitt's status as a philosopher of order follows logically from his functional (as well as tautological) definition of legitimacy: a given order is "legitimate" if it is recognized as such by the majority of its citizens.”* (Wolin, p. 393)

“Historians and political theorists distinguish legitimate from illegitimate governments by focusing on constitutional provisions that establish the opportunity for wide public participation and ensure procedural regularity, especially provisions dealing with majority rule, minority rights, and accountability in regular and frequent elections (Dahl 1956 in Weatherford, p. 150).” In the case of the current study a number of things has to be kept in mind while understanding legitimacy. *“Four attributes stand out in this formulation:*

1. Accountability. Are rulers accountable to the governed via a process that allows wide, effective participation?

2. Efficiency. Is the government set up to accomplish society's ends without undue waste of time or resources?

3. Procedural fairness. Is the system structured to ensure that issues are resolved in a regular, predictable way and that access to decisional arenas is open and equal?

4. Distributive fairness. Are the advantages and costs allocated by the system distributed equally or else deviations from prima facie equality explicitly justified on grounds that define "fair shares" in terms of some long-run, overarching equality principle?” (ibid, p. 150)

Indian government is therefore to be understood as portraying a type of hegemonic legitimacy towards the Adivasis in the conflict region, where it has both the elements of legitimacy and hegemony. *“We use the term hegemony in a way that is a priori neither strictly pejorative nor wholly positive. Rather, hegemonic behaviour can be located along a continuum between coercive and exploitative, at one extreme, and benevolent, or at least benign, at the other. Hegemons whose behaviour is consistently located toward the coercive/ exploitative end are likely to lack legitimacy. Indeed, they should be described in other terms, such as outright dominance or modern empire, political forms not involving legitimacy.”* (Rapkin & Braaten, p.

119). The authority of the Indian government over the Adivasis who have denied the former its legitimacy can be best described in terms of hegemony, where it wants to establish rule without it being conferred upon so. The responses of the Indian government have bordered near exploitative like the illegal mining in Adivasi inhabited regions is a reflection of a hegemon trying to dominate without being a legitimate claimant to that authority.

“This process consists of legitimation efforts by hegemonic actors claiming legitimacy for their activities, and may also be countered by delegitimation, that is, efforts to deny or undermine legitimacy claims.” (ibid, p. 120) This explanation helps us to understand the Maoists’ strategies of delegitimising the government’s efforts of legitimising itself among the Adivasis in the region.

Before discussing further on why Indian government is labelled to be a hegemonic legitimacy before the Adivasis, we need to understand how the idea of hegemony functions. No discussion on hegemony is complete without the mention of Antonio Gramsci. Although his work mainly relates to cultural hegemony, the interpolation of his analysis to politics will not be discomforting. He states that a dominant class through the dissemination of cultural norms, ideas and values legitimise their status quo which is accepted by the dominant as normal and inevitable and therefore beneficial for their well-being. Professor Gwynn Williams explains Gramsci's hegemony as “... *an order in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant, in which one concept of reality is diffused throughout society in all its institutional manifestation, informing with its spirit, all taste, morality, custom, religious and political principles, and all social relations, particularly in their intellectual and moral connotations.*” (Woolcock, p. 204) Gramsci defines State as “*the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules*” (Daldal, p. 156).

Louis Althusser’s arguments on Ideological State Apparatuses although largely based on Gramscian concepts has, however, been expanded by the former. Training towards a higher type of civilisation, State ‘*trains people to adapt the morality and mentality of the masses to the logic of the production process.*’(ibid, p.156)

In the recent history, one of the most outstanding contributions on hegemony is made by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in their work *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985). In the preface they write that Marxism in the 1970’s was unable to conceptualise the realities of capitalism within the paradigm of Marxism. Categorically stressing that, “Our approach is

grounded in privileging the moment of political articulation, and the central category of political analysis is, in our view, hegemony (p. x). Continuing on what is meant by hegemony they argue, “In that case, how — to repeat our transcendental question — does a relation between entities have to be, for a hegemonic relation to become possible? Its very condition is that a particular social force assumes the representation of a totality that is radically incommensurable with it. Such a form of hegemonic universality' is the only one that a political community can reach.” (ibid) The story of unrelatability of the multitudes as explained earlier is what Laclau and Mouffe calls as incommensurability where the Adivasis have failed to find their place and therefore suffer from a sense of alienation. Maoism has helped the Adivasis to find them that place to which they can relate to. The disenfranchised sections of the population that have been supporting the Maoists have failed to relate to the existing nature of social and political context of the country. They feel alienated. The welfare which the government has been implementing have failed to bridge this gap because the way welfare is perceived by the government and by the Adivasis do not necessarily match. For example, government provides housing to the poorest of the poor. But as per the way of life of the Adivasis in most of the central parts of India where Maoists dominate, they are used to staying closer to nature.

However, there remains some glaring differences with their and Gramscian concept of hegemony. “*first, it does not accept class as the privileged signifier for the "hegemonic subject"; and, second, it does not envision a "single hegemonic center."*” (Bertram, p. 96). Invoking a notion of popular struggles they reject the attempts by hegemonic forces to divide in particularly two social classes. “*Conceived in this manner, popular struggles only occur in the case of relations of extreme exteriority between the dominant groups and the rest of the community.*” (Laclau & Mouffe, p.133) Dominant groups in this context would signify the social and political elite of the country who have been devising the policies and measures to deal with the conflict across political spectrum. Their failure to relate to the extreme situation of the disenfranchised groups have created such measures which has failed in its objective of bridging the gap between the government and the people in these areas. Continuous conflicts, wrongful arrests, illegal mining, eviction and rehabilitation have all combined to create an atmosphere of absence of legitimacy for the government. Hence the impact of the welfare measures undertaken by the administration in the areas are largely negated by the above mentioned conditions. This explanation of struggles and the one by Butler in the following paragraph will help explain how the excluded react in the face of such hegemony.

What Butler understands of hegemony as developed by Laclau and Mouffe is articulated as *“that democratic polities are constituted through exclusions that return to haunt the polities predicated upon their absence. That haunting becomes politically effective precisely in so far as the return of the excluded, forces an expansion and re articulation of the basic premises of democracy itself.”* (Butler, p.11).

Legitimacy is not just a peacetime concept. And all of the government’s efforts to legitimise itself before this disenfranchised population in these regions have resulted in it being a hegemon trying to forcibly create a space for themselves denied by the very people from whom it has been claiming legitimacy. During a conflict, as the parties fight over establishing the legitimacy over the population for support, legitimacy is contested and renegotiated. In my thesis, unpacking the role of legitimacy during conflict is the primary objective. As the excluded comes to haunt democracies (explicated by Butler ; explained above), what is missing is the role of the Maoist in trying to: first, delegitimise the role and actions of the government and second, establish a legitimacy and legacy of their own which will help to seek long term support from the Adivasis as well as quell any kind of challenges from the government to curb their presence. Take for example, the definition of conflict diamonds in the context of international law is that found in the Kimberley Process core document, which is based on Resolution 55/56 of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), and relevant UNSC resolutions, *“Conflict diamonds [are] rough diamonds used by rebel movements or their allies to finance conflict aimed at undermining legitimate governments.”* (Davidson, p. 25). Diamonds are used to undermine legitimacy of governments. Maoists are using the government responses to delegitimise the government. The continuous support of the Adivasis is the key to a prolonged conflict in the region where Maoists have been able to establish themselves as a viable alternative on which the Adivasis can depend and with them they can relate to. My thesis, therefore, expands the study of legitimacy in a conflict scenario by understanding and analysing these renegotiations and contestation as manifested by the Maoists to ensure a prolonged struggle against the legitimisation efforts by the government. This continuous and willing support has also created condition forcing the government to not clear the Maoists areas in a battle ; a key reason for its failure to come to an early decisive battle.

2.4 Conclusion

What is often noticed in any protracted conflict theory is the portrayal of suffering and the impact of long wars on the people. What is often denied or overlooked in such analysis, is

the identification and understanding of the active participation of the people to continue the fight – to study their agency. On one side is the Maoist leadership who are the ideologues of the party and on the other is the conscious participation of Adivasis who continue to support the Maoists. This makes it difficult and impossible for the government to declare war on the Maoists thereby also contributing to the prolonged nature of it. Instead the government take recourse in securitising the conflict by creating an atmosphere of fear through illegal arrests, encounter deaths and illegal mining. All of these have contributed towards prolonging the conflict.

In order to understand the prolongation of Maoist conflict, using legitimacy has its advantage. While it allows the use of the existing conceptualisation, it provides room for further negotiations and expansion. As the Maoists are able to introduce their counter legitimacy in the conflict areas, for understanding Indian Maoist phenomenon simply understanding the absence of government's legitimacy among the Adivasis will not help answer the Maoist conflict. It will simply help explain the denial by the governed to accept the proposal of the government. To understand the additional dimension of survival of the Maoist conflict for prolonged period, the legitimacy as established by the Maoists to counter the government's legitimacy is necessary to understand. This understanding of legitimacy helps to address the current constrains in the concept and incorporates these multiple dimensions of understanding conflict prolongation of Maoism in India. It also helps to explore the role of the Adivasis and renegotiate their role as willing and conscious agents where they choose which legitimacy is more dependent. Therefore in this thesis, Legitimacy as unfolds in a conflict scenario helps to capture these myriad dimensions beyond the unilateral understanding of the governed and governor. It expands to question the implicit homogeneity of the governed and incorporates the multiple layers within it.

On the other hand, what ails the government responses, despite being implemented for decades, that it has so far failed to win the hearts of the Adivasis. The role of the responses do not simply end over there. In addition to failing in its designated objective of establishing legitimacy and countering the Maoists, it has been actively contributing towards the aggravation of the conflict, leading to conflict prolongation. At this juncture, the strategies adopted by the Maoists to use the same government responses in their favour by establishing their legitimacy needs examination. Thus, the government responses, on one hand fails to establish its legitimacy and on the other are being used by the Maoists for their benefits. It is the dual phenomenon of the government responses, working simultaneously, that is

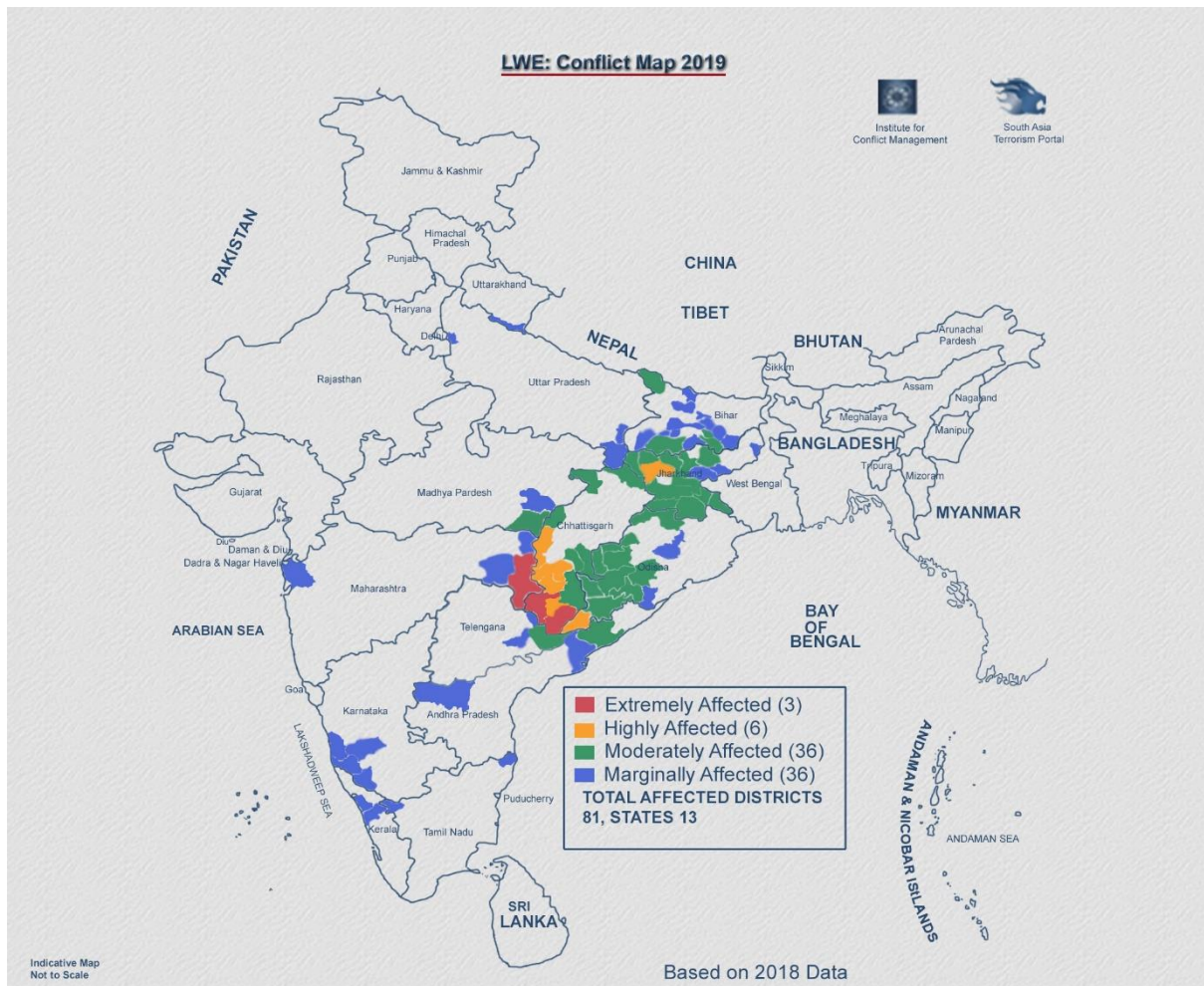
contributing towards conflict prolongation of Maoism in India. This thesis explores the reason behind this willing and active participation of the Adivasis who have created this space for themselves to choose one legitimacy over the other and subsequently contribute towards the survival of the Maoist conflict.

3. METHODOLOGY

The objective of the research is to analyse how the government responses are contributing towards the prolongation of conflict instead of addressing it. This research deals with human subject and is a sensitive topic which pertains to the security of the country. Hence, to ensure the safety of the respondents, the research proposal was first cleared by the Ethics committee of my University department, Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung (Centre for Development Research), after carefully verifying the content and the language of the probable questions (probable because this was not a survey questionnaire which had fixed set of questions) to be asked to the participants. Thereafter I was provided with a consent form needed to be signed by the participants to ensure the voluntary participation and anonymity of the respondents. However, it was also incumbent upon me to clarify to the respondents against signing the form in case of security issue for having been a participant to this research. Although the consent form was in English language it was translated verbatim by me to the respondents in the vernacular language wherever necessary.

Before I start writing about the fields and the data collected from there, some clarification is required regarding the characterisation of the respondent which I shall be using for the purpose of this research:

- Maoist sympathiser is one who is not an active member of the group but an avid proponent of the Maoist ideology
- Maoists are people who have been associated with the current phase of the Maoist Phenomenon (the period post the death of its founder, Charu Majumder in 1972)
- Ex-Maoists are people who have left the current phase after being associated with it for some period (I have avoided any specific time period because the length of association with the Party is not relevant to the discussion).
- Ex-Naxalites are people who were associated with the early phase in the 1960's and never became part of the current phase
- Armed forces include people belonging to both Police and paramilitary forces.



Map 1: LWE Conflict Map (Source: South Asia Terrorism Portal)¹⁸

As of 5th February, 2019, 90 districts in 11 states are affected with Maoist related incidents.¹⁹ Out of the 11 states I have visited 3 of the affected states- Bihar, WB, and Odisha. This was not done to concentrate on these states as case studies for comparison of the responses (and not of Maoist scenarios) in the respective states. The research has no intention of engaging in comparative study of the regional responses towards Maoism as pursued in various states. Although it is important to clarify here that the regional governments have been given autonomy to design responses in its respective provinces by classifying Maoism as law and order problem which is within the constitutional jurisdiction of regional governments. The research is trying to argue that this autonomy is conducted within the framework of discourse

¹⁸ One might find slight difference between the figures stated in the map and the subsequent figure mentioned by the MHA. The map is based on 2018 data and the government figure is updated till February, 2019. Since there is no updated map available, I incorporated the one based on the 2018 data.

¹⁹ Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India available at <http://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=188075>

largely dominated by the central government which is gradually centralising the state responses to ensure stricter attitude and implementation of the responses towards the Maoists. Therefore the focus throughout the research will be on understanding these responses from the central government’s perspective to highlight the idea of dominant discourse within which the responses function. Within this argumentative framework, regional comparison becomes redundant for the purpose of this research. Although it is not to argue that the states do not have any autonomy regarding planning and strategizing the responses against the Maoists. What I am trying to argue (and as will be highlighted throughout the following pages) is that this autonomy is strictly limited and in case of any divergence of opinion between the state and central government on this matter, the view of the latter assume priority. Hence it is important to understand the structural politics of dominance as practised by the central government that nurtures these responses thereby failing to successfully address the grievances of the people supporting the Maoists, leading to five decades of conflict prolongation.

The often asked question/ concern is difference in scenarios of Maoism in different affected states. This is a study of government responses against the Maoists. This study had not intended to compare the different Maoists scenarios in various states. Hence while the scenarios or their origin across different states might be different, the dominant security discourse/ culture as nurtured at the behest of the central government remains structurally homogenous. That means there are certain basic aspects which remains unchanged across different states and which are a reflection of the structural political dynamics of the country.²⁰ Therefore the next plausible question is, do the responses strategy remain same in various affected states. This autonomy in respect of the responses as implemented by various states will become clear when I mention my field trip in Bihar in the subsequent section.

| S. No. | State | Number of Districts | Name of Districts |
|--------|----------------|---------------------|---|
| 1. | Andhra Pradesh | 6 | East Godavari, Guntur, Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, West Godavari |
| 2. | Bihar | 16 | Arwal, Aurangabad, Banka, East Champaran, Gaya, Jamui, Jehanabad, Kaimur, Lakhisarai, Munger, |

²⁰ This point is further elaborated as the thesis progresses in subsequent chapters.

| | | | |
|-----|----------------|----|--|
| | | | Muzaffarpur, Nalanda, Nawada, Rohtas, Vaishali, West Champaran |
| 3. | Chhattisgarh | 14 | Balod, Balrampur, Bastar, Bijapur, Dantewada, Dhamtari, 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. | Kerala | 3 | Malappuram, Palakkad, Wayanad |
| 6. | Madhya Pradesh | 2 | Balaghat, Mandla |
| 7. | Maharashtra | 3 | Chandrapur, Gadchiroli, Gondia |
| 8. | Odisha | 15 | Angul, Bargarh, Bolangir, Boudh, Deogarh, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabrangpur, Nayagarh, Nuapada, Rayagada, Sambhalpur, Sundargarh |
| 9. | Telangana | 8 | Adilabad, Bhadradri-Kothagudem, Jayashankar-Bhupalpally, Khammam, Komaram-Bheem, Mancherial, Peddapalle, Warangal Rural |
| 10. | Uttar Pradesh | 3 | Chandauli, Mirzapur and Sonebhadra |
| 11. | West Bengal | 1 | Jhargram |
| | Total | 90 | |

Table 3: List of 90 districts of LWE affected States

(Source: Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=188075>)

Since it was impossible to travel to all the 11 states, therefore I visited these 3 states (WB, Bihar & Odisha) for two reasons. Firstly, I am fluent in the local languages of these 3 states particularly WB and Bihar, *Bengali* and *Hindi* respectively. With regard to Odisha, although I do not know *Odia* (the local language), Hindi as medium of instruction was normally understood among the respondents. Secondly, networking was a crucial issue in a sensitive topic like Maoism where people were generally sceptical to speak candidly with a stranger. I was able to contact people from these three places who were at the same time willing to discuss with me on this topic.

In addition I have visited New Delhi (ND) and Pondicherry as well, although these two are not affected states. The reason for the visits in these two states are elaborated in its respective sections.

3.1. Fields Visited

The field work spanned for a period of eight months, July 2017 to February 2018.

I had to keep in mind about the foreign University (in my case University of Bonn) to which I am affiliated to when I went for the field work. I knew government officials would be reluctant to speak to me due to the nature of the topic specially since the data is being collected for academic purpose in a foreign educational institution. Hence before leaving for the field I had contacted Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS) which is a New Delhi based think tank associated with the Indian Air Force for an internship opportunity. This provided me with a necessary start to talk to a number of people associated with the armed forces. Being an intern also facilitated in establishing contacts with other armed forces personnel through members of CAPS. Additionally, the government responses are formulated from the capital which also allowed me to interact with the very people who are in charge of the responses.

3.1.1. New Delhi

My first stop was New Delhi where I had spent two and a half months. I spoke to 17 respondents. The selection criterion largely dependent upon convenience. The reason being setting up contacts through right kind of trusted people who would be willing to share stories despite the risk involved. However, most of my respondents in ND comprised people who have been associated with the task of planning and strategizing on one hand and on the other hand social and political activists who would reflect their experience of the impact of those said responses. In this way I could gather perspectives from people from both sides of the aisle who would provide data on government responses. The interview conducted were semi structured in nature.

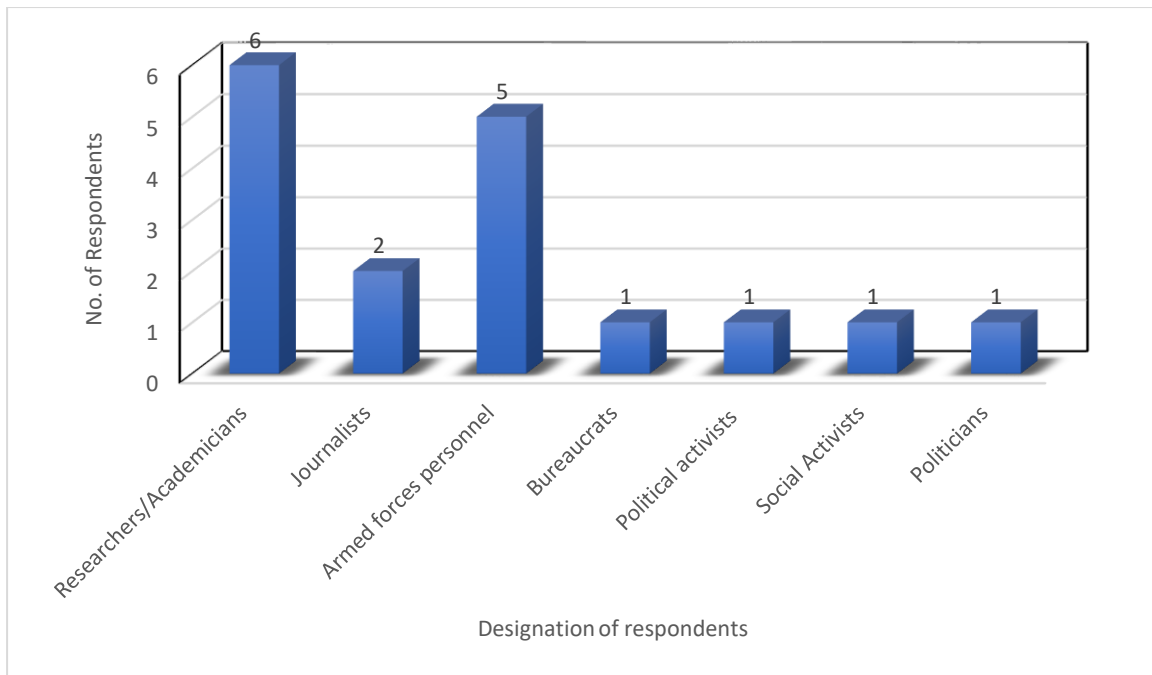


Fig.1- Respondents in New Delhi

I had the opportunity to listen to Mr. Jairam Ramesh, who was a minister during the government of United Progressive Alliance (UPA). Due to his tenure as Minister of Environment and Forests (2009-11) and Rural Development (2011-14), he has vast exposure in the forest laws and the rural development policies which form an integral part of the broader understanding of the causes of prevalence of Maoism despite decades of planned responses. He is not listed as a respondent in the above chart since I did not talk to him personally but had an opportunity to listen to his views related to the subject at a Conference.

3.1.2. Odisha

The next stop was Bhubaneswar which is the capital of the state of Odisha. I spent 10 days in Bhubaneswar in the month of October. Although Bhubaneswar was never in the initial list of fields to be visited. However, some respondents in Delhi had put me in touch with their colleagues in Bhubaneswar who were quite experienced in the topic that I had been dealing with. Their long exposure to the subject had made them versed in Maoists related topics not only from the region's perspective but also from the national level perspective. This is because of their association with All India level organisations like, Association for Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR) which is a national organisation involved with grassroots movements. They travel throughout the country and interact with people from various states

and cities to demand justice for democratic rights of the people. This provided an opportunity to collect data from the perspectives of people on the other side (other than that of the central/state governments) of Maoism. I had the opportunity to interact with 14 respondents in Bhubaneswar. As explained earlier, the focus here was to understand the dynamics of the grassroots movements which the Maoists are using to their advantage thereby causing the government responses to fail. For example, Maoists are creating an anti-people image of the administration by convincing how the development drives of the government are problematic for the people by participating with the affected people in various anti-government movements. This provides a legitimation to the Maoists while at the same time challenges the efforts of the administration.

Map 2: Map of Odisha depicting the areas visited for data collection (Source: Maps of India)



An interesting respondent was a social entrepreneur who has been working among the Adivasi students and children by providing them with vocational training in the most interior of the affected districts. He confided in me his cordial relation with the Maoists who, although

initially reluctant to allow a large section of their cadre base to get involved in this training, but eventually came around once they found its positive impact on the betterment of the lives of the Adivasis.

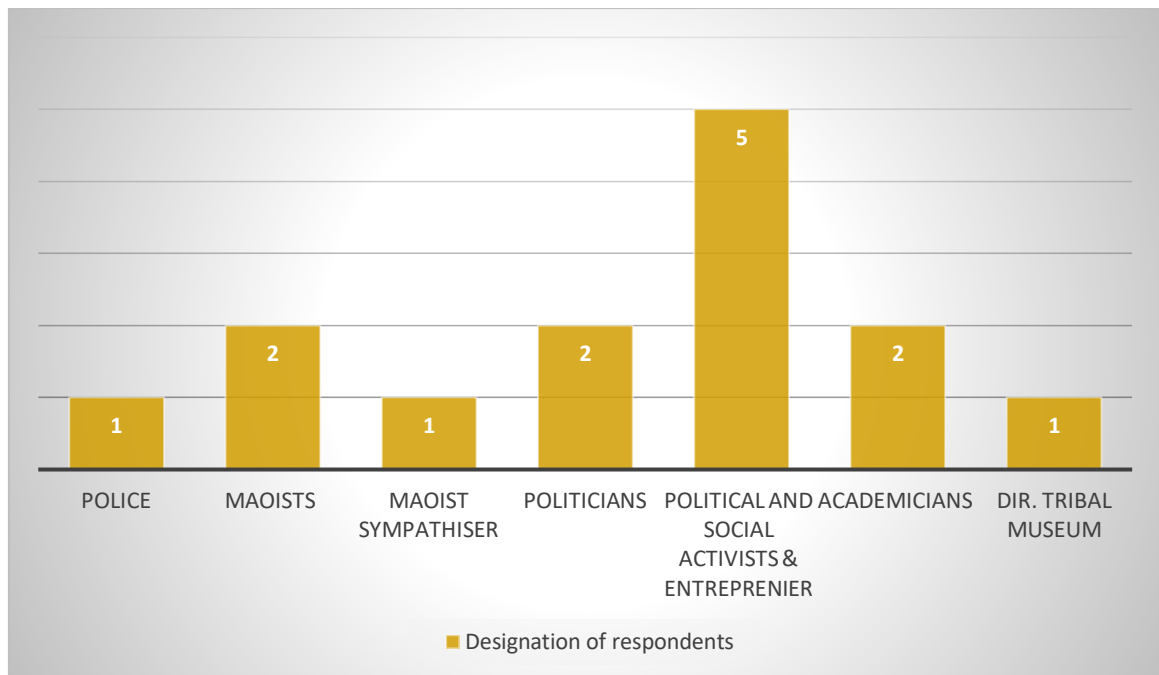
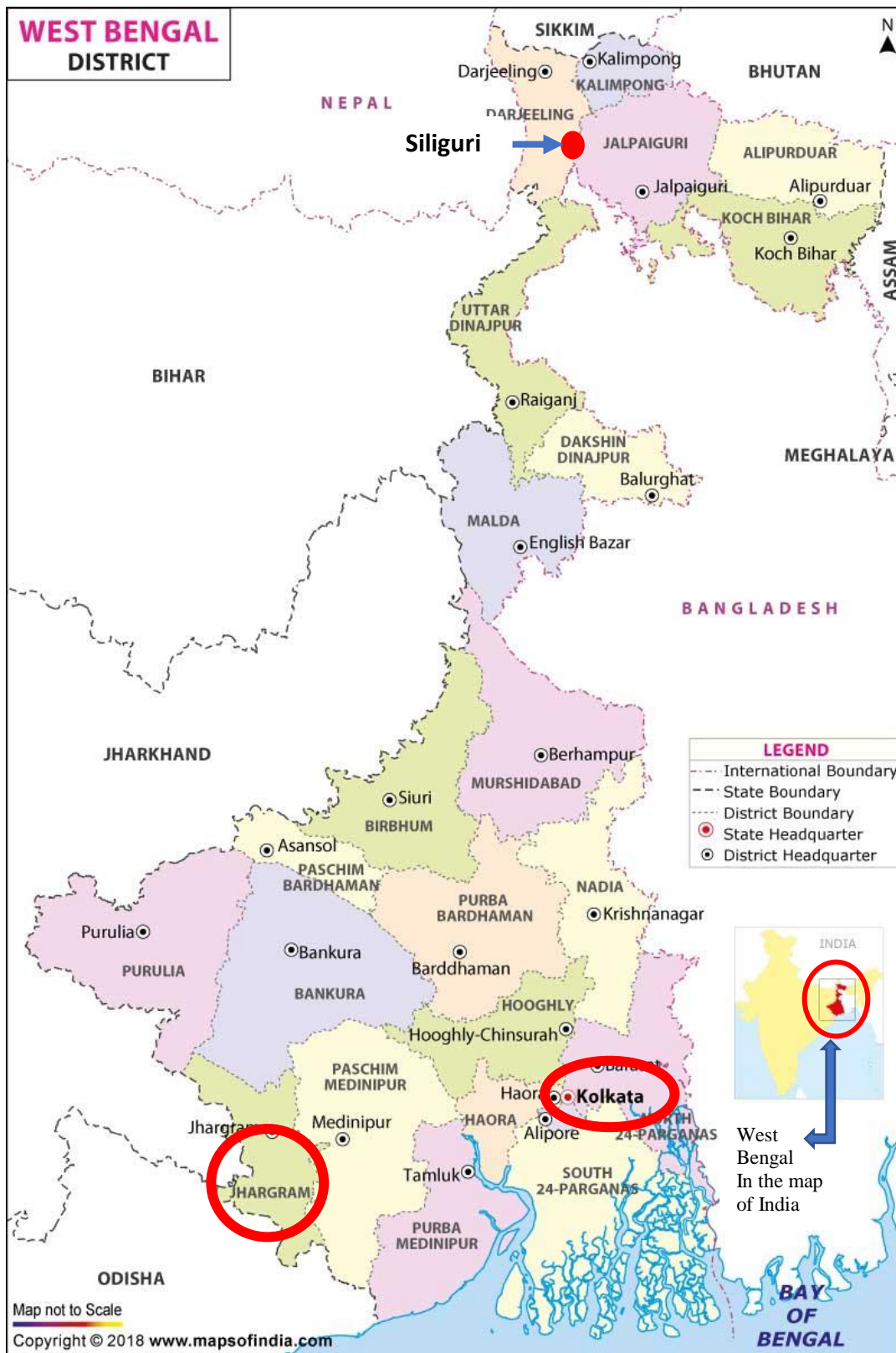


Fig.2. Respondents in Bhubaneswar

3.1.3. West Bengal

In WB apart from Kolkata (the capital city) where most of the respondents reside, I also visited Siliguri and Jhargram. Naxalbari village is located in the district of Siliguri which is in the north of the state. The reason for visiting Siliguri is to visit the village from where it all began and talk to some of the respondents who were involved in the May uprising in 1967. Jhargram was the main centre of Maoist activities in the recent years primarily in the 2000's when Koteswar Rao alias Kishenji, the Politburo member was put in charge of the eastern command. Hence the visit to Jhargram provided a glimpse of the forest covered area, the conversation with Adivasi people, and the location where Kishenji was assassinated. It also helped to understand the reasons behind the recent uprising in the 2000's. Since I am from WB, my interaction with the respondents happened regularly over the period of the field work and in between visiting other states. Therefore no time frame is mentioned here.

The red circles in the Map are the fields visited in West Bengal.



Map 3: Map of West Bengal depicting the areas visited for data collection (Source: Maps of India)

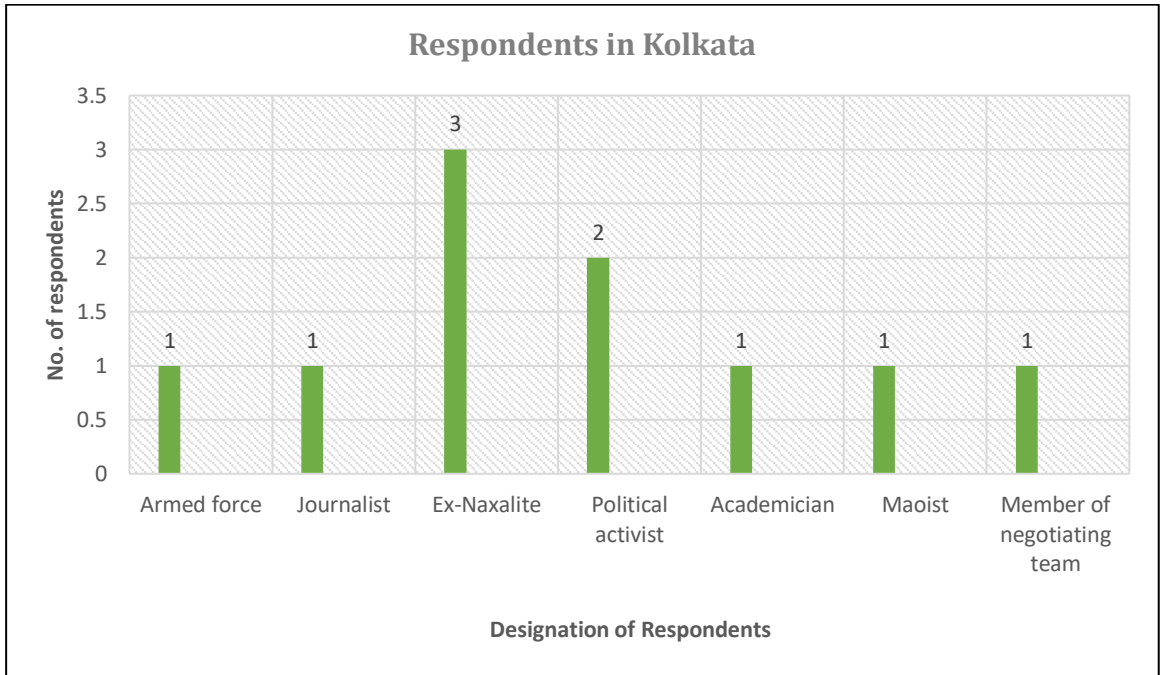


Fig. 3: Respondents in Kolkata

3.1.3.1. Jhargram

I visited Jhargram twice. Once in the month of December , 2017 and another in January, 2018. In the first phase I visited for 7 days. In the second phase I stayed for 3 days.

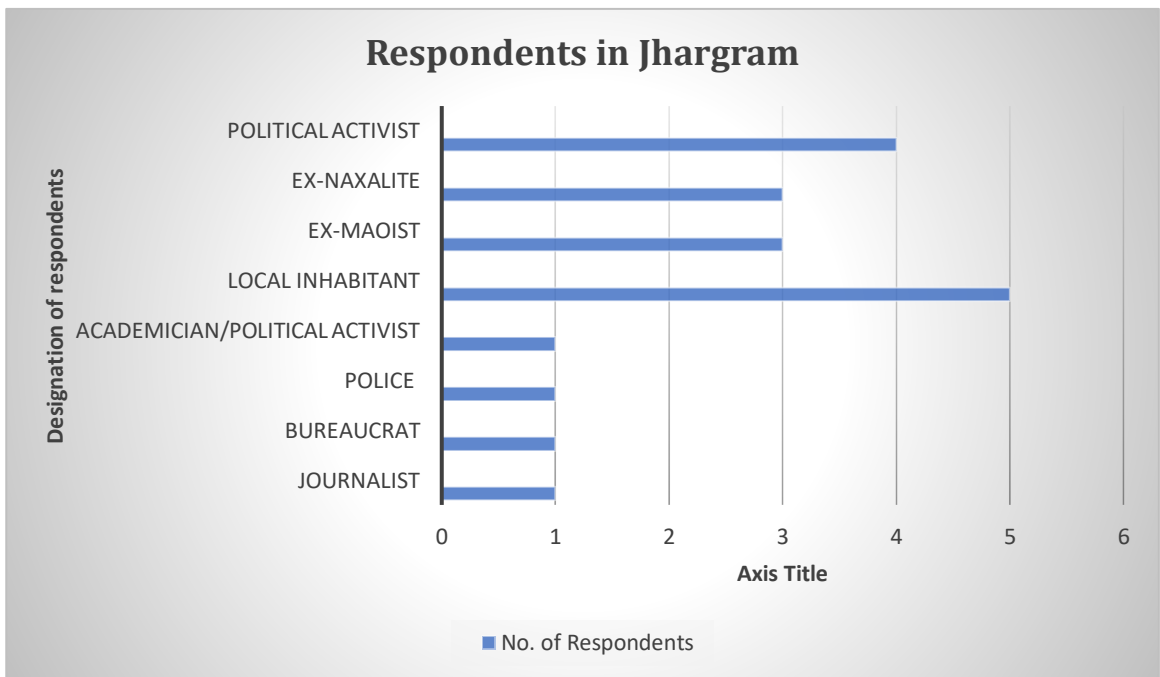


Fig. 4. Respondents in Jhargram

3.1.3.2.

Siliguri

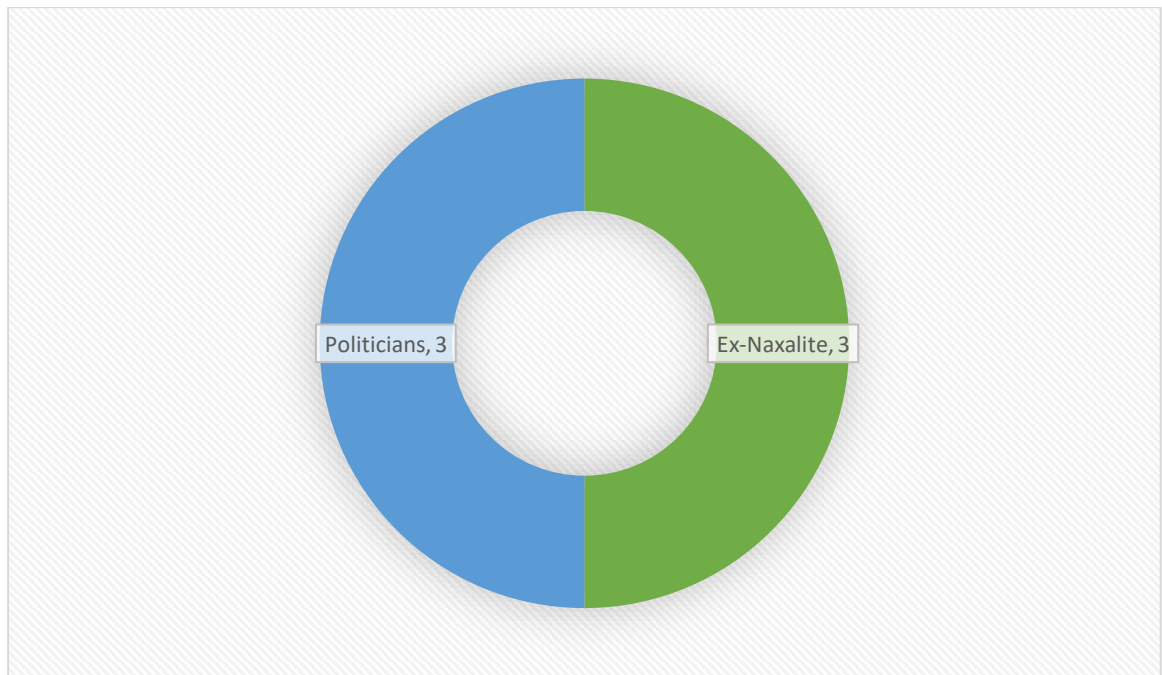
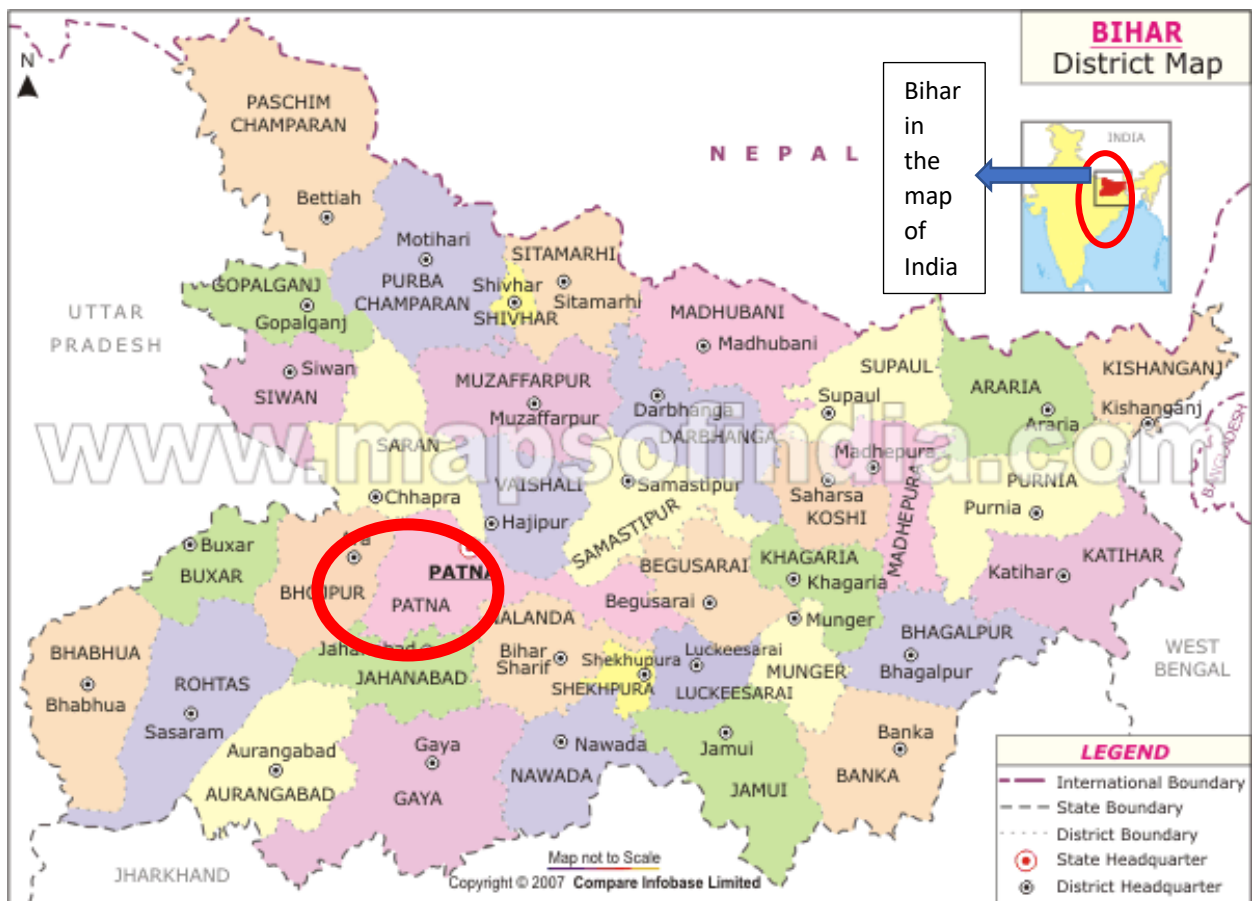


Fig. 5: Respondents in Siliguri

3.1.4. Bihar

By the time I visited Patna, capital of Bihar, I had already interacted with a number of respondents who had not only provided answers to my questions on Maoist phenomenon in the whole of India but also about specific scenario with respect to the responses in the various states. Therefore, that helped to draw the patterns which were specific in the case of Bihar. However, for further analysis I decided to visit the field and talk to the people specific to the location to understand about the particularities of Maoism in Bihar. Hence the number of respondents in case of Bihar is also less, compared to the other fields. Additionally, my request to arrange meetings with some Maoists or the militias in Bihar was dismissed by the respondents. They were reluctant to take the additional risk of the contacts apart from being in touch with me. Additionally, Bihar politics has a substantial segment dedicated to the influence of caste. Therefore visit to the state and talking to the people helped me to understand the caste politics since lower caste people form a substantial section of the mobilised cadres supporting the Maoists. This is what I want to emphasise when I talk about state autonomy. While the development trajectories and security approaches were continuing, there were numerous caste-

based private armies which functioned with impunity to deal with lower caste who were seeking the Maoists' support against the upper castes. Hence while the broader ideology of prioritising security over peaceful negotiation at the behest of the central government continued, a different form of unconstitutional measure in the form of privatised caste army functioned within the state. Again at the same time it is wise to accept that the central government was equally aware of the private armies and its state sponsored violence in the name of maintaining security of the upper castes. Thus while the core of the response remained security approach (both constitutional and unconstitutional), variations emerged in its manifestations and forms.



Map 4: Map of Bihar depicting the fields visited for data collection

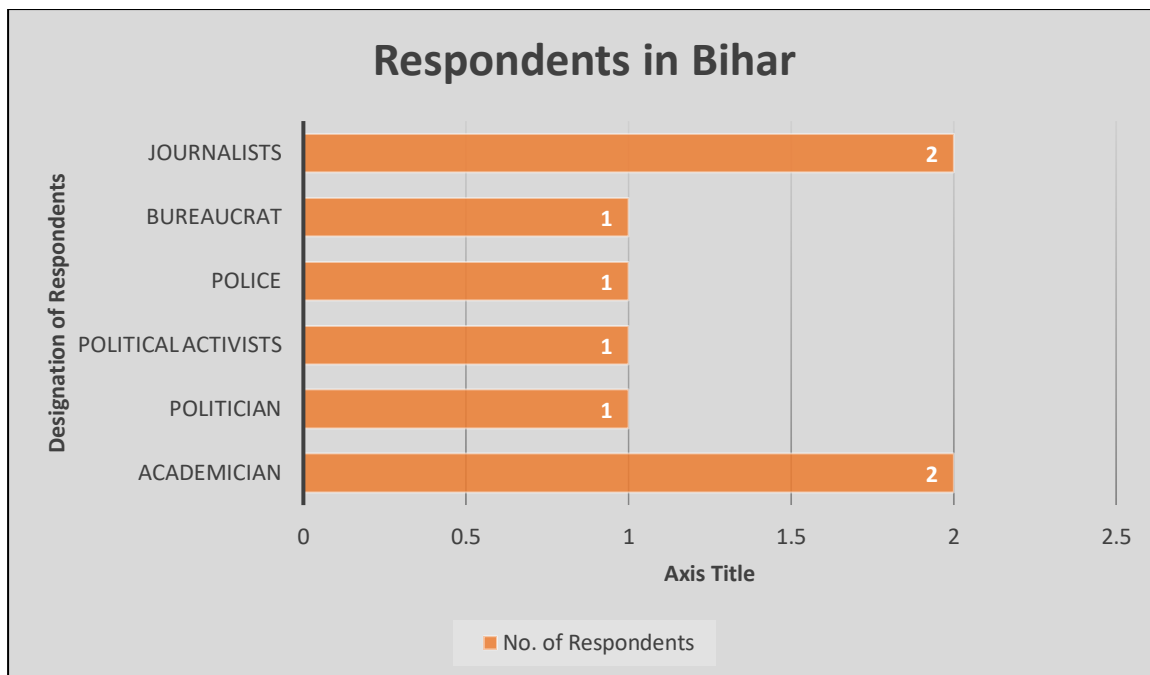


Fig. 6. Respondents in Bihar

3.1.5. Pondicherry

Through social networks I came across a workshop which was related to my topic. The workshop was titled “Water and Socio-Environmental challenges- Methodological Approaches in Social Science Research” to be held from 4th- 8th December,2017. This workshop was organised jointly by Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Pondicherry University and Department of Social Sciences, French Institute of Pondicherry. The additional temptation was to interact with experts on Adivasis and the policies and approaches pursued by the Indian government towards them. Besides, the workshop helped to interact with researchers and professionals who have been working on related topics throughout India. This provided me with information about the rural situation and the rights of the marginalised which helped to understand the structural background of my research.

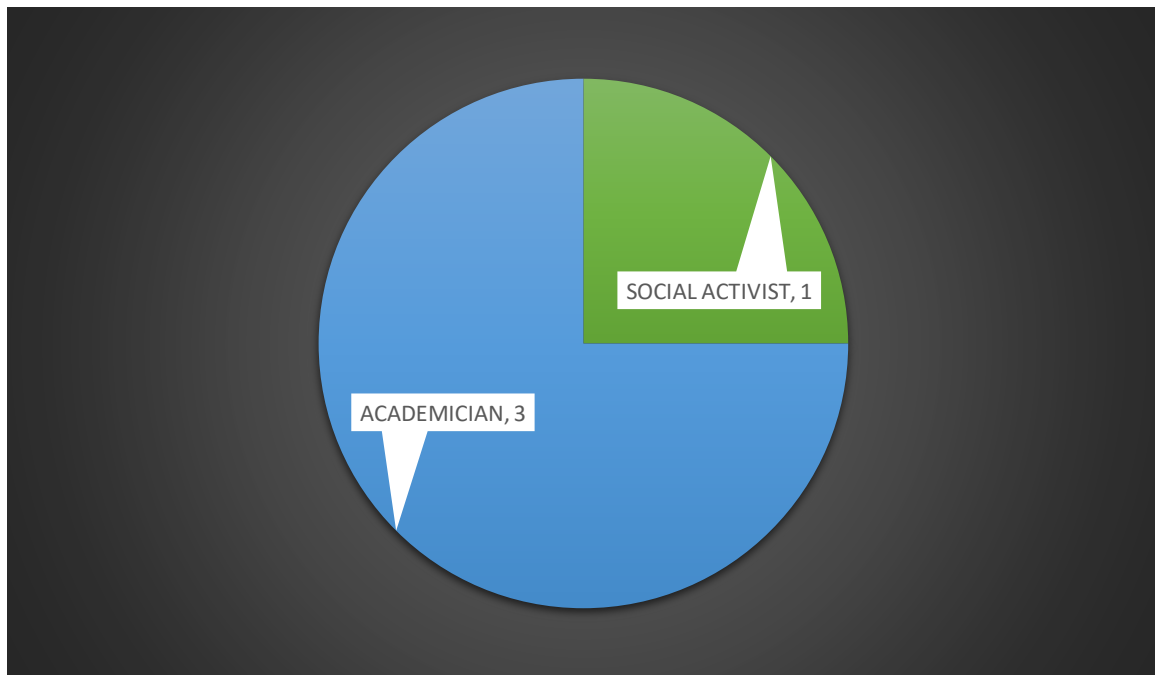


Fig.7. Respondents in Pondicherry

A total of 4 semi structured interviews were conducted in Pondicherry. Apart from that, informal discussions and group work with other members were also part of the workshop in Pondicherry that informed my outlook towards the topic.

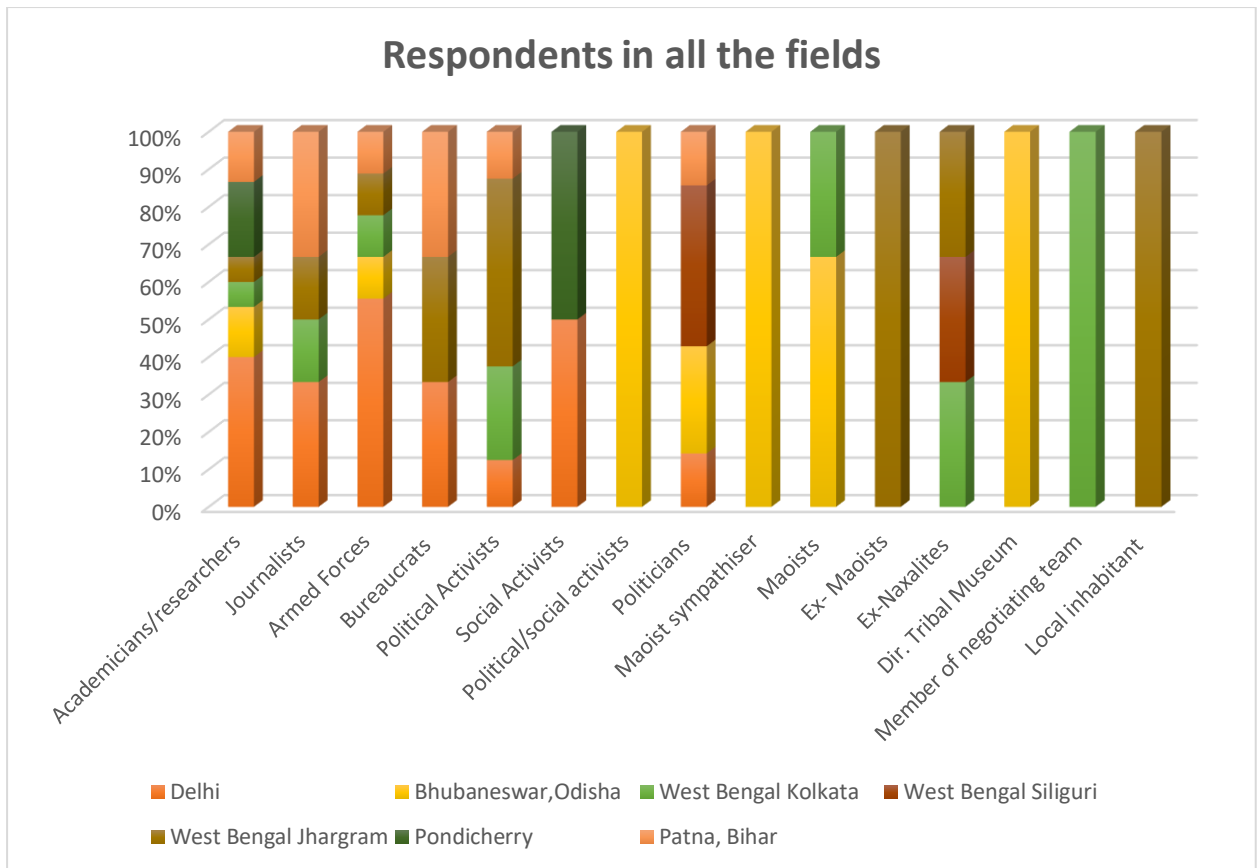


Fig 8: Combined representation of all the respondents in all the fields by their profession

| | Delhi | Bhubaneswar, Odisha | West Bengal | | | Pondicherry | Patna, Bihar |
|----------------------------|-------|---------------------|-------------|----------|----------|-------------|--------------|
| | | | Kolkata | Siliguri | Jhargram | | |
| Academicians/researchers | 6 | 2 | 1 | | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Journalists | 2 | | 1 | | 1 | | 2 |
| Armed Forces | 5 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 1 |
| Bureaucrats | 1 | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Political Activists | 1 | | 2 | | 4 | | 1 |
| Social Activists | 1 | | | | | 1 | |
| Political/social activists | | 5 | | | | | |
| Politicians | 1 | 2 | | 3 | | | 1 |
| Maoist sympathiser | | 1 | | | | | |
| Maoists | | 2 | 1 | | | | |
| Ex- Maoists | | | | | 3 | | |
| Ex-Naxalites | | | 3 | 3 | 3 | | |
| Dir. Tribal Museum | | 1 | | | | | |
| Member of negotiating team | | | 1 | | | | |
| Local inhabitant | | | | | 5 | | |

Table 4: Combined data of all the respondents by their profession

3.2. Methods of Data Collection

3.2.1. Primary method

3.2.1.1. Sampling

The sampling technique applied for this research was Expert Sampling. Expert knowledge is possessed by people (unlike lay-men) who by virtue of their profession has specific and detailed understanding of the subject. (Sprondel, 1979). Expert knowledge was important to understand the nuances of government responses. Opinions or commentaries by any lay individual would have been detrimental to analysing the particularities of government responses that play a role in aggravating the conflict leading to its prolongation. To understand the government responses within the broader dynamics of dominant politics, it was crucial to select respondents who have specific knowledge about the subject and who have been associated with various aspects of Maoist conflict in some professional capacity.

This study, however, has broadened the definition of experts by not merely including those who have professional understanding of the subject (like a policeman or a professor) but also by incorporating those who personally deal with the subjective realities of the Maoist conflict on a daily basis, for example an activist, Maoist sympathiser or an Adivasi. For the purpose of this study an expert has been identified as a person who has an insider knowledge not only by virtue of being a member to the group (Maoist) which is the subject matter but also one who has expanding exposure to the subject (Maoism and government responses) owing to one's professional or personal obligation. Therefore, an expert has been identified as a person who has particular knowledge about the conflict due to their association as a professional or being a member of the Maoist discourse.

A professional versed in the subject included academicians, members of political parties, social and political activists, journalists and state representatives like police, armed forces personnel, ministers, and bureaucrats. A member of the Maoist discourse ranged from people who are still members of the Maoist group, erstwhile members, Maoist sympathisers and the local inhabitants affected by the violence. The reason for including the latter group in the broader framework of expert knowledge is because, the understanding and experience of the real world that these people possesses is tantamount to an arm-chair definition of an expert dealing with the subject. In fact, they were better able to explain the ground situation with much more vivid details and appropriate illustrations which often miss the pages of a book or

articulations of a conference. These data, sometimes, stood in stark variance from the official/intellectual position particularly in a conflict zone. The idea of politics and how it functions, for example, incorporates wider definition in reality specially in a conflict situation than what theorists may have explained in academic discourses. In Jhargram, for example, I was acquainted with how politics decide every aspect of human life from food, to getting arrested, to getting killed.

The reliability and validity of expert knowledge has been triangulated with secondary materials to collate a valid and reliable data.²¹

3.2.1.2. Virtual Snowballing Space

Working on a sensitive topic has its share of challenges in selecting the samples as well. While I knew about few people who have been working on the topic or are associated with it in their respective capacities, the challenge was for the people to agree to talk to me. Through snowball sampling in my research, I helped in creating a trust zone with the respondents who would be ready to share contacts of the suitable respondent. As it is no use knowing the person if he is not willing to talk! Thus, snowballing also incorporated this feature of trust building with the respondents who were willing to speak to me after knowing that I have been referred to him by a reliable contact. Hence snowballing sampling technique for a sensitive topic like Maoism achieved the objective of trust building not only on the part of the respondent who was sharing the contact but also of the respondent whose contact has been shared. What I term as a **Virtual Snowballing Space (VSS)** was created during the period of the field work. It was a constructed candid frame within which like-minded people mingle and exchange information and knowledge which would, otherwise, be riskier in spaces beyond the zone. The word virtual denotes a space which cannot be seen but exists in the minds of the people coordinating in the space. It requires to be physically present to gain access to this space but access to this space is dependent upon faithful networking among people with similar interests.

²¹ The details of the secondary sources have been discussed in every Result and Analysis chapter from which those chapters have been drawn.

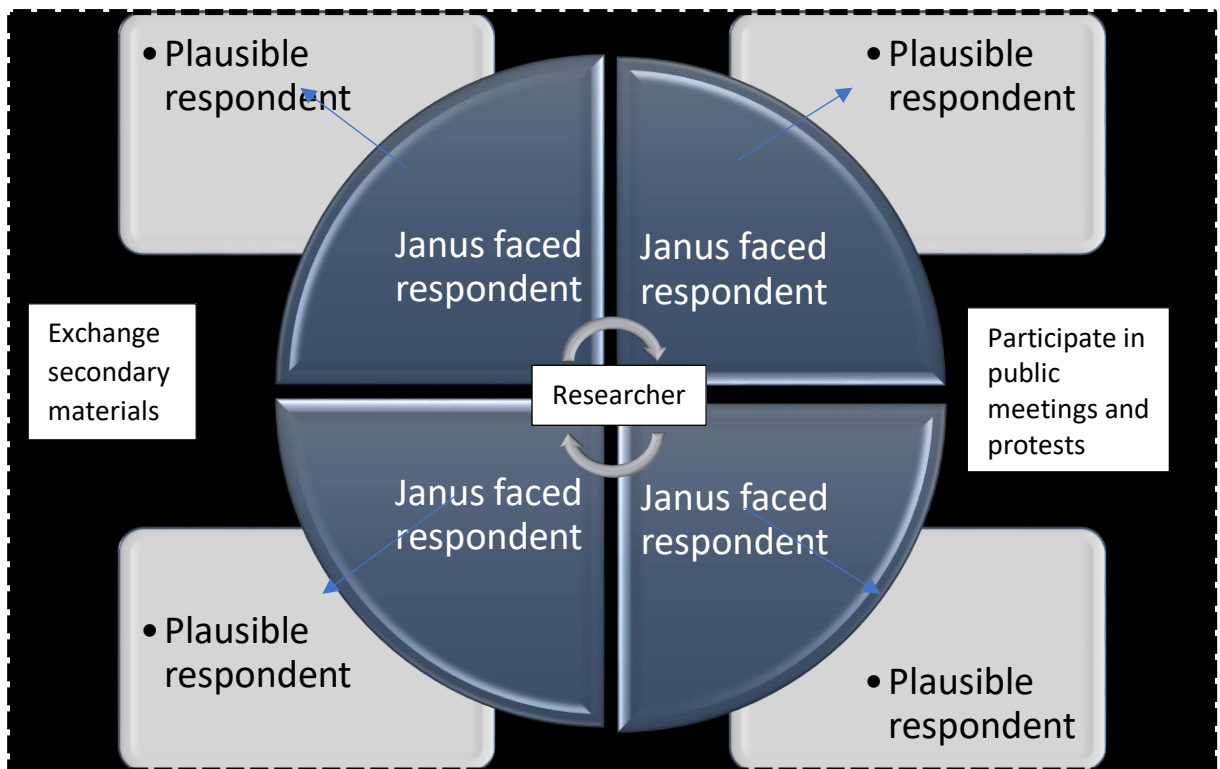


Fig. 9. Virtual Snowballing Space (Source: Author)

In the diagram, the researcher resides in the middle. The Janus faced respondent is the one who is acting as a bridge by putting the researcher in contact with a known person who could serve as a plausible respondent for the current research. The term ‘Plausible respondent’ is applied because when the Janus faced shared the contact with me, it wasn’t certain if the contact would be willing to speak up because of the risks involved. What I would like to clarify at this juncture is atleast because of the Janus faced respondent I could gain access to the plausible respondent who in turn was willing to entertain my presence before deciding upon revealing details to me. This Janus faced respondent is also a trust builder because in addition to sharing contacts of the required person (which is the common form of snowball sampling) this sampling space has four additional characteristics:

Firstly, the plausible respondent could be persuaded to speak to me despite knowing the sensitive nature of the topic being discussed. This is mainly because I was referred to by a common contact whom the plausible respondent trusts. This is, indeed, significant development. Often respondents refuse to speak owing to the subject being discussed and the associated risks involved. Hence in this case every respondent transcended into a Janus, the

Greek God with two faces. While one face looked at the researcher the other face had an eye on the next person to be contacted who could serve as plausible respondent for the research.

Secondly, a viable socialization zone (identified in the diagram in black as the open space within the dotted line) was created which was used by both-me and the respondent- to discuss and share subject related sensitive literature and pamphlets and information about political meetings which was only limited to the zone. A kind of socialisation space specifically dedicated to acquiring/exchanging information on a particular subject in which both have similar interests. Additionally, I had also attended some of the political meetings which are, otherwise, strictly audience restricted due to the secret agenda of the meeting concerned. Thus, apart from interviewing the respondents, the VSS helped in gathering secondary materials as well as provide the required window to act as an observer at political meetings and street protests.

Thirdly, another significant aspect of this Space is that I was also not spared from questioning by the respondents. And these questions are not simply like, ‘Why did you take up this topic?’ or ‘Why are you pursuing this study from abroad?’. These questions pertained to my views and opinions on the very questions that I was posing to my respondents. For example, a Maoist asked me, “*What do you think of our movement?*” In this manner I had to be always prepared from beforehand. Taking each case at a time this preparation was influenced by the wide range of the respondents and their plausible view-points on the subject. For example, the opinions of a Maoist and of a policeman were vastly different on the same subject. On the other hand, the respondents, with such an approach, tried to understand the mind-set of the researcher with whom he not only spent his time and shared physical space but also shared sensitive information (probably upon this discussion depended their decision to speak to me). This provided a glimpse of the character of the respondents. This revealing of the character by the respondent in front of me could be of utmost risk on the part of the respondent owing to the sensitive subject being discussed. Hence it became quite important and fair on the part of the respondent to understand my outlook by posing these questions and trying and understanding me the way I was attempting to understand them. This also acted as initial ice-breakers to begin a serious conversation with some highly motivated individuals.

Fourthly, all interviews were conducted in physical spaces shared by the researcher and the respondent. No interview had taken place over phone or any other medium of communication. While on one side it is understandable because of the probability of risk while

talking over the phone on a security related subject. On the other, what was surprising to me was the insistence on physical presence by the respondent even where physical presence could be equally if not more dangerous. Where the respondent could have easily denied a meeting, he actually was present to speak on the subject. I vividly remember a Maoist and his assistant visiting me in a safe house of a Janus-faced respondent in Bhubaneswar. The respondent was in search of a common and shared space where the mutual exchange become risk-free and candid. This owed largely to the safety assurance provided by the Janus faced respondent to the plausible respondent.

However, VSS has its share of disadvantages as well. The respondents would often enquire what the other respondents replied to a question. I had to play a very balanced role here by neither offending the respondent nor revealing anything significant of some other respondents. This was the toughest part of the data gathering episode. One is not only at a risk of losing a valuable contact in case one finds the reply unsatisfactory but also exposing oneself in front of some highly motivated people who might find you untrustworthy for revealing information. Hence, I had to engineer my path through various layers of trust building to maintain my position in this virtual space.

3.2.1.3. Interviews

A combination of semi-structured and structured interviews was conducted for the research although not necessarily with the same set of questionnaires. This was largely depending upon the respondent being interviewed and the circumstances of the interview. For example, while talking to a Maoist or a Maoist sympathiser, the questions were spontaneous as the discussions progressed. In these circumstances there were additional problem of not being allowed to record the interviews. Questions to a bureaucrat or a police officer were more in the form of structured nature due to the paucity of time when they answered the questions without often having the time to discuss in detail. Hence a fixed set of questions would be used for such interviews although more often questions were prompted by the ongoing discussions resulting in ample modifications of the earlier questions. Real time changes were expected in the questionnaire to avoid offending the respondents who were highly motivated on both sides of the conflict- the state representatives and the Maoists and their sympathisers. I also tried to establish contacts with the surrendered Maoists who are in rehabilitation currently but was denied permission.

3.2.1.4. Observation

Observation became an important tool for collecting data. It was conducted in three phases - attending political meetings, visiting fairs and photo exhibit. Observation and interaction in such informal gatherings helped in the following way in collecting data relevant to the research question. Firstly, it helped me to experience first-hand the political interactions of the people who do not necessarily agree with the government on the various topic related to government responses like arrest of political prisoners, their treatment insides the jails and government's opinion and approach towards political dissent. Secondly, instead of having individual interaction with these people, such gatherings provided space for discussions by large number of people and helped me to collect diverse observations by the very people who are at the receiving end of the government responses. Finally, sharing the physical space with these people allowed me to closely comprehend their political opinion on government responses in a candid manner which may not have been always possible in a face to face interview specially on a sensitive topic like Maoism.



Picture 1: Political meeting #4 ; Location-Kolkata; Date- 23.12.2017 (Source: Author)

Being an inhabitant of the VSS, I had received a unique opportunity to be part of four political meetings. The information about the meetings are normally circulated among a closed group of participants who are either members or support the cause for which the meeting is conducted. However, one disadvantage of sharing the meeting itinerary by the members of the virtual space was the insistence on my participation sometimes even when the topic discussed had nothing directly to do with the research under consideration. I had to reluctantly agree to attend such meetings to enter the coveted circle of experts. One additional advantage of attending these

meetings apart from acquiring information, was an opportunity to interact and establish further contacts of plausible respondents. This was another opportunity to collect reading materials and related literature which, otherwise, may not be available in the open market in such abundance.

I attended four such political gathering/meeting. The fourth meeting was organised at Kolkata and focussed on the Cultural revolution of China. The meeting was attended by members of various Maoist groups (not the banned ones) and political activists from around the city. This was one such meeting which I had to attend despite it having nothing to do with the research. The objective behind sharing this detail in methodology section is to stress that attempts of data collection in the field also include those aspects which may not have directly yielded any data but anyways form part of the understanding of methodology of a study process.

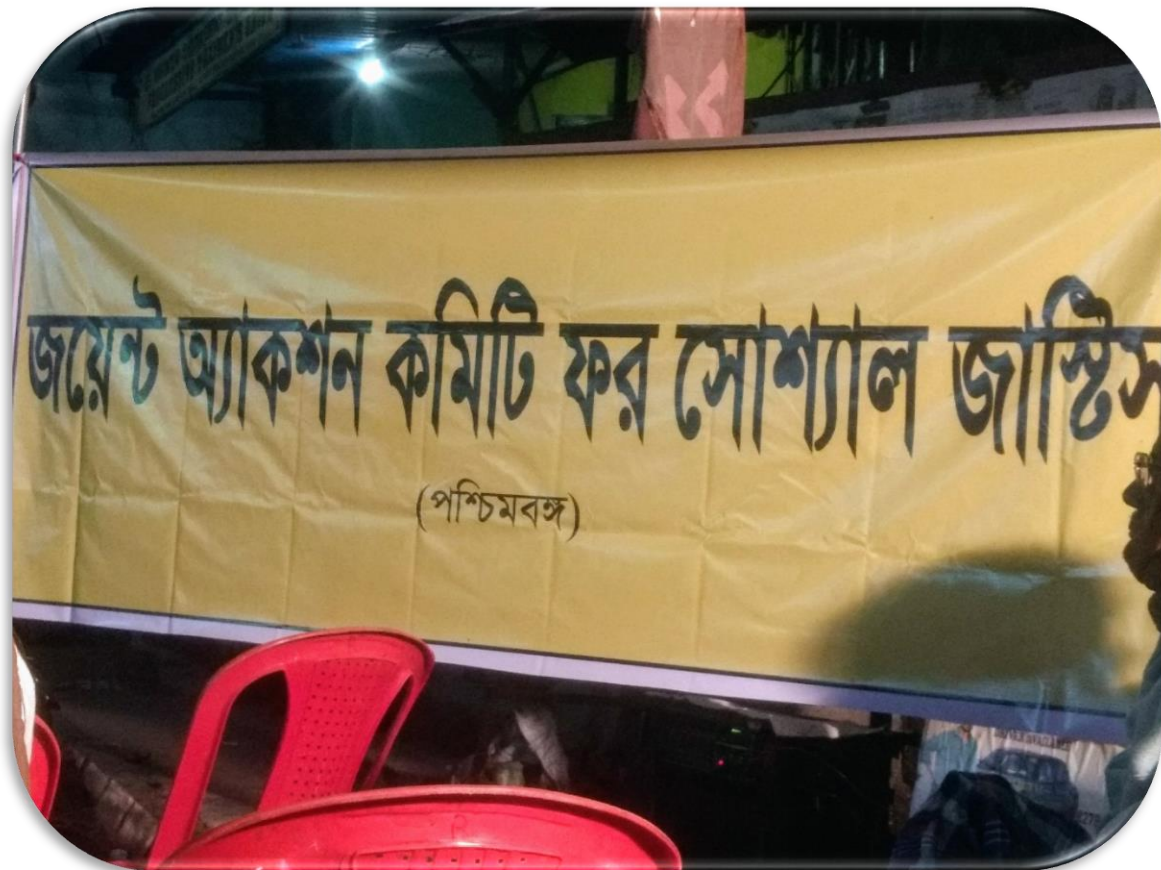


Picture 2; Political meeting #3 Location Jhargram; Date: 17.12.2017 (Source: author)

I attended the third meeting while on my field work in Jhargram. It was organised by the Communist Party of India (CPI). However, unlike the other meetings this one was an open

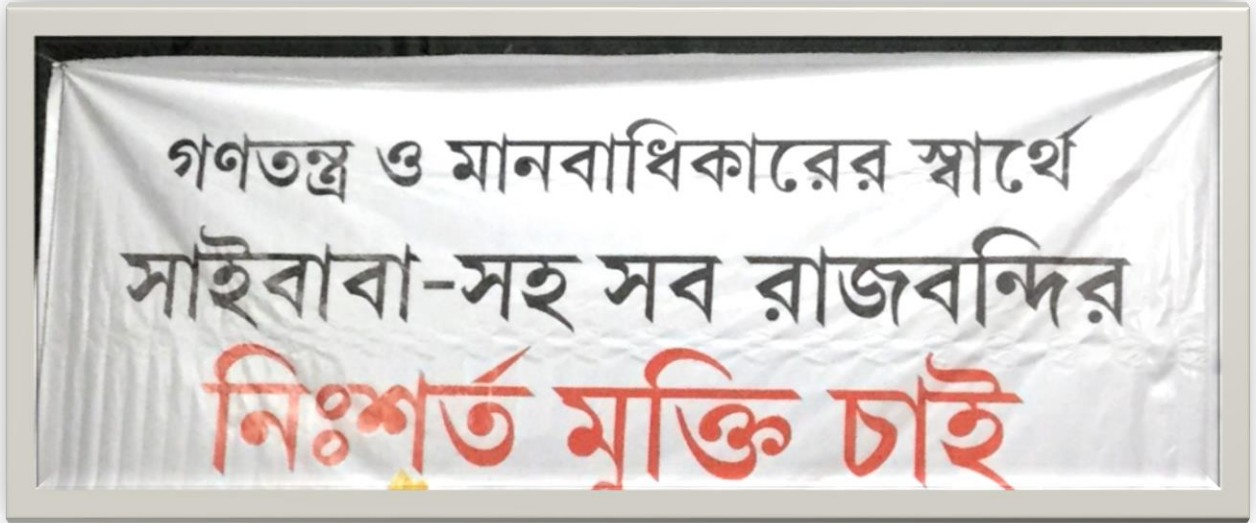
meeting attended by the locals. The topics under consideration was the general socio-political climate of the locality after a prolonged episode of violence due to the presence of Maoists in the area.

The second meeting was more a street corner than a meeting inside a hall. It was organised in Kolkata by Joint Action Committee for Social Justice. The issues focussed on were voicing concern about the state's attitude and subsequent handling of dissent and opposition.



Picture 3 Political meeting #2 : Location-Kolkata; Date- 30.11.2017 (Source: author)

The first meeting was organised to rally support for the unconditional release of all political prisoners. And this also included special mention of Delhi University Professor G.N. Saibaba who has been arrested on charges of alleged Maoist activities.



Picture 4: Political meeting #1 Location Kolkata; Date 21.11.2017 (Source: author)

3.2.1.4.1. Visiting Fair

WB government has been conducting the *Junglemahal Utsav* (Junglemahal festival). The initiative started by the state government in the conflict prone area serves two purposes. Firstly, an opportunity for the local inhabitants to sell their home-made products in an open market to people coming from all over the state to participate in the fair. Secondly, to restore normalcy in the region both during and after the period of conflict. This fair takes place every year in the month of January. Although my



Picture # 5



Picture #6



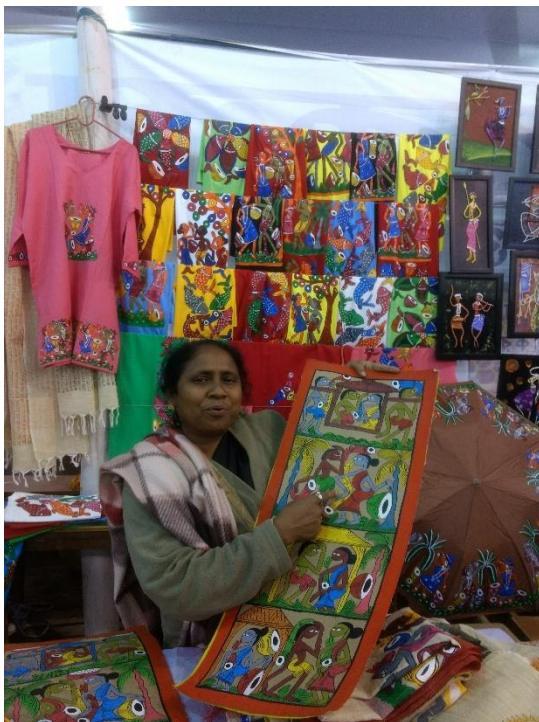
Picture #7

Photo courtesy : Researcher; Location Jhargram ; Date 08.01.2018.

field work in Jhargram was almost over in December, I returned to Jhargram in January to observe the details of the fair. It was a unique opportunity to interact with local inhabitants and the villagers and understand their perspective about the conflict. This also helped to explain people's reaction and their degree of acceptability of the government initiative of welfare programmes in these conflict areas. Various cultural programmes are also arranged during the week-long festival



Picture # 8 Photo courtesy: Researcher; Location-Jhargram; Date- 08.01.2018



Date- 08.01.2018



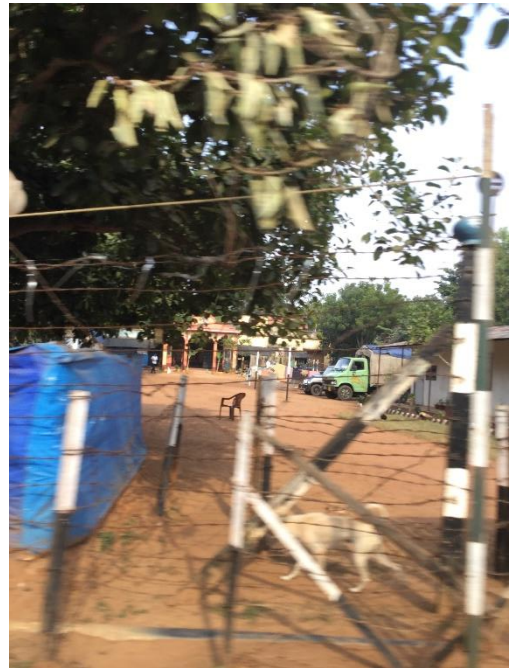
Pictures #9 & #10 Photo courtesy: Researcher ; Locals displaying their talents at various stalls. location Jhargram

3.2.1.4.2. **Photograph as data collection**

Taking photographs became an important source of data collection in the field of Jhargram. I resorted to taking photographs where direct contact with respondents was not possible. Capturing the physical frameworks of the conflict zone was also facilitated by photographs. For example, although conflict is not ongoing, the entire district being a forest area is under various paramilitary camps. This step is taken by the administration to discourage the Maoists from once again making the area as their base for further expansion. This is more a preventive measure than an offensive one. The photographs were taken while on a moving car because of security reasons. Photographs primarily acted as corroborative sources of information on the security aspects of the government responses. I was then able to verify the information by showing the photographs to other respondents and getting to know their knowledge about it. Through discussions, the rationale behind the existence of the camps and its future was evident. This became an important source of data for the purpose of the research where the objective is to analyse the role of the government responses in conflict prolongation by failing to legitimise itself before the affected population. These photographs clearly highlighted the intention of the government in securitising the responses by refusing to dismantle the armed camps of the police and allow a normal life in the villages.



Pictures # 11&12 Photo courtesy: Researcher ; Police/paramilitary camps inside the forest. location :
Somewhere in Jhargram



Pictures # 13&14 Photo courtesy: Researcher ; Police/paramilitary camps inside the forest location: somewhere in Jhargram

Another area where photography became immensely helpful was when I traced back the trails inside the forest to find the exact location where Kishenji's body was shown to be found across television channels after exchange of fire with armed forces. There are allegations against the state government that Kishenji was, in fact, assassinated. This version is against the official stance that he was killed in the combat operation with the police. This forest attained significance because of the rumours that he was killed in some other forest in the nearby vicinity and that his body was transported at *Burisol* which, was later revealed before the media. Hence photography and later corroboration by a number of respondents became an important source of data collection in the field. Therefore visit to the forest where Kishenji was assassinated provides the graphic detail of the security aspect in addition to my argument that extra constitutional measures are often resorted to by the government which acts as an important segment of government responses, thereby failing to win people's trust.



Pictures # 15 & 16 Photo courtesy: Researcher ; Way to the Burisol forest along with my companions



Pictures # 17& 18 Photo courtesy: Researcher; Inside the forest

3.2.1.5. Group Discussion

I had no initial plan for Group Discussion (GD) and neither does it serve any specific purpose of this research's objectives. However, some GD during the period of the field work occurred spontaneously. Hence contacts were established, and discussions proceeded without prior plans. One important aspect of this phase of data collection taught me to be ever ready and carry necessary logistics anytime and everywhere. Incredibly significant facets of data were revealed in the most unlikely places of discussion and in the absence of a systematic layout. However, this nature of preparation institutes additional help when it is difficult to convince people to talk to about the topic, in this case without endangering oneself. Since getting informants and respondents is a challenging task of the data collection in this kind of research, it is pragmatic to be always prepared for discussions at unlikely places to avoid missing any plausible opportunity of gathering data.

I was involved in two such spontaneous group discussions in Jhargram. Keeping in mind the nature of the subject under consideration arranging for a Focussed Group Discussion was a challenging task. The discussion that I had does not fit the category of a Focussed Group Discussion (FGD) because of the absence of a clear plan and objective as laid out to the participants. This was more a Formal Group Discussion where the topic to be discussed was comprehensible to the respondents and in line with their character and nature of involvement with the Maoist phenomenon. At the same time, it lacked prior preparation and coherent strategy required for FGD. However, two spontaneous group discussions materialized in Jhargram. My first companion who has detail knowledge about the area, picked up another gentleman who had frequent and close encounters with the Maoists. This prompted a discussion on the subject. Both of them, then brought me to a third person's village who then joined the discussion. Therefore, while working on a sensitive topic, there can be no prior plans and I was prepared for such circumstances.

Similar group discussions were also held in Bhubaneswar, Pondicherry and Siliguri where people joined in the discussion and wanted to contribute to the discourse. In these geographical locations, I had intended to speak to one respondent according to the prior appointment. However, the meetings ensued in formal settings and hence other people in close physical proximity began to contribute their share of knowledge and information. In both the

cases, the participants shared knowledge, often first-hand, about the government responses and intriguing details about its myriad facets.

Another very unlikely places where an impromptu group discussion began was in a book shop in College Street, Kolkata. The area is known for its collection of books and has been witness to many historical and political episodes of Calcutta. The events associated with Naxalbari was not an exception where many people witnessed unleashing of violence on the streets of the city in the late 1960's and early 1970's. During one visit to the area in search for books, in a tiny book stall, the shopkeeper noticed my collection of books and began enquiring. This was the beginning of a highly informative discussion where the shopkeeper brought in another person to join and share his memories about Naxalbari and how the police at that time has often resorted to indiscriminate killings of young people to refrain them from joining Naxalism by spreading fear and terror. They began to share first-hand account as eye-witnesses from their personal stories as to how the government dealt with the unexpected rise of the movement in the heart of the city in the 60's through counter-violence as an integral aspect of the responses.

However, one should also be cautious before engaging in these sorts of impromptu discussions. The person concerned may not have the best intention in mind and the researcher always runs the risk of endangering oneself. It is not unnatural for the government agencies to collect information about people interested in security related topic. So, I, for the discussion particularly at College Street, always kept the discussion at a very casual level and often kept engaging the respondents into trivial issues. Hence while the broader framework of the discussion was clear to me, in the process of the discussion, I enquired to the respondents about their family, choice of sweater or the climatic variations. This kept the discussion at a very casual level while at the same time addressed my research objectives by consistently reflecting on the topic at regular intervals. One should be very informal about one's body language at these times so that it does not indicate any avoidable hints to arouse some kind of suspicion. I was unable to take notes at real time. However, at the end of the discussion, I went to a nearby coffee shop to note down every detail to avoid missing any aspect of the discussion.

3.2.1.6. Use of social media

There was one more method used in the later stage to collect data from one bureaucrat. On my field visit to Jhargram, the respondents I interacted with, repeatedly mentioned about a very honest bureaucrat who had left his job and went back to his home amidst the ongoing anti-

Maoist operations. I was able to contact the person concerned over social media and was ready to travel, to talk to him (as he currently resides in Chennai). However, he refused to provide any formal reply to the questionnaire owing to his past professional commitment as a bureaucrat and hence divulge any information against any particular government. So the topic was discussed in an unstructured interview format over Facebook messenger regarding the various state responses that he was in charge of implementing. However, what rendered the discussion interesting was his take on the challenges that he faced as a bureaucrat from various political parties in the form of political pressure to adopt and implement responses in a specific way that would be advantageous to the concerned political party. This helped to highlight the structural limitations of Indian politics that acts as a barrier in successfully implementing the responses to deal with the Maoists thereby contributing unknowingly to the prolongation of the conflict. And to add to our structural discussion, these kinds of tactics are applied by all the political parties across various states. Hence this becomes an essence of Indian political dynamics which highlights the core of it and is not constrained by federal set up. This helps to structure the socio-political challenges that influences the government responses. He chooses to remain anonymous.

3.2.2. **Secondary Method**

Secondary data pertaining to books was consulted from the libraries of CAPS and Centre for Land and Warfare Studies (CLAWS) in New Delhi. On my visit to Bhubaneswar, I was able to get in touch with the Director of the Museum of Tribal Arts and Artefacts. Thereafter I was able to get access to the vast library of Tribal studies and other related documents. Finally, in Kolkata, I visited the library of The Asiatic Society. The documents ranged from government reports on Maoism, Planning commission report on development measures in Maoist conflict areas and books and materials pertaining to Adivasi / tribal issues.

Another interesting manner in which the secondary data was collected was through the members sharing the VSS. Every political meeting had book stalls with documents and publications circulated among the people attending the meetings within the closed group. Hence by virtue of being a member of the space I was able to gather significant documents which are not otherwise available in the open market. These documents pertain to perspective of the Maoists on these responses and how they plan to use it to their advantage to enhance their public support. However, all those documents were in vernacular languages, the required portions of which has been translated into English by me for the purpose of data analysis.

Another channel of collecting secondary data was also facilitated by virtue of sharing the common space. Couple of respondents helped me to identify a particular book shop in College Street which was the only one that sells Maoism related literature. The book shop was exceedingly small, housed in an old, dilapidated building. On my mentioning of the person who had referred me, the shopkeeper entertained me and was ready to supply books and other literature relating to Maoism and government responses. This was yet another example where Janus faced respondents were helpful.

Apart from this, the political activists also supplied me with necessary secondary materials which are generally circulated manually within the closed groups and solely among the members to avoid police suspicion. There were many situations where the activists were reluctant to hand over the original copy of the secondary materials or due to the extreme locations of the places visited, xeroxing was not an option. In these cases, photographs of the necessary documents were taken and later used for analysis.

3.3. Challenges of Data Collection

Working on a sensitive topic relating to the security of the country had its share of challenges as well. The difficulties can be classified into two categories. First was in the form of questions or interrogations by army, police, Maoists, and the activists. Second was in the form of logistics.

In addition to this, one must remember a cautious advice to consistently double check sources and claims. This helps to secure not only the safety of the researcher but also the identity of the respondents. Jeopardising either, could hamper the plan of completion of data collection and subsequent time management as scheduled for the purpose. One should also be cognisant of the time to be spent in bureaucracy and red tape related to various aspects of data collection specially on a topic related to national security and hence plan accordingly the time period scheduled for data collection.

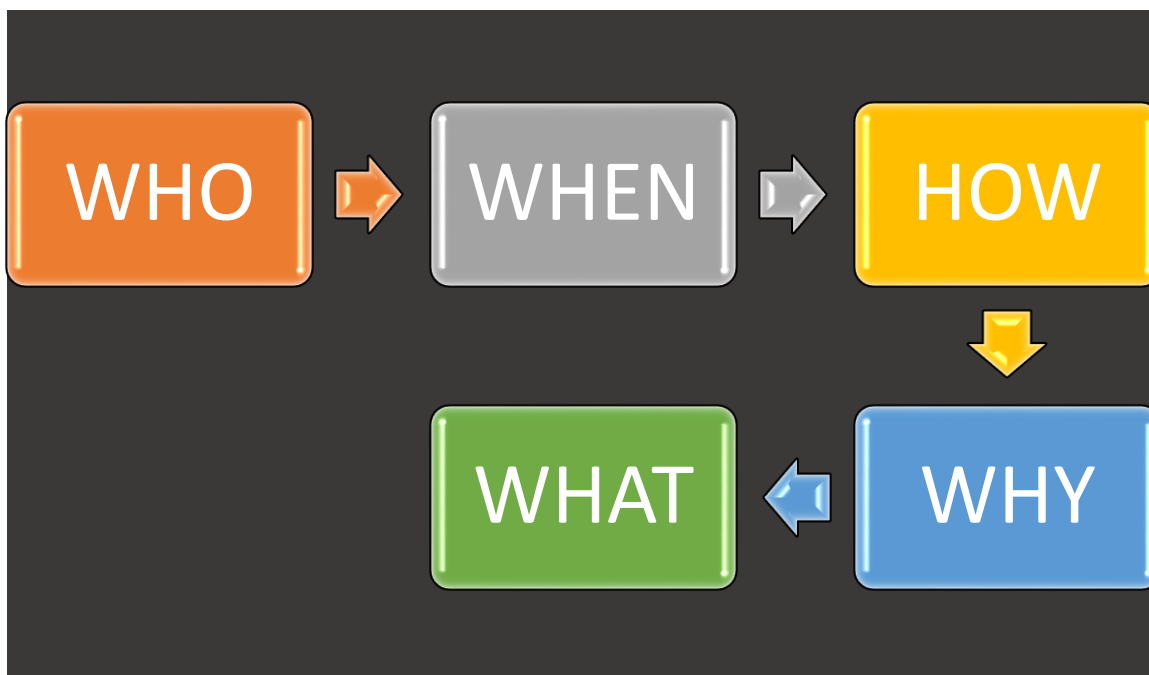


Fig: 10 Diagrammatic representation of the list of 5 questions; Source: Researcher

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Verbal | <p>Kinds of Questions asked/ concerns raised by the following respondents:</p> <p>Army:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Why are you pursuing your studies in Germany/ Why is Germany interested in India's internal affairs ❖ Are there any Pakistanis studying there?/ Will they have access to the data collected by you? ❖ Who are your supervisors? <p>Maoist :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Help them to search for a room in Kolkata ❖ Do propaganda work for them abroad <p>Police :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Noting down my personal details for verification |
|---------------|--|

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| | <p>Political activist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Where will the data be used? / to whom you have to submit the collected data? |
| Logistical | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not allowing to record • No photos • Meeting at unknown locations • Odd timings • Return to your lodging before dark • Change sim and apartments regularly • No contacts over phone or emails • Transcribing all data (except for a few which was done with trusted persons) |

Table 5: Tabular representation of the challenges during fieldwork; Source: Researcher

3.4. Data Analysis

For the analysis of the data in the current study I have used Thematic Analysis as a method explicated by Clarke & Braun (2006). I have followed their steps in analysing the data based on thematic analysis. The following are the reasons for selecting thematic analysis for the research. Firstly, thematic analysis is not fixed into particular theoretical framework. Hence it provides the flexibility to be applied to a range of research studies borrowing from different theoretical perspectives. Since in the current research I have borrowed different concepts from a range of different theorists to construct the prism through which the government responses have been understood, thematic analysis provides an ideal ground for this experimentation. Secondly, owing to the sensitivity of the topic at hand, visit to the field, careful observation and the sources of banned literature became a significant portion of data collection. Many issues which remained hidden from the surface could actually be unravelled at the conflict region and after talking to the respondents. Hence many themes were arrived at by interpreting the data which may not have been directly emphasised by the respondent. For example, the concept of politics we read in books and theories is quite different from what constitutes politics in layman's term particularly in a conflict region. Every decision, for example, availability of welfare measures, in such emergency situations became a political decision. Maoist literature

also helped to shed light on how politics is perceived by them and how they plan to use the situation in their favour. Thirdly, the current study draws heavily upon qualitative and descriptive analysis of the data. Thematic analysis helped to capture the varieties of the topics enclosed within the discussion of such an extended field of study on a nation-wide scale. The themes captured the essence of the discussions on a multiple level by bringing in newer themes in addition to the existing ones.

Additionally, it is necessary to clarify that I have not used any software for selecting/analysing the themes. I have transcribed the data and divided them into data sets and extracted the data depending on various themes manually. I have used conventional manner of classifying the themes and segregating them into different colour coded folders and sub-folders. Technology often times overlooks the subtleties of the data which may not necessarily miss the eyes of the researcher. I am not against technological usage of data analysis. It is just for the current research I was inclined to work manually to incorporate these subtleties within the data, many of which I was made aware of during my field work. While analysing the data of such a sensitive topic I have often come across inner/hidden meaning of a discussion/writing which the respondent/writer intended to communicate. Those subtleties eventually helped to address many pre-conceived notions about the social realities of which I, being from a privileged background, had very superficial and pedantic knowledge about. This was essential to address and incorporate within the themes which could not have been captured by any software or technological equipment.

In the following section, I shall be clarifying the different terms and provide instances for each, based on Clarke & Braun which has been used for my study.

Data corpus refers to the entire data collected during my field work at various locations in different provinces. I have interviewed 80 respondents which includes people from academicians, politicians, Maoists, political activists, social activists, policemen and senior researchers. The data also incorporates the necessary secondary literature collected for the purpose from various sources (details provided earlier).

From the entire range of data corpus I have separated the **Data set** which has been specifically used in my study. Clarke & Braun refers to two different kinds of data sets which the researcher may resort to for classification of the data. One is based on the respondents where they are classified based on their profession and background. For example, for my research I could segregate data based on the Maoists, politicians, researchers, and policemen.

The second one is based on “particular analytic interest in some topic in the data”(p.6). I have followed the latter one. The topic of my research seeks to answer the role of government responses in contributing towards prolonging the conflict. Therefore, the unit of analysis is the

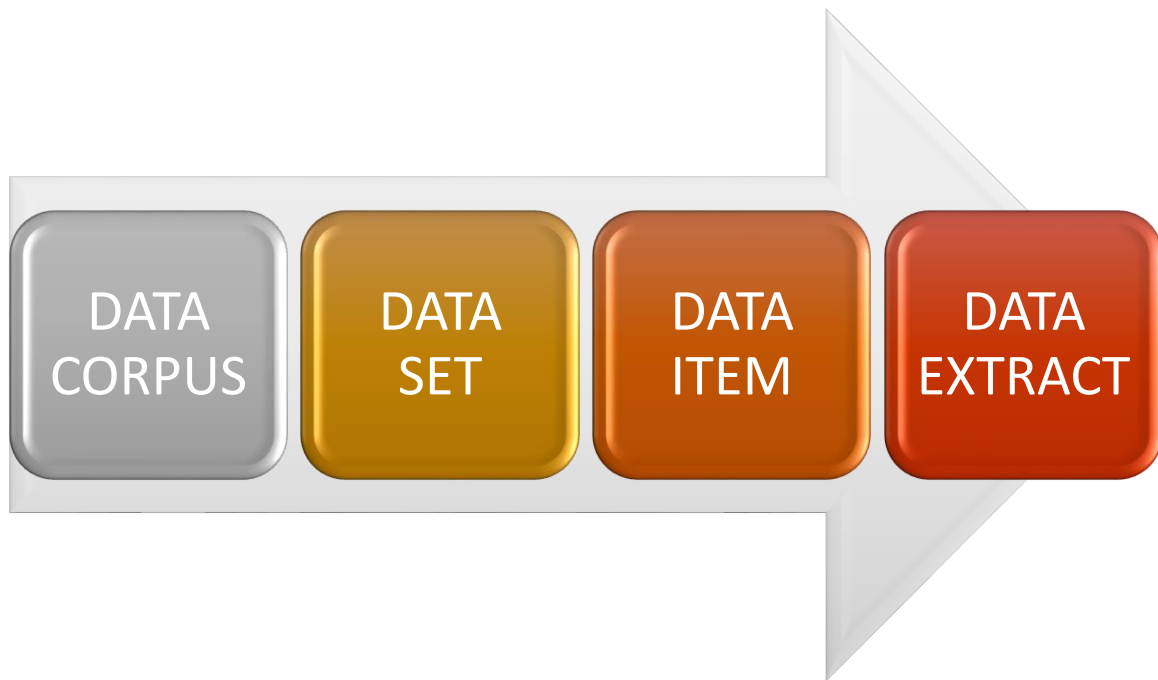


Fig. 11 : Process of Data Extract ; Source: Researcher

various responses as evaluated by various actors involved in some way with the analysis of the conflict and how they evaluate these responses (Expert sampling explained previously). The study does not intend to focus or compare the differences in perspective of different actors based on their profession. Rather the emphasis is on collecting data to aggregate the various complications and challenges within the responses that are contributing towards prolonging the conflict instead of addressing it. And those challenges can be pointed by any of the respondents irrespective of their professional affiliation.

Data item “refer to each individual piece of data collected, which together make up the data set or corpus.” (Clarke & Braun, p. 6) In my study the data items are, every interview of each respondent, documents from the websites, and documents collected from the respondents. However, I will have to add to the list, data based on observation and items of secondary data. I have participated in group discussions where the respondents have often contradicted their opinions – what they said during the presence of everyone and what they confided in me separately.

Finally, from every data item ‘individual coded chunk of data’ is extracted. This **Data Extract** helped me to substantiate my argument with evidence. Data extract helps to answer the research questions.

Let us understand this with the following examples from my field work:

Data Set- Since I have segregated the data sets based on some particular topic, I will produce excerpts from two interviews who have responded to the same question/topic.

Both the respondents were asked similar question on a particular topic.

Journalist Ashutosh Bhardwaj:

Q: What went wrong with the state responses.

A: I shall be talking not only about policies, but in general as to what went wrong. Indian society is indifferent to the plight of fellow Indians. There is a collective apathy which gets reflected in the state's policies and they who are people chosen from amongst us. State has failed to address the demands. Drunk with power, they are not ready to negotiate. It is the duty of the State to bend a little for peace when so much is lost. They just cannot sit with their ego intact. On the Maoist side, it has been based mostly on violence in the last decade or so. If they had tried to build their mass base, somehow, they thought by violence they will be able to do that. Atleast they could have taken to common people which they did not.

Prof. Nandini Sundar

Q: Why do the state responses fail to achieve expected results?

A: Policy failed towards Adivasis and tribals. Many acts are there but no implementation. There is no pressure on the government to address it. States get lot of money from this conflict. Everybody wants Maoists. Indian political system is racist towards Adivasis. No president Adivasi has been nominated till date. No understanding of the Adivasi specificity among the state representatives.

The examples highlight, topic based classification which are collectively called data sets from the entire data corpus. Hence all the responses by the respondents pertaining to this particular question or similar questions constitute data set.

The following is an interview with a senior policy analyst who is the Director of a New Delhi based think tank. His responses constitute data item.

Q: What are the drawbacks in the current state responses towards Maoism?

A: First of all there are no policies. the term strategy and policy both of them being have inherited in them the notion of consistency over time. Or a direction or commitment over time. To certain ends and terms. We do not see any coherence in the practices of the state. With regard to Maoism. The state has often been collusive to the rise of the Maoists, over reactive at different phases , underreacted ; consequently to speak of its policies over 50 years is meaningless. I won't even speak of a policy over years. Because most of this is done in a manner which is completely adhoc. If you see the policy papers of the govt they use generic terms – holistic policy, multipronged policy , development and security will go side by side. This is political rhetoric this is not a policy. It is not a strategy. A policy or strategy has meaning only when it has 3 or 4 essential component- the first is objective and reality based assessment of the threat – what do we have- these are our brothers and sisters , these are our children, these are enemies and threat to the nation neither of these constitute an objective and reality based assessment. Assessment of the resources to deal with the threat. Chidambaram said I will launch a massive attack and then 67 battalions of the central forces were deployed in the Maoists areas. Less than 30000 personnel deployed to cover ½ billion people in the entire central region. Where is the coherent assessment of the threat? Forces can be reconciled with the threat and the resources after they have been assessed. Maoists have come up with documents even before this is launched. The Maoists response is far more reality based. So when they are going to attack us on our areas of dominance, we are going to expand our attack on the areas where they are weak. They attack Abujmad the Maoists concentrate on west Bengal, Gujarat and expand the people's war throughout the country in 2004- even within state they are coming into South Chattisgarh. South was not affected before 2004. It was completely clean. We don't read an American book which says clear , hold and develop. Then I will go in for targeted operation. People in AP have done this with very small police force. Massive operation launched, then Maoists attack killing 76 personnel and then the DGP of Chattisgarh says I have only 5 policemen for every 5 kms. My question is didn't you know this before. Me: so why does a reality based assessment does not exist? He: because we are idiots. No there is no vested interests. No that's all nonsense. There are vested int that undermine operational capabilities from time to time, that hold the police back etc. but the absence of strategy is not the consequence of vested interest or the perversion of strategy. Chidambaram's policy was the

most stupid thing to do although it was well intentioned. There is difference between being malicious and corrupt and being stupid. The reason is our political leadership has no understanding of security issues – a person becomes a home minister, defence minister on every other day Chidambaram was an intelligent man so he tried to learn very quickly but he learnt like a schoolboy. He goes to America sees their massive functioning gets influenced and says oh I want one of these. These are childish things- it's like a villager coming to a city and sees a five star hotel and says I want a chandelier like this in my hut- You can't get. So you need people who have adequate understanding and experience. This combination almost never exists. It exists in individual, but it does not exist in Indian Inst. There are a lot of experience in our country but the capacity to contextualise this experience is not there. Indian police academy had no dept od counterterrorism till 2010. Then Chidambaram insisted that they should have. The Indian police have been dealing with terrorism for at least 5 decades. Earlier army used to handle. Post Punjab it was demonstrated that police is core component of response. Police trained into civil policing is suddenly thrown into areas which is full of insurgency. The third is we do not have any institutional memories. You ask a police officer and ask them how was terrorism defeated in Punjab. Everyone one of them will have a completely different perspective. And none of them will be research or reality based. They will have their own opinions but if you start probing – he does not know.

From this particular data item, I have extracted the data in particular reference to the research question.

“We do not see any coherence in the practices of the state. With regard to Maoism. The state has often been collusive to the rise of the Maoists, over reactive at different phases , underreacted..... There are a lot of experience in our country but the capacity to contextualise this experience is not there. Indian police academy had no department of counterterrorism till 2010. Then Chidambaram insisted that they should have. The Indian police have been dealing with terrorism for at least 5 decades. Earlier army used to handle. Post Punjab it was demonstrated that police are core component of response. Police trained into civil policing is suddenly thrown into areas which is full of insurgency. The third is we do not have any institutional memories. You ask a police officer and ask them how was terrorism defeated in Punjab. Every one of them will have a completely different perspective. And none of them will be research or reality based. They will have their own opinions but if you start probing – they do not know.”

In the above data extract, we find the specific nature of the problems with the Indian government responses towards Maoism. This will help to throw light on structural problems associated with responses in India and help to answer the question as to how these responses contribute towards the prolongation of the conflict instead of addressing it.

3.4.1. Themes

Once the data is extracted, the next step is to decide on the themes. The question that we need to find answer to is: what are the themes focussed in this research and how have those been selected. I have once again followed Clarke & Braun's six step guide for conducting the analysis. But before that I would like to clarify the difference between latent and semantic themes and which theme I have preferred for my research and why.

Semantic themes '*...within the explicit or surface meanings of the data and the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written.*' (p.84). While latent themes *start to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations – and ideologies - that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data*' (p.84). For the purpose of my research a combination of both the themes have been explored. Let me clarify this with an example. Indian government has explained that Maoist ideology has no place in the Indian democratic structure. Such a justification on a superficial level appears to be quite simple. Because democracy and violence based revolution cannot share the same pedestal. However, what is missing from Indian government's analysis is how the Maoists have adapted their Maoists ideology to the Indian system and intertwined it within the Indian structure. By this they have been able to reach out to a large segment of the population and explain their ideology in a language and in a manner, which is relatable to them. Marginalised people could relate to the so called Maoist ideology in a much better way than democratic principle propagated by the Indian government. Hence to understand the theme of ideology one needs to go beyond the text to interpret the ideas and understand the reasons for this ideological appeal to the people for a prolonged period. On the other hand other themes like discrimination based on certain hierarchy (caste based killings) or killing of people in the name of security have been identified under semantic themes as they are quite self-explanatory. Now I shall proceed with the six step guidelines in the following section which will further clarify these differences.

However, the analysis of the themes has primarily depended upon theoretical thematic analysis (top-down) instead of inductive one (bottom-up). Although, this does not mean that this kind of thematic analysis has ties to any particular theoretical perspective or epistemological framework. This is only because of the pre-existing themes related to the responses that I am working with (explained in detail in stage 2). The idea is to develop sub-themes and subsequently generate codes that will best reflect the existing broader themes. “This form of thematic analysis tends to provide less a rich description of the data overall, and more a detailed analysis of some aspect of the data” (Clarke & Braun, p.12). The aim of the research is not to discuss the overall government responses and subsequently criticise it for improper implementation. The objective is to analyse the responses in such a way which will help to explain how are those contributing towards the conflict instead of addressing it. “You can either code for a quite specific research question (which maps onto the more theoretical approach).” (p. 12) Hence this research was working with specific research questions to find answer to it. While in the inductive ones, analysis is more data driven, in the theoretical one, analysis is more research question driven.

| | |
|--|------------------------------|
| Step 1: Become familiar with the data | Step 4: Review themes |
| Step 2: Generate initial codes | Step 5: Define themes |
| Step 3: Search for themes | Step 6: Write up |

Table 6: Braun & Clarke’s six-phase framework for doing a thematic analysis (p. 10)

3.4.1.1. Step 1: Familiarising with the Data Corpus

I had transcribed my data during the period of my field work. This was necessary to avoid any overlooking of observation or informal discussion which I used to have with the respondents regularly. Additionally, since I was quite often not allowed to record the interview, I had to transcribe the data immediately to avoid forgetting any important point. After coming back from the field work, I began reading and re-reading the transcripts repeatedly. This process was interspersed with regularly revising the data recordings to search for any missing link. Alongwith this process, the search for relevant information from secondary sources also continued. I had small notes in the form of observation scribbled down at the side of the data transcripts to note down my impression of that particular respondent or the discussion. These observations have helped me in developing the latent themes throughout the study.

3.4.1.2

Step 2: Generate Initial Codes

It is wise to acknowledge at this point that when I began my field-work I was primarily searching for factors that might have influenced the government responses towards Maoism in India. However, over the course of the field-work, the emerging patterns within the responses pointed towards structural issues of these responses which are creating hurdles for successful redressal of the conflict. Therefore, research question was further modified after the initial reading of the transcript. The responses pointed towards a specific question : how are the government responses contributing towards the prolongation of the conflict? At this stage, I followed open coding where instead of working with some pre-determined codes, I worked and developed codes at various stages. This provided ample scope for flexibility of modifying the themes as the stages proceeded. Since the coding process was conducted manually, I colour coded and put post it notes for additional information. A set of initial codes were designed at this stage.

However, it is important to point at this stage to avoid any confusion further, that although there weren't any pre-determined codes to start with, there were some pre-determined broader themes with which I was working. The three pre-determined themes of the responses are security, development/welfare, and management of public perception. These themes are not identified by me. I decided to go along with the government's classification of the responses into three categories towards the Maoists. The reason for not modifying these existing categories is because the aim of the research is not to criticise the responses. Rather the objective of the research focusses on explaining how the existing responses are contributing towards the conflict instead of addressing it, which goes beyond mere criticism of the existing responses. This in a way does not directly question the current responses. It aims to find the gaps between expectation and reality in the existing government responses.

3.4.1.3 Stage 3: Search for Themes

As has been pointed by Clarke & Braun, a theme is not based upon the percentage of times it appears in the data sets. It is not important if the theme occupies a significant portion of the data sets or appear once or twice during the course of the entire data corpus. A theme emerges based on the researcher's best judgement. This is more so if the topic at hand is sensitive and many people might be reluctant to openly discuss about certain issues. For example, the issue of corruption in the public goods delivery system is an aspect which came up very occasionally. However, this remained one of the major structural issues which the

executive bodies responsible for delivering, face on a regular basis. Hence this became a major theme despite it being mentioned rarely.

As clarified earlier, this research worked with a combination of semantic and latent themes. Additionally, some of the broader themes were pre-determined based on Central Government's categorisation of the responses towards the Maoists. To explain it further, although the themes were pre-determined some of the codes which helped to explain the themes in a latent manner were for example, the issue of adaptability of the Maoist ideology to the Indian situation. On probing further with the initial codes, it pointed towards a better understanding of the initial themes. The codes were then classified which helped to develop the nuances within the themes. Some of the codes were applicable in more than one themes, for example the neglect of the issue of Adivasis and Dalits and how their structural dissatisfaction is ensuring a steady flow of cadres, were classified under both the security and development themes. Each of the theme had something to contribute towards understanding the central research question.

| Theme - SECURITY | Theme: MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC PERCEPTION | Theme: DEVELOPMENT/WELFARE |
|---|--|---|
| Codes : Difference in terminology Missing link of politics Use of violence Label of enemy No follow up action by security forces Lack of intelligence gathering and sharing (more feedback required) Steady flow of cadres Absence of peace talks Debate between security v/s violence (alleged by the Maoists) Focus on mass movements (by the Maoists) | Codes: Mobilisation based on ideology Objective conditions (more feedback required) Adaptation to Indian society (latent themes) Bolshevisation (practiced by the Maoists) Mobilisation based on fear Use of mass media by the State Putting theory into praxis (by the Maoists) | Codes: Dalit/ Adivasi issue neglected (also steady flow of cadres) Marginalisation Structural discrimination Characterisation by the state (by the Maoists) Indiscriminate development Welfare not reaching the public (issue of corruption- latent theme- more feedback needed) Dislocation Increasing anti-state feeling Natural resources conflict Vicious cycle of development |

Table 7: Search for Themes; Source: Researcher

3.4.1.4 Stage 4: Review the Themes

Once the themes have been developed at stage 3, the time is to review the theme. In this, data sets were categorised under every theme to check whether the data reflect the themes. The idea is to see if the data substantiate the identified themes. Every theme captures a particular essence of the research question which in combination would help to answer the question. It could be possible at this stage to go beyond the data extract and review the data items for additional information which could better reflect the theme. The additional

information, if any, could form part of sub-themes within the broader theme, thereby highlighting specific aspect of the theme. Some of the codes could actually be grouped under a sub-theme. I decided to use the Maoists' interpretation of the government responses of each theme under its specific sub-theme for which I have specifically referred to the Maoist literature which has been regularly published by them. For example, how were the Maoists using the deployment of security forces to their advantage became a sub-theme within the broader security theme. Characterisation of government which was under development/welfare theme was also added in the security sub-theme and moved to sub-theme within the development theme. Missing link of politics was also added as a sub-theme under management of public perception.

While developing the themes I kept in mind the following:

“Things to think about include:

- Do the themes make sense?
- Does the data support the themes?
- Am I trying to fit too much into a theme?
- If themes overlap, are they really separate themes?
- Are there themes within themes (subthemes)?
- Are there other themes within the data?” (Maguire & Delahunt, p.3359)

| Theme: SECURITY | Theme: MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC PERCEPTION | Theme: DEVELOPMENT/WELFARE |
|---|---|---|
| Codes: Differences in terminology Missing link of politics Use of violence Label of enemy No follow up action by security forces Lack of intelligence gathering and sharing (more feedback required) Steady flow of cadres Absence of peace talks Sub-theme: Debate between security v/s violence (alleged by the Maoists) Characterisation of state Focus on mass movements (by the Maoists) | Codes : Mobilisation based on ideology Objective conditions (more feedback required) Mobilisation based on fear Use of mass media by the State Putting theory into praxis (by the Maoists) Sub-themes: Adaptation to Indian society (latent themes) Bolshevisation (practiced by the Maoists) Missing link of politics | Codes: Dalit/ Adivasi issue neglected (also steady flow of cadres) Marginalisation Structural discrimination Indiscriminate development Welfare not reaching the public (issue of corruption-latent theme- more feedback needed) Dislocation Increasing anti-state feeling Natural resources conflict Sub-themes: Characterisation by the state Vicious cycle of development |

Table 8: Review the Themes; Source: Researcher

3.4.1.5 Stage 5: Define the Theme

This is the stage to ‘..identify the ‘essence’ of what each theme is about.’.(Braun & Clarke, p.92).” The task at this stage is to define the theme to highlight which aspects of the study would be captured within every theme. This stage also goes a step further in answering the research question by trying to accumulate the essence of the understanding of all the themes combined. Some of the questions that we could focus on this stage are “ What is the theme saying? If there are subthemes, how do they interact and relate to the main theme? How do the themes relate to each other?” (Maguire & Delahunt, p.33511)

It is important to clarify at this juncture how I have used the conceptual understanding of dominant discourse, hegemonic legitimacy, and friend-enemy concept of Carl Schmitt in

this theme identification (these three themes form part of the conceptual framework of this research). While working on the broader themes, there was a particular pattern emerging by grouping the data extracts into three categories. The patterns pointed towards the prism of friend-enemy in understanding security response, the prism of dominant discourse in understanding management of public perception and the prism of hegemonic legitimacy in understanding development/welfare initiatives of the government. Although it is not to suggest that the three themes belong to such water-tight compartmentalisation but that there is an inter-connection among all the three themes under each of the conceptualisation identified. This has formed part of the conceptual framework chapter (chapter 2) where the themes and sub-themes have been studied within this conceptual framework of dominant discourse, hegemonic legitimacy, and friend-enemy concept.

The task at this stage is to identify the essence of every theme. After studying the pattern within every theme, it pointed towards the above discussed concepts.

3.4.1.6 Step 6: The Write - Up

This stage is produced in the form of Results and Analysis chapter (chapters 4-7) in the thesis. The chapter has been further sub-divided into four chapters which infers the result of the analysed data. I shall briefly explain how I have divided the themes and the sub-themes into these four chapters.

Chapter 4 : This chapter attempts to understand the centralising tendencies of the central government in managing Maoism by overlooking the federal obligations. The focus is on Naxalism movement followed by Maoism

Chapter 5 : This chapter studies the complications and challenges within these broader themes of government responses that is contributing towards the conflict instead of addressing it. It also studies the challenges within the responses in conjunction with its interactions within the broader socio-political context of the country. It also analyses the participation of the marginalised people and how this is a contributing factor for the Maoists in their case towards legitimacy.

Chapter 6 : This chapter has collected the sub-themes within every broader theme. It has attempted to study the government responses from the other side of the conflict (Maoist perspective) in order to find answer as to how the Maoists are using the complications within the responses to their advantage. This in a way is also contributing towards the prolongation of conflict which is becoming difficult for the government to identify and address.

This entire exercise of thematic analysis helped to systematically argue the rationale of every chapter undertaken henceforth. This mental exercise is helpful to put the entire research into perspective. The sub-themes, both latent and semantic, made the description of the data rich and also helped to refine the research questions. The sub-questions which coincided with the some of the sub-themes collectively worked towards finding answer to the central research question. The three results chapter help to answer the central question of how the responses are contributing towards the prolongation of Maoism.

Before finishing the chapter there is one more section towards which I want to draw attention. This section deals with conducting validity check through the use of Member Checking (Harper & Cole, 2012). To check the validity of my research I opted for Member Checking. I emailed some of the data transcripts back to the respondents after few weeks of our discussion. They returned them back to me with the comments and suggestions of any change to their earlier version of the responses. Some of them did not reply which is a definite drawback for this method. However, there was another drawback with such a method - of the unavailability of access to internet/ emails or even having the knowledge of it among a section of my respondents.

Additionally, many respondents reside in conflict areas or locations in quite far off places. In such situations physically visiting the places for more than once was a challenging task in addition to being a time consuming affair for me. Hence, I had built upon the approach of Member Checking. I searched for respondents who are social workers and political activists working on a regular basis among the supporters and in those areas. I discussed the data I collected from the field in those locations, verbally with the social and political activists who resided and frequently visited cities for work. I used to meet them at a convenient city location to validate my finding and gather their opinions and comments based on their practical experience of working among those people in that area. This is in addition to they, already being potential respondents where their views were sought separately. This definitely helped a lot in the sense of expanding my understanding of the realities of conflict areas. My visit to these conflict areas was for noticeably short duration during which I stayed in hotel accommodations and met few people. They, on the other hand, shared the challenges of interaction with administration and bureaucracies on a regular basis.

In addition to this, I attended two conferences after coming back from the field where I presented my work. The first one was in Berlin in 2018 and the second one was in Marburg in 2019. Here I discussed the results in particular the conceptual framework, with people working on similar topics. This helped me to revise my findings with them where they shared

their observations and commented upon plausible gaps in understanding. This also helped me to deliberate upon my data from every possible angle to enhance the scope of improvement while analysing it for results.

3.5 Discussions and Conclusion

Methodology is not just about the methods used to fulfil the task of data collection. Additionally, it is a combination of the researcher's inner contradictions, for example with one's identity, and the ways and means to survive in circumstances quite detached from the one that the researcher is accustomed to and comfortable in. It is also about one's existence and meaning in somebody else's perception. Therefore, we cannot visit a field with only institutionally approved behaviour and training. It also requires intelligible and logical effort on the part of the researcher to try and discern one's identity from one's role. A self-trained and argumentative researcher will be in a position to face the unanticipated circumstances and gather the maximum out of it.

These challenges together form the experience of research. Hence it is important not only for the current researcher but also work as guidelines for future researchers to explain and acknowledge these contradictions. Methodology, therefore, for me was an attempt to travel down the memory lane to not only face the challenges but also share the means of overcoming it.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

(Chapters 4-6)

4 GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TOWARDS MAOISM – A FRAMEWORK OF DOMINANT STRATEGIC CULTURE

The title of this chapter has the word culture in it to emphasise on the latent relation between the government responses and the dominant political structure. The responses are an extension of the socio-political aspects of the broader structure within which it functions. Hence the study of the responses cannot be separated from the study of the structural interactions which informs these responses. This relationship will help us to understand the delegitimization that the government suffers from, despite myriad attempts, in addressing the conflict for the last five decades.

This chapter is mostly based on secondary literature comprising government reports and academic writings on the responses and how it has dealt with Maoism. Thematic analysis has been applied to analyse the events and identify the responses as has been implemented to deal with the uprisings. This chapter will help us understand the similarities in the response strategy over the period. It will explain what comprises the dominant strategic culture and how it functions. It will highlight how the government response has securitised the conflict instead of addressing the issues of governance and the structural factors which have provided a conducive atmosphere for the conflict to originate at the first place, thereby highlighting the core of the dominant strategy. The aim of this chapter is two-fold: firstly to understand the gradual centralising tendencies to take over the management of the day to day conflict bypassing the federal obligations. Secondly, this chapter draws an analysis as to why the successive approaches have failed to establish legitimacy for the government subsequently contributing towards its prolongation.

4.1 Naxalbari uprising

“The only political mass movement that seriously challenged the independent Indian political state inherited as it is from colonialism is the one known as Naxalite movement of the late 1960’s and early 1970’s.” (Gangopadhyay, p. 150)

Every government would respond in its unique way depending upon the gravity of the situation and the available institutional mechanisms ready to face the challenge. What differentiates the various government responses are its political formation. Be it authoritarian, democracy, and oligarchy – every type of political culture has its unique way of handling a

brewing crisis formed within its political structure. The choice of these responses towards conflict is important in its formation and reformation. (Ray, p. 1)

This becomes all the more significant if the country is a nascent post-colonial country with the institutions and political culture still manifesting signs of the colonial political institutions. One need not look beyond the legal institutions of the country to get a glimpse of it. For example, section 124 A of the Indian Penal Code was introduced in 1870 during the height of the colonial rule. It states,

*“Whoever, by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards, the Government established by law in India, shall be punished with [imprisonment for life], to which fine may be added, or with imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added, or with fine. Explanation 1.—the expression “disaffection” includes disloyalty and all feelings of enmity. Explanation 2.—Comments expressing disapprobation of the measures of the Government with a view to obtain their alteration by lawful means, without exciting or attempting to excite hatred, contempt or disaffection, do not constitute an offence under this section. Explanation 3.—Comments expressing disapprobation of the administrative or other action of the Government without exciting or attempting to excite hatred, contempt or disaffection, do not constitute an offence under this section.”*²²

This law continues to be in action and many Maoists, Adivasis and even their intellectual supporters are often charged under this seditious law. The law was introduced by the British against Indians fighting for their liberation and the current state of affairs continue to force this law on Indians who challenge/criticise the government and its function. This has become a potent weapon in the hands of the administration, in addition to UAPA, to repress any kind of disapproval against it under the garb of maintaining law and order.

Naxalism in 1967 (exactly 2 decades after independence) posed a serious threat of disturbing law and order before the nascent post-colonial India which was still grappling with nuances of a new democracy and its functioning. With respect to Indian policy in the Northeast, *“It is now being increasingly realized that the transition from a colonial society to a post-colonial one has a critical bearing on the character and conduct of counter-insurgency*

²² Central Government Act, The Indian Penal code available at <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1569253/>

operations (CIO). The colonial modes of CIO are both irrelevant to and counter-productive in a post-colonial society.”²³ The ideas with which a foreign ruler adopted strategies against the natives who were attempting to overthrow the colonial rule was never fully abandoned by the ruling elites of Indian political class. The Communist uprising was viewed as a challenge to the exiting political order and not a contrary political opinion which needs to be addressed within the democratic structure of independent India. Dissent was tantamount to insubordination.

4.1.1 Government responses towards the Naxalbari uprising²⁴

This is what former Commissioner of Calcutta Police had commented, “*Any standard counter-insurgency manual recommends two common methods for combating violent mass upsurge, viz, suppression and deflection.*” (Mukhopadhyay. p. 396) Kolkata police which had till then only dealt with petty crimes was confronted with an organised and ideologically motivated outfit in the form of Naxalism. On 28th July, 1971, K.C Pant the then Minister of State for Home Affairs stated in the Parliament that 87 companies of the Central Reserve Police have been sent to WB, proving the seriousness of the government in curbing the uprising. (Mukhopadhyay, p. 16) A number of strategies were adopted by the then government of WB in collaboration with the Central government to deal with the evolution of this sudden crisis.

Before we begin to study in details these various counter methods to deal with the Naxalites, we should know that there was an attempt made by the government of WB to negotiate with the Naxalites. Kanu Sanyal (one of the leaders alongwith Charu Majumder and Jangal Santhal who spearheaded the uprising) in his biography mentions, “finding the situation growing out of control, *Krishak Sabha* state committee leader and then West Bengal Land Revenue minister Hare Krishna Konar, came down to Siliguri. Konar invited Sourin Bose and me for a truce meeting at a Sukna forest Bungalow.” (Paul, p. 195) This was an attempt by the Parliamentary left which was ruling WB as a coalition partner of the United Front Government alongwith Bangla Congress (Bengal Congress) to bring back the radical elements of the party within its fold. “*Konar’s Cabinet mission to talk to Mazumdar and Sanyal in May 1967 was unsuccessful. Despite Jyoti Basu’s instructions to the police not to enter the rebel strongholds, the movement took a violent turn, inviting retaliation from the police. The Naxalites ignored*

²³ Das, Samir Kumar. (2002). “Ethnic Conflicts and Internal Security: A Plea for Reconstructing Civil Society in Assam,” Faultlines 10 available at www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume10/Article3.htm

²⁴ Since the details of the beginning of the uprising has already been discussed in the previous chapter, I shall refrain from repeating it here. This section directly discusses the government responses.

three appeals by the West Bengal Cabinet to surrender by 4 July 1967, the key leaders were arrested and by September, the situation was 'brought under control' ”(Mehra, p. 8)

Petty criminals under police radar were effectively used to weaken the force of the movement from within. Their use was not something spontaneous, but a strategic move adopted by the state government to deal with the crisis. The police force had its own share of reasons for using them. They were easily available at beck and call of the police. Secondly their death or missing report need not be accounted for by the police. They could easily be written off by the police. These criminals were but left with very few alternatives other than helping the police in their objectives. They were persistently threatened with dire consequences if they fail in their allotted job. Already being in the bad books of the police, they, on the other, found this an easier way to receive the support of the police force with whom they have to constantly deal. These people ranged from local goons to notorious gangsters generally within the radars of the police force. The sub divisional police officers were instructed to mobilise the local goons and anti-social elements in their efforts to counter the *Naxalites*. (Chakrabarty & Kujur, p. 175)²⁵ However, the version of the police in this regard is completely opposite. They, in fact, have accused various political parties and the *Naxalites*, to have indulged in recruiting anti-social for their purpose. (Chakrabarti, p. 400)

The enthusiasm with which the young boys began their journey waned with the passage of time and they became disillusioned with the activities of these people under the garb of *Naxalism*. Many amongst them regretted their choice later and were desperate to 'come back'. They, in turn, were interrogated by the police to extract information about the other *Naxalites* and their hideouts.²⁶ Thirdly, some among these criminals were made to infiltrate within the group of *Naxalites* by the police. They would simultaneously perform both the above mentioned task- collecting information and weakening the organisation from within. The city police raised "resistance groups" and "guerrilla squads" to tackle the *Naxalites*. However, it is important to consider here that as the *Naxalites* gradually began to kill "class enemies" (the landlords), the organisation began to attract anti-social elements. The latter would find a safe haven within the organisation as they had no qualms in killing a person even if he had no idea

²⁵ Additionally the information on the use of criminals for political purpose during *Naxalism* by the police was corroborated by respondents I met in Kolkata who were also associated with *Naxalbari* uprising.

²⁶ Based on interviews with Dipanjan Raychaudhury who is an ex *Naxalite*.

of who a class enemy is. This also created a conducive atmosphere for settling of personal scores and revenge among its members.²⁷

A number of laws were either revived or enacted to provide the police with the legal teeth for dealing with the *Naxalite* movement. Provisions of colonial legislation like Bengal Suppression of Terrorist Outrages Act of 1936 were revived on September 10th 1970 to be made applicable against the *Naxalites*. (Mukhopadhyay: 1993, p. 17) The state also empowered itself with a host of other laws, which were climaxed by the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA), signed by President Giri on 7 May, 1971 under which people could be detained without trial for an indefinite period. Another was West Bengal Prevention of Violent Activities Bill comprising similar provisions in addition to arrest without warrant. (Mukhopadhyay: 2006, p. 3229)

The scale and the impact of the techniques of addressing the conflict applied jointly by state and central government were supposed to be so severe as to act as deterrent which in turn would gradually reduce the magnitude of the conflict at hand. The state police were following this logic while dealing with the *Naxalites*. One such account of police repression goes like this. It happened in the Baranagar area near Calcutta where some 150 boys were rounded up. Police picked up almost every available young boy in that locality on 12th or 13th August, 1971. The escape routes were said to have been blocked by the police. Throughout the night the raids and killings continued. Later on the dead bodies were thrown in the canal.²⁸ The operation was carried out with the help of hired hoodlums and the so called resistance groups created by the police force of WB. It is also alleged that members of political parties like Congress and CPI(M) were also involved in this, “*By 1972 this edition of revolution would be pretty much over in Bengal and elsewhere, utterly steam rolled by the state. One of the worst massacres took place in August of that year in Kashipur and Baranagar areas near Calcutta, when police literally dragged out and killed known and suspected Naxals. There is no credible estimate of the numbers killed beyond ‘hundreds.’ Dozens disappeared including some well-known naxal leaders like Saroj Dutta and Sushital Roychoudhary,*” (Chakravarti, p. 159)

²⁷ Refer Dasgupta, Biplab. (Feb. 1973). “Naxalite Armed Struggles and the Annihilation Campaign in Rural Areas”. *Economic and Political Weekly*. 8(4/6). Pp. 173-175+177+179+181+183+185+187-188

²⁸ In an interview with Paresh Saha, librarian at CPI (M) Party office, Alimuddin Street. These incidents were quite common where young boys became the target.

*My father who was in his 20's at that time also escaped arrest, although he had nothing directly to do with the movement.

Such stories poured in from different parts of Calcutta like College Street and Beliaghata. Dipanjan Raichoudhury in a discussion with me, however, opined that only those occurring in the cities came into limelight although incidents like these became normal and common in every part of WB. Incidents like these were rampant and gradually alienated the police from the public.

“According to police sources, between March 1970 and August 1971, 1,783 CPI(ML) supporters/members were killed in Calcutta and its suburbs. Later investigators claimed the figure was at least double. Between May and December 1971, the police opened fire on Naxalite prisoners in at least six jails in West Bengal. The newly elected Congress government of West Bengal also fuelled the counter-revolutionary activities to a great extent.” (Mukhopadhyay, p. 3231)*

“Sumanta Banerjee writes that 300 academics and writers from across the world including Noam Chomsky and Simone De Beauvoir, wrote to the Indian Government on 15th August 1974, Independence day, asking it to take a compassionate view of the matters. It was ignored. So was a call later that year from Amnesty International, when it listed in its Annual Report cases of illegal detention and torture of Naxals in jails across India.” (Chakravarti, pp. 160 & 161)

However, police have a different version to this entire episode of encounter killings. According to the police, surrender of Naxalite activists started increasing because of the fear of encounter. Presenting the entire case as a strategy of counter-insurgency, police claims it to be part of a bigger plan. *“It may be recalled unidentified dead bodies of young Naxalites were often recovered from odd places in the suburbs of Calcutta. Many people including a section of the print media believed that these massacres were the handiwork of the police. Disinformation and propaganda are the two most potent weapons of counter-insurgency strategy and the police also conveniently allowed these wild rumours to spread.”* (Chakrabarti, p. 403) Therefore when violence started spreading, police decided to use the narrative to create fear which was effectively used to wean away members from Naxalism.

Though the movement originated in rural areas and among the peasants, their spread in the heartland of the city of Calcutta worried the government. A number of reasons could be argued behind the police anxiety. Firstly, the city is the centre of administrative function. That needs to be kept ‘normal’, devoid of any law and order crisis. Moreover, activities in the city and its suburb draw much more attention compared to a similar incident happening in an

interior corner of the country. Secondly, the elites and the middle class reside in the city. The normal lives of these classes began to be disturbed which were highlighted by the press. Thirdly it was the youth in the city who left their education to go and stay among the peasants in the villages and in a way lead the movement. Thus the city bred leaders would use their knowledge and ideology to draw cadres for the movement. One such leader was capable of producing a number of supporters, thereby increasing the strength of the organisation.

However, the villages had its own share of experience of countering mechanism. One of them was the creation of strategic hamlets. In this context it is necessary to mention that the then Calcutta police commissioner, Mr. R.K Gupta recommended to his staff to read selected portions of Sir Robert Thompson's book *Communist Insurgency of 1965*.²⁹ The book became a Bible for the officers during that period. "*The state government also tried to isolate the affected populace from the insurgents in strategic hamlets on the lines of British in Malaya and French in Algiers.*" We have observed similar strategies used in case of the Telangana uprising as well. (Gahlot, p. 10) Some of the methods used by them owe its origin from this book, like that of strategic hamlet or encirclement and suppression. The latter was successfully used in both urban and rural pockets. The Baranagar massacre is an example of this method where the police ensured closure of all outlets before rampaging the locality. In Srikakulam, AP the tribals Girijans were isolated from the guerrillas with the help of Vietnamese policy of strategic hamlet. Politburo member of the current Maoist party Azad, commented on this, "*The Supreme Court should know that the displacement of the Adivasis was done in accordance with a pre-mediated plan to evacuate the villages and settle them in Vietnam-type strategic hamlets.*"³⁰ In this, the entire village is shifted to a different area to cut down the support and supply base of the guerrillas and then the police could attack them with full force without the loss of life of the innocent villagers caught in the cross fire. In this case they were shifted to Rambhadrapuram, Jammivalasa and Peddabalibanda villages. (Banerjee, p. 178) However, police accepted that, "*Blanket raids in the villages of the suspect landless peasants further*

²⁹ Sir Robert Thompson was a British military officer and counter insurgency expert. He is known for his role in Malaya where he was posted. He was a leading expert on countering Mao- Tse Tung technique of rural guerrilla insurgency. His book *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences in Malaya and Vietnam* is considered as Bible among the counter insurgency experts.

³⁰ In an exclusive interview to *The Hindu*, Azad, spokesperson of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), answers in writing questions on his party's attitude to dialogue with the Union Government. Edited text of 12,262-word response by Azad, Spokesperson, Central Committee, CPI (Maoist). Available: <http://www.bannedthought.net/India/CPI-Maoist-Docs/Interviews/Azad-Hindu-Interview-100414.pdf>

alienated the police and soon the wild goose chasing had to be abandoned.” (Chakrabarti, pp. 400-401)

Another remarkably interesting aspect of the counter measures adopted by the police has been shared with me by two of the respondents who were Naxalites during that period. Calcutta police, in an effort to discourage young people from the path of revolution who were at the same time brilliant students from upper middle and middle class families, began to provide them with lucrative offers. For example take the case of Dipanjan Raichaudhury. He was arrested alongwith Ashim Chatterjee, both of whom were the student of Physics Honours in Presidency College, Calcutta. Raichaudhury was released from prison and taken straight to Kolkata airport where his passport and visa were ready and sent to London to pursue higher education. V.S. Naipaul has mentioned about Raichaudhury in his book *India: A Million Mutinies Now*. He was not allowed to even visit his family members. On the other, such offers were not acceptable to another Naxalite³¹. He was lured inside the jail with women who would be showing their breasts. He was also offered a job with the Kodak company in Bombay. However, neither of the initiatives succeeded in attracting him to ‘normal’ life.

However, corroborating the veracity of such tactics, ex police commissioner of Calcutta informs, *“From the middle of 1970 the police, particularly in Calcutta adopted a very ingenuous method of deflecting the movement. By now the police were aware of the extent of disillusionment of the young Naxalites of urban background and many of them were having serious second thoughts. The police took the initiative of secretly contacting the parents and guardians of these disenchanted revolutionaries. After some persuasion a few young Naxalites agreed to surrender to police secretly and they were promptly smuggled out of the state. Thus active and dedicated urban cadres started disappearing from the scene of action mysteriously and sooner than later the truth was known. A large number of brilliant students of affluent families quietly surrendered to police on assurance of ‘safe passage’ out of West Bengal, and thus, surrender to police became frequent and soon the situation went out of the hands of the organisers.”* (Chakrabarti, p. 402)

Apart from the police actions, army based operations were also launched to stop the Naxalites from further spreading. Operation Steeplechase is one such operation. The first United Front Government was formed in 1967 with Ajoy Mukherjee of Bangla Congress as the CM alongwith other left parties in coalition. This government suffered from inner party

³¹ Interview with the researcher. (Place and date are not mentioned for security purpose)

factions and upon its failure to prove majority on the floor of the House, was dismissed which was followed by imposition of President's Rule in February 1968. The second United Front Government came in 1969 which ruled for 13 months. Once again President's rule was imposed. Before the formation of the next government under Congress in 1972, Operation Steeplechase was launched in 1971. *"In 1971, the then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi convened a meeting of the Chief Ministers to address the problem of growing agrarian unrest in different parts of India. In this meeting, the then Home Minister Mr. Y.B. Chavan made the now famous statement that the Government of India would not allow the Green revolution to become a Red revolution."* (PC, p. 56)

With Naxalite related violence increasing in the states of WB, Bihar, and Andhra, GOI planned for a joint operation involving the army, paramilitary forces, and the police. *"The broad strategy was to surround an area that was a known stronghold with an outer cordon of the army, an inner cordon of the CRPF, and local police operating inside."* (Rammohan, p.102.) *"To quell the movement, the police was joined by one battalion of the Fourth Raipur Infantry, five companies of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), two companies of State Armed Police, two platoons of the Eastern Frontier Rifles, two companies of the National Volunteer Force, two companies of the Saurashtra Reserve Police, in all, 8000 to 10,000 soldiers."* (Ghosh, p. 56) Within a year in July 1972, Charu Majumder was arrested where he later died in 1972 drawing a curtain to the first phase of the uprising.

4.2 Maoism

While Maoists incidents were occurring post the death of Charu Majumder, the movement witnessed gradual withdrawal. As many factions came up within the party, the organisation lost its strength. However, all this changed when the groups in a surprising move became united in 2004 thereby proving to be a more challenging and powerful outfit that the government has to deal with. The central government which, so far, was busy with other insurgent movements across North-East, had to revive its attention once again to the situation of Maoism.

| State | Surrender/ demobilisation program | State level elite forces | Offer of peace talks | State level peace talks | State level economic initiatives |
|----------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Andhra Pradesh | 1997 | 1989 | | 2004 | 1969 |
| Bihar | 2001,2009 | 1988-89,2009 | None | None | 2006 |
| Chattisgarh | 2004 | 2005,2011 | 2009,2016 | None | 2012 |
| Jharkhand | 2001 | 2000,2005/2009 | 2010 | None | 2012 |
| Karnataka | 2014 | 2006 | 2013 | None | None |
| Maharashtra | 2005 | None | None | None | 2013 |
| Odisha | 2006,2012 | 2008 | None | None | None |
| West Bengal | 2010 | 2010 | | 2011 | None |

Table 9: Summarises the state-wise initiatives undertaken over the period (Source: Shapiro et al. “Indian State Counterinsurgency Policies: Brief Historical Summaries”. p. 5)

| Years | Civilians | Security force personnel | LWE/CPI (Maoists) | Total |
|-------|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| 2005 | 281 | 150 | 286 | 717 |
| 2006 | 266 | 128 | 343 | 737 |
| 2007 | 240 | 218 | 192 | 650 |
| 2008 | 220 | 214 | 214 | 648 |
| 2009 | 391 | 312 | 294 | 997 |
| 2010 | 626 | 277 | 277 | 1180 |

| | | | | |
|--------------|------|------|------|------|
| 2011 | 275 | 128 | 199 | 602 |
| 2012 | 146 | 104 | 117 | 367 |
| 2013 | 159 | 111 | 151 | 421 |
| 2014 | 128 | 87 | 99 | 314 |
| 2015 | 93 | 57 | 101 | 251 |
| 2016 | 123 | 66 | 244 | 433 |
| 2017 | 109 | 74 | 150 | 333 |
| 2018 | 109 | 73 | 231 | 413 |
| 2019 | 15 | 1 | 36 | 52 |
| Total | 3181 | 2000 | 2934 | 8115 |

Table 10 Fatalities in LWE 2005-2019As of Mar 3, 2019³²

The table below highlights some of the important events in this current phase of Maoism. It provides a timeline in the COIN approaches and its associated modifications over time.

| | | | |
|------------------|---|------------------------|--|
| December 6, 2001 | Centre | Policy statement | Central government declares the People's War Group (PWG) and the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) to be terrorist organizations under the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance |
| Dec, 28, 2001 | Centre, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, | State/centre agreement | The chief secretaries, home secretaries, and police chiefs of these nine states met to discuss Naxalite attacks. The Centre encouraged these states to use the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance to freeze the assets of PWG and MCC. The Central Home Ministry also encouraged the States to invest in police modernization |

³²Refer, South Asia Terrorism Portal
https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/data_sheets/fatalitiesnaxal05-11.htm

| | | | |
|---------------|---|---------------------|---|
| | Maharashtra, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal | | |
| Feb, 24, 2002 | Orissa, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Andhra Pradesh | Policy statement | The Center government has announced plans for development in tribal areas of six states. It has allocated Rs four billion for roads, electrical infrastructure, and school construction |
| Jan 19, 2004 | All/ centre | Agreement | Following requests from States, the Centre has announced that it will no longer charge Naxalite affected States when Central Para-Military Forces (CPMFs) are deployed |
| Jan 5, 2005 | All | Policy statement | The Centre announced an increase in paramilitary force recruitment from Naxal-affected areas. The policy is intended to keep unemployed youth from joining Naxal groups |
| Dec, 29, 2006 | Centre | Policy statement | Central Home Secretary Duggal said that the Centre wanted to pursue a policy focused on development to contain Naxalism. He also encouraged Naxal affected States to create surrender policies similar to the Andhra Pradesh model. |
| May 26, 2009 | Centre | Policy statement | On his first day in office, Central Home Minister P. Chidambaram announced the Centre's strategy for countering Naxalism. He said that the Centre intended to prioritize security, carrying out police actions before engaging in development |

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------|------------------|---|
| July 8, 2009 | Centre | Policy statement | Central Home Minister P. Chidambaram announced in a speech to the lower house of Parliament that the government did not believe development work was possible in Naxal-affected areas until they have been cleared by security forces |
| July 16, 2009 | Central | Policy statement | Central Home Minister P. Chidambaram, speaking to the upper house of Parliament, reiterated the Centre's policy to focus on police action. He added that the Central government does not support non-State actors, specifically Salwa Judum |
| September 16, 2009 | Centre | Policy statement | Prime Minister [Manmohan] Singh addressed the Maoist threat during a police conference. He urged the Centre and States to take action to modernize police forces by improving training and access to technology. He also argued that many more police officers were needed. |
| September 21, 2009 | Centre | Policy statement | The Central government began a new media campaign. Advertisements were placed in national newspapers with names and photos of people killed by Naxal violence |
| Oct 21, 2009 | Centre | Policy statement | Centre offered to hold talks with CPI-Maoist conditional on the group ending violence |
| Nov 12, 2009 | Centre | Policy statement | Central Home Minister P. Chidambaram clarified earlier statements on the conditions for talks. CPI Maoist would not need to surrender its weapons in order to have talks; they would only need to give up violence. |

| | | | |
|------------------|--|------------------|--|
| Nov 16, 2009 | Centre | Policy statement | The Central government announced that it will begin using unmanned aerial vehicles to monitor insurgents. |
| May 19, 2010 | Centre | | The Centre reiterated its offer of talks, conditional on CPI-Maoist suspending violence. The Home Minister defined suspending violence as a halt to all attacks for 72 hours |
| June 15, 2011 | Odisha , Chhattisgarh | Agreement | The Central government announced plans to increase joint operations with Orissa and Chhattisgarh. The Central Home Minister also clarified that there would be no more operations without the participation of State forces. |
| August 2, 2011 | Centre | Policy statement | The Central government approved raising Specialized India Reserve Battalions (SIRBs) to execute development projects. SIRBs would have both engineers and security forces |
| April 30, 2012 | All nine | Agreement | The Central government promised to install over 2,000 mobile towers in Naxal-affected states to improve communications between security forces |
| December 4, 2012 | Maharashtra, Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh | Agreement | The Central government has asked four Naxal affected States to allocate land for new army bases in Naxal 'liberated zones.' By the Army's rules of engagement, units may fire in self-defense only if attacked by Naxals. |
| July 1, 2013 | Centre | Policy statement | Central Home Minister Shinde encouraged all Naxal affected States to develop special forces modelled on the Andhra Pradesh Greyhounds |

| | | | |
|--------------|-----|-----------|---|
| June 6, 2013 | All | Agreement | The Chief Ministers (CMs) of Naxal-affected States convened a special meeting to discuss Naxalism. All 9 states agree to form a national policy and follow the Andhra Pradesh model. Bihar's CM argued for prioritizing development while Chhattisgarh CM argued for a security response. The Centre agreed to deploy additional forces, focusing on top CPI Maoist leadership. |
|--------------|-----|-----------|---|

Table 11 : National communication events (Source: Shapiro et.al. "Indian State Counterinsurgency Policies: Brief Historical Summaries." p. 14-17)

As is evident in the Table above , the gradual overtaking of the reins of control by the central government. With the formation of LWE division, efforts were undertaken to gradually implement and encourage those mechanisms that would keep the central government not just a mere spectator but an active participant to arrest the spread of the conflict. Starting from using paramilitary forces to planting stories in newspapers, central government began to involve itself in way that would put the centre at the command of things. This helped to bypass the many mechanisms of federal obligations that was proving to be a hurdle in effective implementation of its security strategy. In the name of maintaining national security, central government, transcending political party differences, armed itself with laws and policies that would forward its security agenda.

4.2.1 The Government Responses

The GOI has clearly specified what the responses in dealing with Maoism are, in the following words:

“The Government’s approach is to deal with Left Wing Extremism in a holistic manner, in the areas of security, development, ensuring rights and entitlements of local communities, improvement in governance and public perception management. In dealing with this decades-old problem, it has been felt appropriate, after various high-level deliberations and interactions with the State Governments concerned, that an integrated approach aimed

at the relatively more affected areas would deliver results. With this in view, a detailed analysis of the spread and trends in respect of Left Wing Extremist violence has been made and 90 districts in eleven States have been taken up for special attention with regard to planning, implementation and monitoring various interventions. However, 'Police' and 'Public Order' being State subjects, action on maintenance of law and order, lies primarily in the domain of the State Governments. The Central Government closely monitors the situation and supplements and coordinates their efforts in several ways. These include providing the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs); sanction of India Reserve (IR) battalions, setting up of Counter Insurgency and Anti-Terrorism (CIAT) schools; modernisation and upgradation of the State Police and their Intelligence apparatus; reimbursement of security related expenditure under the Security-related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme; providing helicopters for anti-LWE operations, assistance in training of State Police through the Ministry of Defence, the Central Police Organisations and the Bureau of Police Research and Development; sharing of Intelligence; facilitating inter-State coordination; assistance in community policing and civic action programmes etc. The underlying philosophy is to enhance the capacity of the State Governments to tackle the Maoist menace in a concerted manner.”³³

The MHA website clarifies this response as the core constituent of dealing with the Maoists.

The above mentioned responses have been adopted to deal with Maoism in this current phase (since 2004). It has a specific element of holistic development of the local population by ensuring their rights and dignities (as outlined in the EBA approach earlier discussed). This is quite specifically clarified whereas the earlier response was mentioned as three pronged: security, development, and management of public perception. Additionally, while land was one of the major issues, the responses of the current phase do not mention anything about this most controversial issue. Instead it groups everything together as aspects of development issues for example mining of natural resources and rehabilitation programmes. Disproportionate land possession among the few individuals have become a challenge for the government to redistribute it among the peasants which can only be attempted by any political party at the cost of one's electoral future. (Khan & Ahmed, p.512) This proves the similarity in approaches by various political parties which came to govern the country over the period.

³³ Please refer Ministry of Home Affairs website: https://mha.gov.in/division_of_mha/left-wing-extremism-division

Identifying Cycles of Development and Extremism, MHA states,³⁴ The following two diagrams represent how the GOI views and analyses the Maoist conflict. In the first diagram it explains Extremism as vicious cycle. GOI represents the Maoist conflict as a socio-economic issue (without the political angle).

In the second diagram it represents development related issues which have an interconnection with the spread of Maoism as a virtuous cycle. What is interesting and what this research also attempts to argue is the issue of lack of trust in governance and administration. It is to be noted that there has been a rise in welfare projects and initiatives over the years. Despite these attempts by the successive governments , administration has failed to bridge the gap with the locals. This is causing the Maoists to fill the vacuum and establish their legitimacy. Therefore, no matter how many welfare initiatives are launched by the government it will fail to deliver on the issue of arresting the spread of Maoism without the adequate trust and legitimacy in the government from the locals who are supporting the Maoists.

³⁴ Please refer: “Challenges And Strategy For Transformation Of Aspirational Districts Affected By LWE” Ministry of Home Affairs. January 4th, 2018. Available at <https://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/Home-Affairs.pdf>

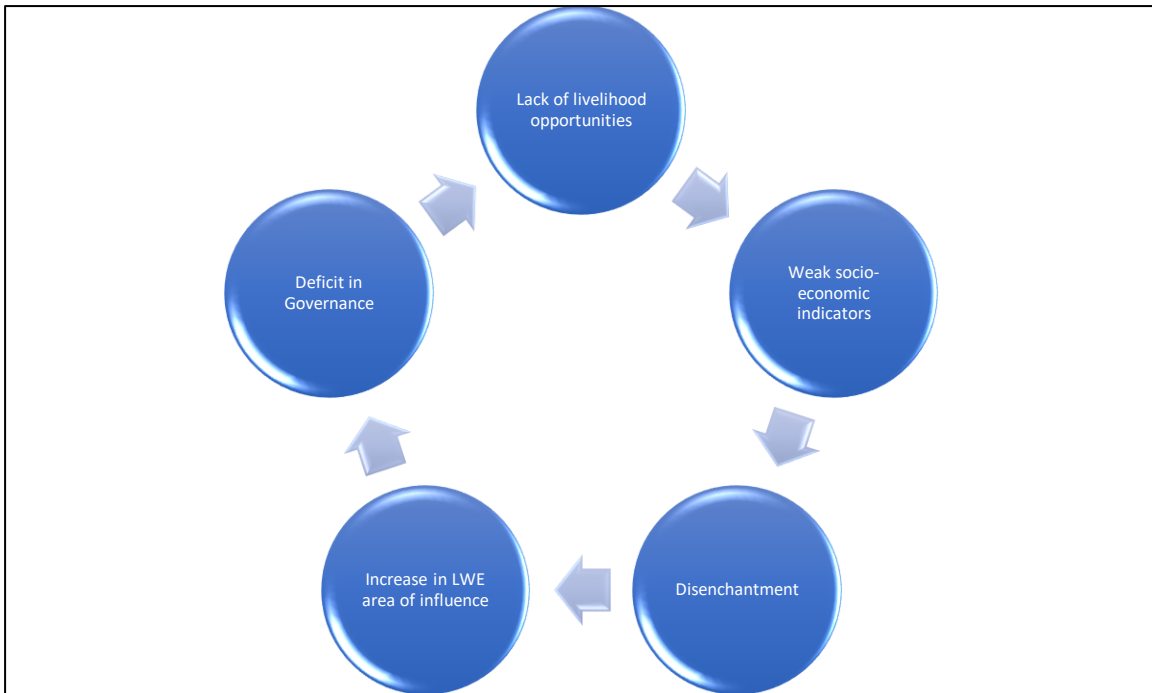


Fig. 12 : Extremism – Vicious cycle (Source: MHA)

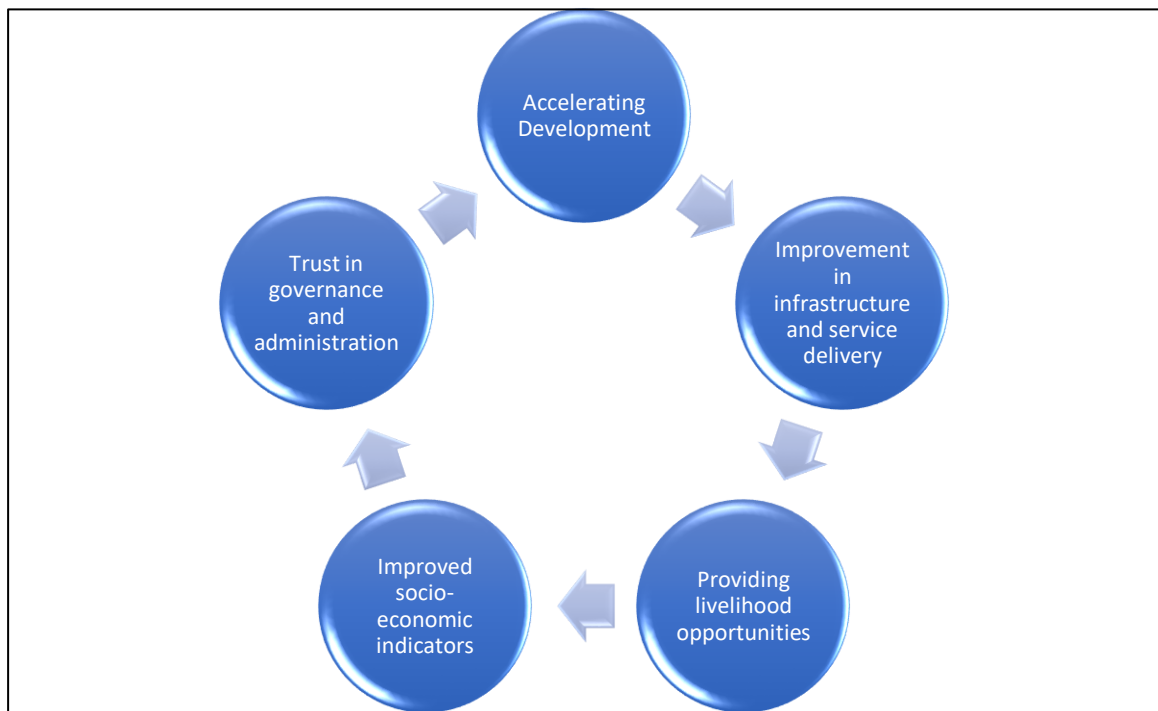


Fig. 13: Development – Virtuous cycle (Source: MHA)

4.2.1.1. Security

Clarifying the current approach in specific terms, MHA released a Press Statement on 16th April, 2018 titled, “Government’s new policy paying dividends in containing Left Wing Extremism”

“The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has been implementing the ‘National Policy and Action Plan’ since 2015 to combat Left Wing Extremism (LWE). This envisages a multi-pronged strategy involving security and development related measures.

The significant features of the new policy were zero tolerance towards violence coupled with a big push to developmental activities so that benefits of development reached the poor and vulnerable in the affected areas.

MHA had categorized 106 districts in 10 states as Left Wing Extremism affected. These districts are covered under the Security Related Expenditure Scheme (SRE) of the MHA for the purpose of reimbursement of security related expenditure like transportation, communication, hiring of vehicles, stipend for surrendered Maoists, temporary infrastructure for forces etc to the states. Out of 106 districts, 35 districts which accounted for 80-90 % of country-wide LWE violence were categorized as ‘Most Affected Districts’³⁵.

Based on the Press Statement released, the details of the following development initiatives undertaken in the various states and division of money between the centre and the state are mentioned below:

Under the important initiatives adopted for LWE districts, MHA states,

- In order to holistically address the LWE problem in an effective manner, Government has formulated National Policy and Action Plan adopting multi-pronged strategy in the areas of security, development, ensuring rights & entitlement of local communities etc.
- “Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme: This Scheme has been extended by the Government on 27.09.2017 as a subscheme of the Umbrella Scheme Modernization of Police Forces for a period of 03 years till 2020. Under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme, the central Govt. reimburses to the State Governments of 11 LWE affected

³⁵ Please refer, “Government’s new policy paying dividends in containing Left Wing Extremism” April 16th, 2018. Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs. Available at <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=178704>

States Security Related Expenditure of 90 districts relating to training and operational needs of security forces, ex-gratia payment to the family of civilians/security forces killed in LWE violence, compensation to Left Wing Extremist cadres who surrendered in accordance with the surrender and rehabilitation policy of the concerned State Government, community policing, Security related infrastructure for village defence committees and publicity materials. There is a substantial increase in annual outlay and new items such as compensation for Security force personnel incapacitated during anti LWE operations and compensation for the property damage have been included for the first time in this scheme. The SRE Schemes aim at strengthening of the capacity of the LWE affected States to fight the LWE problem.

- Special Central Assistance (SCA) for 30 most LWE affected districts: This Scheme has been approved by the Government on 27.09.2017 as a sub-scheme of the Umbrella Scheme, 'Modernization of Police Forces' for a period of 3 years i.e. from 2017-18 to 2019-20. The main objective of the Scheme is to fill the critical gaps in Public infrastructure and Services, which are of emergent nature. Rs 775 crore has already been released by the Government of India to the most LWE affected districts.
- Special Infrastructure Scheme, along with Construction of Fortified Police Stations in the LWE affected States: On regular demand of the LWE affected States, the Government has approved this Scheme as a sub-scheme of the Umbrellas Scheme, 'Modernization of Police Forces' for a period of 3 years i.e. from 2017-18 to 2019-20.
- Scheme of Fortified Police stations: The Ministry had sanctioned 400 police stations in 10 LWE affected States. Of these 397 of PSs have been completed.
- Assistance to Central Agencies for LWE management Scheme: This Scheme has been approved by the Government on 27.09.2017 as a sub scheme of the Umbrella Scheme Modernization of Police Forces for a period of 03 years i.e. from 2017-18 to 2019-20. Under the Scheme, assistance is provided to Central Agencies (CAPFs/IAF etc) for strengthening of infrastructure and hiring charges for Helicopters.
- Road Requirement Plan-I (RRP-I) for LWE affected areas: This Scheme is being implemented by Ministry of Road Transport & Highways for improving road connectivity in 34 LWE affected districts of 8 States i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh. This scheme envisaged construction of 5,422 km roads lengths in LWE affected States, of which 4,766 km roads have been completed by 28.02.2019.

- Road Connectivity Project for LWE affected areas (RRP-II):The Government approved this scheme on 28.12.2016 for further improving road connectivity in 44 districts of 9 LWE affected States. This Scheme envisages 5412 km roads and 126 bridges at an estimated cost of Rs. 11,725 Crores. Ministry of Rural Development is the nodal Ministry for this project. The roads included under the scheme have been identified by the Ministry of Home Affairs in consultation with the State Governments and the security agencies.
- LWE Mobile Tower Project: To improve mobile connectivity in the LWE areas, the Government on 20.08.2014 approved installation of mobile towers in LWE affected States and 2335 mobile towers have been installed in Phase-I. Phase-II of the project has been approved by the Government of India, under which 4072 mobile towers, involving an expenditure of Rs. 7330 crore, will be installed in LWE affected States.
- Aspirational District: The Ministry of Home Affairs has been tasked with the monitoring of Aspirational districts programme in 35 LWE affected districts.” (MHA website)

The above schemes outlined as initiatives has an underlying commonality of emphasis on security. For example, under the SRE schemes emphasis is on training of police personnel and compensation for families in case of accidents. Infrastructure construction focusses on road connectivity and mobile towers connections for easy movement of troops and surveillance purpose. The roads have made the movement of the locals easier as well. But both these infrastructure projects are stressed towards strategizing the security aspect of the counter insurgency operations against the Maoists. Maoists have often targeted the roads to create impediment for easy movement of troops. Government also emphasises on construction of school building which appears to be for the purpose of encouraging literacy programmes in the affected areas. But most often these schools have been used by the security forces to station their troops, thereby encouraging the Maoists to attack the school buildings targeting the security forces. The attack on schools and roads by the Maoists has been used as propaganda mechanisms by the Government to label the Maoists as anti-development. Building of police stations and modernisation of police forces are an integral part of the overall scheme to emphasise on the security aspect of the conflict while being advertised as development schemes.

Despite the huge amount of money and resources diverted for security, other than measuring its success in terms of number of incidents averted or number of Maoists killed, the security response has not yielded much result in terms of eradicating the conflict substantially, if not permanently. The security indicators tracked by MHA are as follows:

- LWE district incident and violence index
- Geographical spread
- Vacancies index
- Surrender with arms
- Number of arrests
- Action against LWE cadres
- Choking of funds (MHA, 2018)

The indicators of success as measured by MHA has nothing to do with addressing the reasons for which the conflict occurs at the first place. It together aims towards promotion of security response. It is equally a mistaken formula to measure the success of the response, specially the security centric, on the number of enemies killed or number of accidents averted when the conflict has multi-layered dimensions associated with it. For example, in a Press Release on 16th April, 2018, highlighting the achievement of the security forces GOI states, *“Over the last four years, there has been a substantial improvement in the LWE scenario. Incidents of violence have seen a 20% decline with a 34% reduction in related deaths in 2017 as compared to 2013. The geographical spread of LWE violence also shrunk from 76 districts in 2013 to just 58 districts in 2017. Besides, just 30 of these districts account for 90% of the LWE violence in the country. At the same time certain new districts have emerged as the focus of expansion by the Left Wing Extremists.”*³⁶ Not only is the indicator of success based on number of deaths and incidents, ironically the press release also accepts that new districts have been added in the list of Maoists affected which proves the failures of the current response in tackling Maoism. The number of districts has decreased in one place but has increased in another. While AP claims to have ‘successfully’ eradicated Maoism from its state, Maoism has simply travelled to the neighbouring state of Odisha.

The other aspect of the response is development and welfare initiatives undertaken to develop the areas resided by the Adivasis from where most of the recruitment takes place.

³⁶ “Government’s new policy paying dividends in containing Left Wing Extremism” (April, 2018) Press Information Bureau, GOI, MHA available at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=178704>

4.2.1.2. Development/ welfare (may not necessarily for LWE districts only):

- **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA)** – “Evolving the design of the wage employment programmes to more effectively fight poverty, the Central Government formulated the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in 2005. With its legal framework and rights-based approach, MGNREGA provides employment to those who demand it and is a paradigm shift from earlier programmes. Notified on September 7, 2005, MGNREGA aims at enhancing livelihood security by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The Act covered 200 districts in its first phase, implemented on February 2, 2006, and was extended to 130 additional districts in 2007-2008.” (MNREGA) For the Fiscal year 2019-20 60,000 crore has been allotted. (Economic Times)

- **Integrated Action Plan (IAP)**

The Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for Selected Tribal and backward Districts was approved on 25.11.2010 for 60 districts. Below is the list of the districts in various states:

AP-2

Bihar- 7

Chhattisgarh- 10

Jharkhand- 14

Madhya Pradesh-8

Maharashtra- 2

Odisha- 15

Uttar Pradesh- 1

West Bengal- 1 (CLAWS, p. 134)

“The Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for Selected Tribal and Backward Districts under the BRGF programme will cover 60 districts and will be implemented with a block grant of 25 crore and 30 crore per district during 2010-11 and 2011-12 respectively.”³⁷

³⁷ Please refer, “Integrated Action Plan for Selected Tribal and Backward Districts” (2010) Press Information Bureau Government of India Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs. Available at <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=67682>

The plan is implemented by the PC and has been extended to include 88 districts in the LWE areas currently. It includes building Public service works like schools, culverts, skill development and trainings, electric lights, godowns, village roads, livelihood activities and community centres.³⁸ The “State Government has reported that the works are mostly being implemented in inaccessible tribal pockets affected by Left Wing Extremism and IAP has had a positive impact in terms of providing connectivity, health and drinking water.”³⁹ CLAWS team has analysed that distributing equal amount of money to all the districts needs to be reviewed as the districts vary in size and the scale of development works needed (p. 134).

- **Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY)**

“This scheme was launched on 4th April, 2005 with the primary objective of creating rural electricity infrastructure and completing household electrification.” (PEO Report No. 224, preface)

“The principal aims of RGGVY being implemented since 2005 are the following:

- Electrifying all villages and habitations as per new definition
- Providing access to electricity to all rural households
- Providing electricity connection to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families free of charge” (ibid, p. 12)

The implementation of this scheme becomes particularly challenging in Maoist affected areas. Often times they do not allow such schemes to make inroads in these areas. “Maoists have been using a novel technique to destroy power pylon. They stack a heap of wood around the pylon or pole and then set it on fire as a result of which the pylon melts.” (CLAWS, p. 135)

- **Indira Awas Yojana (IAY)**

India became a signatory to Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlement in June 1996 recognising thereby the need for access to safe and healthy shelter and basic services as are essential for a person’s physical, psychological, social, and economic well-being. It is a flagship scheme of the Ministry of Rural Development. It has been providing

³⁸ For further information also refer, Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs Lok Sabha Unstarred Question no. 828 available at <https://www.mha.gov.in/MHA1/Par2017/pdfs/par2016-pdfs/ls-010316/828.pdf>

³⁹ Integrated Action Plan (2012) Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Planning Commission available at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=86514>

assistance to BPL families for constructing safe and durable houses. The funding is shared between the central and state government on a 75:25 ratio basis. Special focus is also given to people belonging to SC and ST. (IAY, Preface & p. 8)

Apart from the development schemes the government responses also specify steps taken for entitlements and empowerments. The following two legislations form part of that initiative.

- **Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA), 1996 –**

This Act needs special mention in the context of Maoist study and the government responses. The aim of this Act is to “provide for the extension of the provisions of Part IX of the Constitution relating to the Panchayats Extension to the Scheduled Areas.”⁴⁰

Predominantly Adivasi population of the country reside in the Scheduled areas. Just like the Panchayat system allowing the lowest of the grassroots rural member to participate in the electoral process and take decision. This Act extends the system of self-governance in the Adivasi areas where the lowest of the decision making rests with the Gram Sabhas. The idea is to respect the specific character of the Adivasi lifestyle where “a State legislation on the Panchayats that may be made shall be in consonance with the customary law, social and religious practices and traditional management practices of community resources.”⁴¹ Adivasi being one of the primary communities to participate in the Maoist conflict, this piece of legislation is important in term of empowering the community by redressing years of injustice and neglect. However, one has to also keep in mind this is the period when Indian economy was opening its market, thereby augmenting the demand for natural resources. These natural resources are mostly located in the interior forests where the Adivasis reside therefore exploitation of mineral resources was bound to come into conflict with the locals inhabiting the region for generations and disrupt their lives.

- **Forest Rights Act, 2006-** A substantial section of the original inhabitants, the Adivasis, inhabits the forests region of the country. Only a very miniscule section of the Adivasis migrated to other places for work which happened gradually after they were exposed to the outer world. For their basic needs and livelihood, they have often fallen back upon forests. The commercial interests of the colonial masters who wanted to convert the

⁴⁰ Please refer : “The Provisions Of The Panchayats (Extension To The Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 no.40 Of 1996” available at <https://tribal.nic.in/actRules/PESA.pdf>

⁴¹ Ibid.,

forest into regular supply of timber suddenly declared the inhabitants as intruders and criminals (the concept of de-notified tribe originated) thereby displacing the forest population. The first forest charter came up in the year 1855 followed by Indian Forest Act 1865 with subsequent modifications in 1878 and 1927⁴². A chain of forest and its related activities as well as the wildlife came under the law from time to time. However, it was only as late as in 2006 that the Forest Right Act was passed, which recognized the rights of the inhabitants for habitation and livelihood.⁴³

Outlining the aim of this Act, “An Act to recognize and vest the forest rights and occupation in forest land in forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers who have been residing in such forests for generations but whose rights could not be recorded; to provide for a framework for recording the forest rights so vested and the nature of evidence required for such recognition and vesting in respect of forest land.”⁴⁴ This is an excellent piece of legislation which has often been marred by its extremely poor implementation.

4.2.1.3 Management of Public Perception

The third part of this strategy is management of public perception. MHA states:

- Special emphasis is laid on managing public perception. The MHA website states this has to be achieved in two ways: firstly through **Civic Action Programme (CAP)**: “This Scheme has been approved by the Government on 27.09.2017 as a sub scheme of the Umbrella Scheme Modernization of Police Forces for a period of 03 years i.e. from 2017-18 to 2019-20. CAP in LWE affected areas is being implemented since 2010-11 to bridge the gaps between Security Forces and local people through personal interaction and bring the human face of SFs before the local population. The Scheme has been successful in achieving its goal. Under the Scheme, funds are released to the CAPFs, deployed in LWE affected areas, for conducting various civic activities in the welfare of the local people.”
And secondly

⁴² For detail analysis refer, Gadgil, Madhav & Guha, Ramchandra. (1993). *The Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India*. California: University of California Press.

⁴³ Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India ‘Forest Rights Act, 2006- Acts, Rules and Guidelines’ <https://tribal.nic.in/FRA/data/FRARulesBook.pdf> (Accessed 16 Dec. 18, 2018)

⁴⁴ Please refer, “Forest Rights Act, 2006 Acts, Rules and Guidelines” Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India available at <https://tribal.nic.in/FRA/data/FRARulesBook.pdf>

- **Media plan** – This Scheme has been approved by the Government on 27.09.2017 as a sub scheme of the Umbrella Scheme Modernization of Police Forces for a period of 03 years i.e. from 2017-18 to 2019-20. The Maoists have been misguiding and luring the innocent tribals/ local population in LWE affected areas by their So-called poor-friendly revolution through petty incentives or by following their coercive strategy. Their false propaganda is targeted against the security forces and the democratic setup. Therefore, the Government is implementing this Scheme in LWE affected areas. Under the scheme activities like Tribal Youth Exchange programmes organised by NYKS, radio jingles, documentaries, pamphlets etc. are being conducted.⁴⁵

Government initiatives aim to counter the Maoist propaganda by trying to enter these earlier ‘no-go’ zones. This will help to build a bridge between the locals and the administration which will serve two purpose : firstly to act as human intelligence. While the labelling of the conflict as law and order remains unperturbed, the formation of the LWE division has provided an additional dimension in the analysis of the conflict. Soon realising the significance of human based intelligence specially in case of Naxalism, states changed its approach to focus on intelligence sharing. *“The temptation to totally replace HUMINT resources with TECHINT will have to be resisted since there are still situations where human agents can be invaluable. For instance, in sub-conventional threats such as rural insurgencies and Naxalism, quality penetration by human intelligence can be crucial.”*(IDSA Report p. 63) Take for example, under previous H M P. Chidambaram, Multi Agency Centre (MAC) held regular meetings where intelligence inputs from various agencies are analysed. The second is to construct a humane face of the government and administration among the locals amongst whom trust building is a challenge. This time the initiatives focus on changing this image of the administration. Both these initiatives aimed towards addressing trust building thereby creating more space for the government to act according to its plan and implement its programmes. A study conducted on NREGA, for example shows that the aim of these schemes is to improve the public-police interface to better the intelligence gathering. With these schemes, the trust of the public is gained who in turn are ready to share information.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Please refer MHA LWE website https://mha.gov.in/division_of_mha/left-wing-extremism-division

⁴⁶ Refer Khanna, G & Zimmermann, L. (January 2017). “Guns and butter? Fighting violence with the promise of development” in *Journal of Development Economics*. Volume 124. Pp. 120-141

Once again clarifying the divisions in the role between the centre and the state, MHA clarifies: Lead role by States⁴⁷

- Improving governance
- Operations by security forces
- Speeding up implementation of development schemes

Role of MHA

- Coordination, Monitoring & Assistance to State Governments
- Providing CAPFs
- Security related schemes (SRE, SIS, Fortified Police Stations)

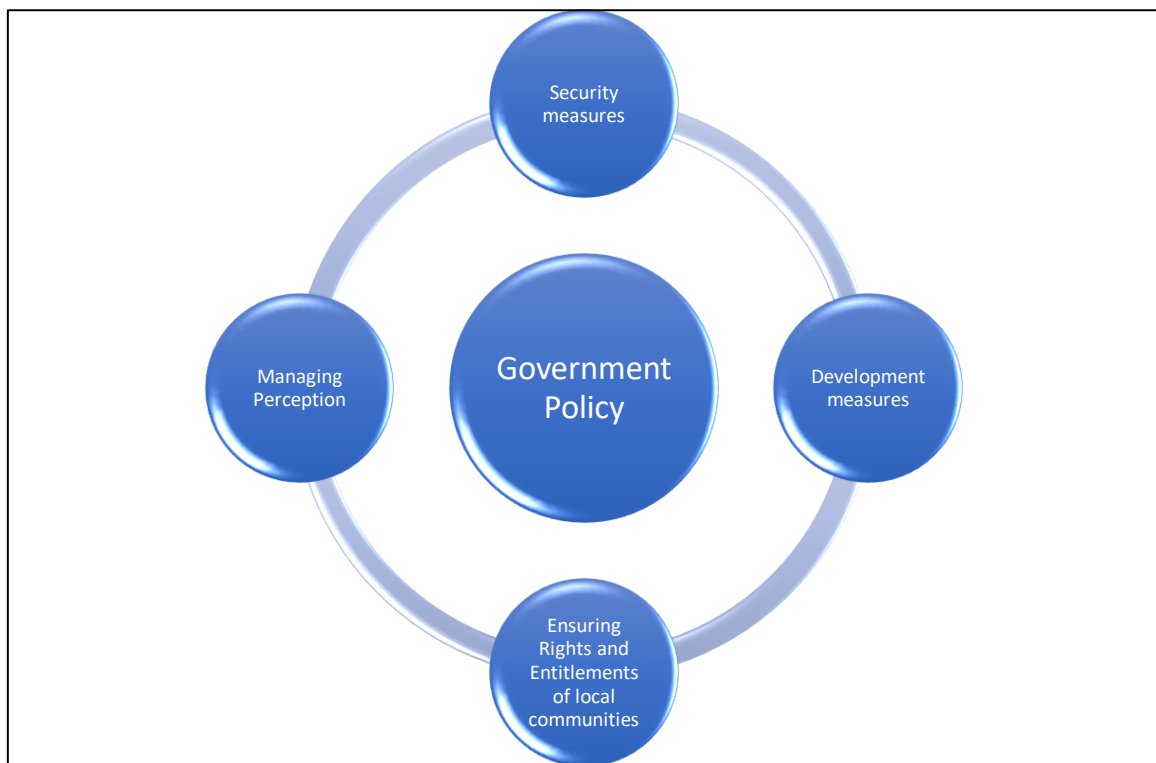


Fig. 14: Representation of Government Policies Sources: <https://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/Home-Affairs.pdf>

- Sharing intelligence

⁴⁷Refer, “Challenges And Strategy For Transformation Of Aspirational Districts Affected By LWE” (January, 2018). Ministry of Home Affairs. Available at <https://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/Home-Affairs.pdf>

- Important developmental interventions

Apart from these stated initiatives, there have been a permanent feature prevalent in the responses not so formally stated in this segment. But it has been clearly stated in the Status Paper tabled in Parliament by the then HM Shivraj Patil in 2006 (the same year LWE division was established and the manual on sub-conventional warfare was published). Among others it states in point number (xiii) *“Efforts will continue to be made to promote local resistance groups against naxalites but in a manner that the villagers are provided adequate security cover and the area is effectively dominated by the security forces.”*⁴⁸ And this is the use of vigilante groups like *Salwa Judum* and *Ranveer Sena* to counter the Maoists. Much before the debate on outsourcing of war to private firms started making the rounds in the global security sector, India had already privatised its security with regular use of private militias and anti-social elements in counter offensive. Commenting on this aspect of COIN policies, Prof Chakrabarti writes, *“Another aspect of the Indian state’s counter-insurgency strategy has been to organize various vigilante groups and pro-government militias, often consisting of surrendered or renegade members of the insurgent groups. Use of such pro-government private groups has been a complementary effort to the more traditional application of force through the army and paramilitary groups and the police.”* (Chakrabarti, p. 75).

Commenting on the Copenhagen school, *“If a subject is successfully securitized, it is possible to legitimize the employment of extraordinary means to solve a perceived problem. This could include declaring a state of emergency or martial law, mobilizing the military, or attacking another country. Furthermore, if an issue is successfully labelled as a security problem, the subject can be considered to be an illegitimate subject for political or academic debate. Once securitization has taken place, the license to bend or break democratic rules does not require the grant of legitimacy from the public in the form of a referendum but can be exercised unilaterally by the state.”* (ibid, p.74) Once the Indian government securitised the Maoist conflict by not prioritising governance, it was easier to engage in non-constitutional means to deal with the Maoists. However, the need was to label the Maoists as enemies and once that is achieved which garnered public support, it was easier and therefore more acceptable to engage the private armies and encourage state sponsored violence beyond the realms of law.

⁴⁸ Op cit., Status Paper (2006) South Asia Terrorism Portal available at https://www.satp.org/satporgrp/countries/india/document/papers/06mar13_naxal%20problem%20.htm

Such informal efforts have acted as a bane in case of dealing with Maoism. The ordinary people continue to be more distant and suspicious of government activities. *“The state government's erstwhile kinetic approach involving the SPF (special police forces) and Salwa Judum merely helped Naxalism grow by committing atrocities and human rights violations against the poor or relocating them out of their traditional habitat without proper rehabilitation and resettlement options.”* (Gahlot, p.11) This is similar to the Strategic hamlet concept used during the Vietnam war and replicated during the Telangana struggle.

Another facet of deploying locals for this task is settling of personal scores. With guns being provided to common people by both the security forces and Maoists, events turn ugly and transform into scenes where situation is used for purposes of personal revenge and other vested interest resulting in fratricidal killings. This in turn become a cycle of yet another path of violence and counter-violence exercised in these areas. (Poddar, p. 384) The argument presented in support of such moves also cannot be overlooked. These young and local population has a better knowledge of the terrain and most importantly of the language (mostly Gondi). This makes them an important human asset who can communicate with the locals and create trust among them. It is also described as a source of employment for the local youths who could have otherwise easily turn to Maoism. However, it cannot be denied that such false sense of empowerment where ordinary Adivasis could carry guns led to wanton violence which continued unchecked and sometimes led to revenge killings.

Before drawing an end to this section, another aspect needs special mention. Although it cannot be studied as an approach, it is more a variant of engagement attempted by various political parties across various states with the Maoists. The help of the Maoists has been regularly sought by the politicians across all political parties to win elections. Conducting regular election is a significant parameter of a functioning democracy. India has always been loyal to this parameter of democracy. Every general elections and other regional elections have witnessed smooth transition of power uninterrupted since the independence of the country in 1947. Accepting such a scenario, it is also pertinent to understand the modus operandi of the elections in India - the means and the ways by which the elections are conducted. Let us understand this with the Maoists and politicians' alliances. The violence and the ideology practiced by the Maoists stands antithetical to the democratic principles and hence the former is a banned organization according to the security organisations of the country. At the same time, it is to maintain that democracy (conducting elections), the help of the same banned Maoists is sought by the political parties. Both the acts – banning the Maoist party and winning elections (even with the help of a banned organization)- are justified in the name of democracy.

This presents a paradoxical situation before the political class of India when they collude with the same Maoists to win election.

To cite an example from AP,

“Telegu Desam Party (TDP) leader, N.T. Rama Rao, described the Naxalites as ‘true patriots, who have been misunderstood by the ruling classes.’ Unsurprisingly NTR found it expedient to secure their support during the elections the following year and succeeded in unseating the Congress I government in the state. In the years that followed his government gave the PWG a free hand to consolidate their activities. By 1985, after a series of ambushes of police parties and the increasing use of landmines to blow up officials and police convoys, even the grateful NTR could no longer ignore the menace. A Special Task Force was established and a number of armed outposts in the 7 worst affected districts were created. In 1987, a group of IAS officers were kidnapped and a demand for the release of a group of jailed Naxalites were raised. The government succumbed, but in the period that followed, its attitudes hardened. The Naxalites were banned and the police and the SF’s were given the proverbial ‘free hand’ to deal with the extremists.” (Kumar, pp.166-167) His successors also continued with such tactics. “Dr. Marri Chenna Reddy of Congress I Party now recognized the ‘patriotic’ potential of the Naxalites and sought and secured their support in the elections of 1989.” (ibid, p. 167) However, ‘Dr. Chenna Reddy as CM in the 1990 had tried a radical solution to the problem. He lifted all curbs on the Naxalite groups and allowed them to function freely.” (ibid, p. 168).

It is difficult to suggest that seeking Maoists’ help has brought any positive dimension in dealing with the Maoists (for example by engaging with them politically) and reducing their influence over their followers. What it has done is, it has been used by the Maoists as propaganda tools to expose the duality in the approaches as used by the political parties and its members.. It has become easier for the Maoists to declare among its followers that administration is in fact seeking the Maoists’ help to win elections while banning the same outfit.

4.2.2 Peace Talks

Before drawing an end to various engagements attempted from time to time, mention should be made about offers of peace talks. References have been made earlier in this chapter about offers of talks as engagements pursued by various state governments at different times (Table provided). The Central government is ready to talk only on the condition when the

Maoists surrender their arms. However, each time, the initiatives of the state government have failed to produce any desired result. Offers of peace talks from central government have been a rarity in the case of Maoism. Stressing on the importance of a centre initiated peace talks, *“Thus, just as security operations are coordinated under the Centre’s leadership, the dialogue process has also to be initiated by the Centre under the auspices of the Home Minister. Since the Maoists also operate as an all-India movement, the talks should take place at the all-India level.”* (Mohanty: 2009) This is mainly because the unsurmountable clause of giving up violence always placed as a pre-condition for talks. This becomes the point of argument among the various stakeholders, particularly the Indian government and the Maoists to trust each other. Maoist spokesperson Azad commented, *“The Home Minister himself had displayed his split personality, not knowing what exactly he wants when he says Maoists should “abjure violence.” To a layman what this proposal obviously implies is that the state too would automatically put a stop to its inhuman atrocities on the adivasis, Maoist revolutionaries and their sympathizers. But not so to our Home Minister.”* (p. 2)

However, for long time, the issue of Maoism being handled by the various state governments, offers of talks have been tried with the Maoists by the states (details in the communication events list). There are two marked difference between the peace talks with Maoists and insurgent groups demanding secession primarily in the north east where peace talks resulted in autonomous districts. Firstly, the demand of the Maoists is not to secede but to form a government of their own. They do not want to break away from the country with powers in their own hand. The secessionists on the other hand can be lured with partial autonomy which is what the autonomous districts have succeeded in creating in the north eastern states. Secondly, the Maoists are not just any insurgent groups. They are a highly motivated and ideologically strong outfit which is more interested in establishing a rule based on the theories and ideas of certain political ideologues which in this case is explicated by Leninism, Marxism and Maoism. They are not just fighting for political power, but political power based on specific ideas which aim to strengthen their ideology and establish a system based on it. This is different than dealing with loosely structured secessionist groups who could be easily lured with bribes and money.

The central government under Home Minister P. Chidambaram offered peace talks along with Andhra Pradesh Congress government under CM Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy in 2004. With brewing disagreements, the talks failed and once again violence erupted. In the meantime, in 2004 the merger of the two biggest Maoist parties, MCC and PWG, occurred leading to the formation of CPI (Maoist). This marked a renewed phase in the Maoist conflict which

manifested the failures of the government responses in dividing the outfit and dealing with them separately. Rather, this merger strengthened the outfit with joint forces of the two biggest groups spanned throughout the country unlike the earlier marked territories of north and south. Thus while the strategy of dividing the groups into various factions worked in case of the north east which eventually weakened their demands, Maoists reversed the process by uniting the erstwhile divided factions into a single whole.

Eventually in 2010 Maoist spokesperson Azad was assassinated. *“Azad was by all accounts the one individual who had the most engagement with the broader civil society. He was considered to be the man who thought through the negotiations with the Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC) in Andhra Pradesh which resulted in the peace talks in 2004. And in the present round of peace efforts initiated by Swami Agnivesh, Azad had been the main interlocutor on behalf of the Maoists.”* (Maringanti, p.39) In WB, in 2011 peace talks were offered through civil society members led by Sujato Bhadro. However, that too did not materialise and soon after the failure of the peace talks Politburo member Kishenji was assassinated. All these have created a huge chasm between the two parties making it extremely difficult to trust each other. Most importantly, Maoist have repeatedly clarified that giving up arms as a condition for peace talks is not an option. Therefore the space for negotiation has become highly limited.

Maoist on their 12th anniversary of the party shared the following view on peace talks, *“Mr. Rajnath Singh has given a call in Bilaspur for the Maoists to shun the weapons and come for talks. He also warned that the government would not remain a mute spectator. Another minister Venkayya Naidu announced that there wouldn't be any talks with those who don't have faith in the constitution. This is the attitude of the government towards the talks. Our party never hesitated to go for talks when it served the interests of the revolution. Our party has already announced that we would definitely consider going for talks if the armed forces stop repression, ban on our party is lifted and the comrades in jails are released and we are invited for talks.”*⁴⁹ In the absence of any clear compromise on the demands, the resultant talks failed to achieve any result.

⁴⁹ Communist Party Of India (Maoist) Central Committee message on 12th anniversary, available at <http://www.bannedthought.net/India/CPI-Maoist-Docs/>

5. GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TOWARDS MAOISM – A REFLECTION OF STRUCTURAL INADEQUACY

5.1 Outline of the chapter

The aim of this chapter is to highlight how the structural inadequacies are reflected in the responses thereby contributing towards the further aggravation instead of its designated role of addressing it. Therefore the objective of the government to win over the people is failing, allowing the latter to support and participate in Maoism. The analysis is based on data collected by me from various respondents comprising ministers, politicians, academicians, activists, police officers, army personnel and Maoists and the local villagers. In addition I have studied various government committee reports and status reports submitted to the Parliament in relation to the Maoist conflict. A particular focus has been on the post 2004 period, i.e. after the merger of the major Maoists parties resulting in the formation of LWE division within the MHA to channel the government's resources to deal with Maoism.

5.2 Security Response

5.2.1 Identifying the 'Other'

The LWE website states, "The CPI (Maoist) Party, is the major Left Wing Extremist outfit responsible for a majority of incidents of violence and killing of civilians and security forces and has been included in the Schedule of Terrorist Organizations along with all its formations and front organizations under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967."⁵⁰ And all of these again are considered as a law and order problem which the central government refuses to deal with, because of its jurisdiction under the various state governments. Although all its efforts are towards centralising the responses to wield control over executive decisions and thereby treat it as insurgency, as explained in the previous chapter. Therefore the bigger question is, are the Maoists-terrorists, extremists, insurgents or simply a band of criminals creating law and order disturbances all over the country? And do these various terminologies have any impact on the successful execution of the security response. The answer to this question is important for the current discussion.

⁵⁰Ministry of Home Affairs, Left Wing Extremism available at https://mha.gov.in/division_of_mha/left-wing-extremism-division

In the earlier mentioned status paper on POLICY TO DEAL WITH THE NAXALITE MENACE, two points are of importance.

“(ii) Keeping in view that naxalism is not merely a law & order problem, the policy of the Government is to address this menace simultaneously on political, security, development and public perception management fronts in a holistic manner.

(iii) Naxalism being an inter–state problem, the states will adopt a collective approach and pursue a coordinated response to counter it.”⁵¹

There are two points which are worth noticing. Firstly, theoretically the government recognises the multiple aspects of the problem beyond the law and order issue. Secondly, it also stresses on the coordinated approach because of the inter-state nature of the conflict.

However, the variety of terms is a possible cause for confusion regarding the treatment of the conflict when it comes to executing it on the field. Let us understand this with an example of how classifying it as law and order is causing a problem. There is an already existing confusion regarding the division of responsibilities among the various state governments and its associated accountability owing to the identification of the conflict as law and order. The de-facto assignment of competencies is not as clear-cut as in theory. The most important aspect has been pointed out in a report prepared by the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS),

“Ownership of anti-maoist operations – a vexed problem lies at the heart of Maoist conundrum which has so far defied all attempts at resolution. This is the issue of ownership of anti-Maoist operations. The centre maintains that law and order is constitutionally a state responsibility and all it can do is to assist the states if requested to do so. As such the state governments actually own these operations. However, they lack the resources and means to confront the Maoist threat on their own and constantly seek central assistance. This leads to a situation where accountability gets diluted as both the centre and state governments affected by LWE conveniently blame each other for lapses in putting down Maoist terror.” (p. 147)

This has been a serious issue in classifying the conflict as a law and order. Since law and order is a state subject, every state has limited jurisdiction to address the conflict. With

⁵¹ Op cit., Status Paper available at https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/document/papers/06mar13_naxal%20problem%20.htm

such a classification comes the bureaucratic baggage and administrative difficulties. For example, Maoists find it easier to run away from one state to another where the jurisdiction of state police separates. Although to a large extent procedural challenges are overlooked when it comes to security, it still remains a problem in case of accountability. States keep blaming one another refusing to acknowledge its respective mistakes or owning up to the failures of operations. Additionally, these issues delay the process of prohibiting the Maoist from spreading to other states thereby contributing to its prolongation with such problematic classification of law and order. End of Maoism in one or two states cannot be a measurement for arresting the spread of Maoism because of the porousness of the geographical spread where, end in one state can also imply spread in another. This is one of the most serious issues within the current security framework which is playing its role in contributing to the conflict. And it is due to these reasons, primarily, that centre's over-arching role in controlling the LWE division, comes to the fore. But this centralising of the issue is inclined more towards securitising the responses than address the issue of governance.

However, an essential step towards dealing with any problem is its identification. Is it, then, a deliberate attempt adopted by the government to create confusion? The confusion of having different terminologies has risen sparks of debate about the classification of Maoism and its subsequent treatment.

Ajai Sahani, Director of Institute of Conflict Management (ICM) argues:

“I don't see much of a difference between the terms. If it is a law and order problem, does that mean it is not a terrorism problem? Is terrorism not a law and order problem? Do we operate outside the paradigm of law and order when we operate counterterrorism? These are false categories. They are false because they do not correspond to the actual orientation of the State on the ground.”

Another important thing to consider is the fact that all those Maoists (the leaders as well as the cadres) are Indian citizens. They have lost faith in the way the current system is being run and have decided to follow a path which they consider will help them to achieve their rights and dignity. Being Indian citizens they are entitled to certain rights. Denying them their Fundamental Rights, will further alienate the already disenfranchised groups. Hence such a response is a reflection of the structural anomaly where certain groups remain invisible from the dominant discourse.

Continuing with his remarks Sahni explains, *“These categories are not mutually exclusive. These categories are used not in the way you would want them to be used in academic context. These categories are used by the police or by the State agencies or by the State policy makers in a very much less rigorous conceptualisation of the term.”*

Arguing against such an explanation, I would like to maintain that classifying any conflict according to these categories helps to deal with the crisis according to its intensity. For example laws relating to terrorism will be much more stringent than a simple theft or burglary which could be brought under local police jurisdictions as a law and order problem. The “level of security” response used by the government determines which category will be applied for a deed. The differences in terminology used by the government for classifying Maoism lead to a mixture of responses not only to confront the conflict but also to deal with the various actors involved in it (as detailed earlier). Whether arrested Maoist (top level leaders as well as an ordinary Adivasi) should be treated as terrorist or as ordinary criminals creates confusion among the various executive agencies. Biswapriyo Kanungo comments,

“State does not want to see it as a political ideological fight or any kind of politics. So they are not called as a party; rather they are treated as a terrorist organisation. However, the moderates among them call it as LWE. They do not distinguish between extremists and terrorists.”⁵²

On posing a similar question to Journalist Ashutosh Bhardwaj, he comments,

“I believe it’s not completely law and order situation, yes it’s an extremism but my personal experience based on my reporting on it, is that it’s an insurgency. I think this is the word which we must use. CPI(MAOIST) is not a terrorist party; it’s a revolutionary party. They have a stated objective.”⁵³

Maoism, apart from being a political revolutionary outfit, has the concern of a socio, economic and political agenda of the marginalised. However, the multiple terminologies in which Maoism has been classified or identified, avoids any mention of a political solution to the conflict which could have effectively addressed these aspects. News Channel NDTV’s journalist Hridayesh Joshi covering LWE for decades and who has spoken to a number of top Maoist leaders, comments that *“LWE is a political problem. Government, however, does not want to accept this fact. There was absence of administration in these areas when the Maoists*

⁵² Interview with the researcher in October, 2017 in Bhubaneswar. He is a well-known political activist.

⁵³ Interview with the researcher in August, 2017 in Delhi

*started establishing their bases. They [Maoists] entered Chattisgarh in small groups from AP creating liberated zones. Persistently oppressed by the forest guards, tortured, sexually abused, the presence of the Maoists helped the tribals to turn to them for support. The cadre strength started swelling.*⁵⁴

Pointing to the missing element of political consideration from the entire security perspective adopted by the government, A senior researcher of Observer Research Foundation (ORF) of the Delhi chapter argues,

*“The third element which is missing in terms of conflict resolution is I feel the political element. Unless you find a political solution, in terms of dialogue in terms of the process that you have witnessed in Colombia or even in Nepal which led to conflict resolution because they were recognised they were given a political part , they were given level playing field and in the sense they were able to win over and became part of the same system. Here by and large the centre and the state have failed to create some sort of dialogue and convince the rebels to join the mainstream politics and accept the political system and democracy and participate in full scale.”*⁵⁵

CPI (Maoist) is a political party with stated political agenda which is to overthrow the government and establish its own system of governance. This political party has been able to use the social and economic problems of the country to build their system on the basis of an ideology. Government responses have failed to adequately acknowledge that this social and economic problem exists with or without the Maoists’ presence. Maoists are not functioning in vacuum. They have rooted their understanding of the situation in the adverse socio-economic scenario of the country. What the current security framework, instead, consistently doing is, it is using various terminologies to justify its varying treatment of the conflict according to different circumstances. But none of these terminologies are addressing the social and economic circumstances which is providing a conducive atmosphere for the Maoists to survive and recruit cadres.

Reiterating the importance of a political solution to the conflict, senior researcher, P.V. Ramana, with Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA) working on this topic for more

⁵⁴ Interview with the researcher in New Delhi

⁵⁵ Interview with the researcher in August, 2017 in Delhi

than a decade explains, “*It is a socio-economic problem turned into law and order problem which requires a political solution. It is not a terrorist problem.*”⁵⁶

Plethora of political opinions, although have found a place in Indian democratic framework, have never been the centre of political dynamics in the country. It has always been ruled by certain political parties primarily the INC for prolonged period. Hence Maoism as a different political outfit with their stated political agenda and socio-economic roots within the Indian society has never been recognised. Just like many of the political parties which caters to specific community based interests like the parties with lower caste vote banks, Maoism has always been the outlier. However, the outlier, this time became the enemy because Maoists’ promise of revolution has violence as one of the major components to capture power. And Maoists’ violence, therefore, became the rallying cry to create opinion against this ‘Other’ and legitimise its counter action to physically negate the designated enemy. The irony remained that there are organisations like RSS which, too, aims to challenge the core of Indian democracy by promising to create a Hindu nation and is equally steeped into violence against the lower castes and other minorities, primarily the Muslims. These organisations merely exist because they cater to the interests of the dominant castes and socio-politically powerful groups.

5.2.2 Legitimation for physical negation

View them as evil and you have a moral sanction to kill them.” Sujato Bhadro

On one side there is confusion regarding the classification of the conflict but on the other there appears to be confidence on analysis of Maoism as a collective which has violence as its core essence. One of the core elements of security response, the counter-insurgency operations, is government authorised security measures/operations to target the Maoist violence. The first point of the earlier mentioned status paper addresses this: “(i) The Government will deal sternly with the Naxalites indulging in violence.”⁵⁷

Violence has been identified as the core constituent of Maoism. Therefore, with such an analysis of what Maoism is, government sponsored securitisation of the conflict becomes justified. It is to be accepted without doubt that in a conflict scenario it is, indeed, a difficult task to negate collateral damages in terms of killing innocent people by either party. Therefore,

⁵⁶ Interview with the researcher in July, 2017 in Delhi

⁵⁷ Op cit., Status Paper, available at https://www.satp.org/satporctp/countries/india/document/papers/06mar13_naxal%20problem%20.htm

use of violence by the Maoist party cannot be a justification furnished by the government for outlawing an organisation (as stated in the earlier quoted website of MHA). PC report on LWE states, *“The public policy perspective on the Naxalite movement is overwhelmingly preoccupied with the incidents of violence that take place in these areas and its ideological underpinnings. The contextualization of this violence is missing from this perspective.”* (p.76) The government report itself accepts that the violence has a context. The violence and counter violence are happening within a geographical space with specific social and economic agendas. Addressing the violence perpetrated by the Maoists by security responses without having to consider the circumstances which are allowing the violence to persist, will only create an anti-people image of the government.

This is because even if one does not argue on the rationale of government’s monopoly on violence, there are other organisations like RSS which not only challenges the secular character of the country by preaching for the creation of an ideal Hindu nation but often use violence against the minorities. It becomes easier for the Maoists to expose such double standards preached and practiced by the GOI and garner support for themselves where RSS remains a legitimate organisation and Maoists become outlawed. Exposing this duality as practiced by the government, Ex- Naxalite and Prof. Dilip Simeon comments, *“Remove Savarkar's (Right wing fanatical accused of murdering Mahatma Gandhi but escaped conviction) photo from [Indian] Parliament. He killed Gandhi. Which means the State is endorsing this act. If you cannot remove Savarkar then put Charu Majumder's (the father of Indian Maoism) photo there. Because both talked about violence. And as such there is no difference between the two.”*⁵⁸ Revealing such contrasting behaviour by the government is only helpful for the Maoists because their propaganda survives on labelling government as the enemy of the people. Savarkar who represents Hindu ideas is accepted within the dominant political structure of the country while Charu Majumder who questions this dominant framework becomes the enemy. This is strange when both have promoted violent means to achieve their ends.

This is never to argue that one form of violence justifies another. However, the government uses different parameters in judging similar violations of the standards set in the Constitution and subsequently identifying an ideal citizen of the country. This becomes advantageous for Maoists to recruit cadres for their cause by ensuring the uninterrupted flow

⁵⁸ Interview with the researcher in September, 2017 in Delhi

of support for their struggle. And herein government loses the status of a legitimate authority capable of ruling the erstwhile marginalised. The Sociology professor at the Delhi School of Economics, Nandini Sundar, who has written extensively on the subject, comments, “*On the question of monopoly of violence by the State, the latter does not take any responsibility for right wing violence, then the State should have a uniform policy of tackling such problem of violence. However, banning an organisation or any kind of association with it, does not make sense.*”⁵⁹ Therefore government’s response of banning the organisation because of its use of violence and subsequently using violence to deal with the Maoists are often viewed as success by the Maoists.

It, therefore, should not come as a surprise when the government bans one ideology-Maoism while allows the other-RSS. While both adhere to certain ideologies which challenges the core of the Constitution, then why does the government follow one set of rules for one group and another set for the other. Is there any other intention behind this garb which is why this differential treatment is followed by the government? The answer to this question is somewhat hidden in the overlapping locations of minerals and the Maoist geographical spread in central India which the government wants to control. (I shall deal with this question in the development/ welfare response section of this chapter)

Because of the over emphasis on Maoist violence, GOI has repeatedly, legitimised its security approach as the most suited to deal with the crisis. CLAWS report states, “*Moreover the armed cadres of the Maoists are just limbs. Even if severed, they re-grow. It is the Maoist leadership which has to be targeted and crushed. Though senior police officer maintain they can overcome the problem, the time frame they suggest is in the region of 10-15 years. This will only give the Maoists time to further grow in strength.*” (p.134)

Another important aspect of this kind of security response is the idea of striking the Maoist leadership based on the rationale that it will help to reduce their sphere of influence and hence manage the spread of the conflict to newer bases. Therefore, one of the key points of argument of the Counter Insurgency (CI) operations against the Maoists, focusses on neutralising the leadership where the supporters and the followers are merely considered to be victims of the conflict instead of active members. CLAWS report states, “*Strike the leadership-while carrying out operations against the Maoists, the thrust must remain on hitting at the leadership of the PLGA [People’s Liberation of Guerrilla Army]. The rank and file must be*

⁵⁹ Interview with the researcher in August, 2017

encouraged to surrender and be assured of suitable rehabilitation measures to bring back to the mainstream.” (p. 187) It is hard to believe that despite accepting the growth of the Maoists, government response still focusses on neutralising the leadership which they hold is the key to reducing the area of influence of Maoism. Such idea of negating the leadership followed by easily co-opting the followers completely negates the agency and conscious participation of the ordinary people who are joining Maoism out of dissatisfaction in the administration. They are simply grouped together as victims of the conflict who can be won over with some developmental and welfare measures so long as the leadership is neutralised. Agency of the Adivasi communities who are capable of taking their own conscious decision and may not be won over by scattered welfare measures is not given due recognition because of the perceived sense of superiority among the dominant groups who eventually form the core of ruling regimes and bureaucratic authorities.

Finally, point 8 of the Status papers clearly reveals the intention of the government where it wants to create these extra judicial groups in the name of ‘local resistance forces.’ “(viii) Efforts will continue to be made to promote local resistance groups against naxalites but in a manner that the villagers are provided adequate security cover and the area is effectively dominated by the security forces.” Subrangshu Chowdhury comments in this respect, “*No officer has learnt Gondi. (To compensate the ignorance of language, State has recruited SPO’s or created Salwa Judum) Hence there is a gap of communication which the naxals are exploiting since they know the language.*”⁶⁰ Instead of learning the local language which could help the security forces and the politicians to engage with the Adivasis on a human level and thus take a small step towards trust building, the way Maoist do, government has come up with this unique way of tackling this problem. They have created divisions among the Adivasis as pro and anti-government groups, leading to fratricidal killings among themselves. These are extra-constitutional, and its actions remain hidden from the public eye. These killings ensure the continuation of cycle of violence. Just like violence perpetrated by RSS goes unnoticed within the dominant political framework of Indian democracy, so does the strategy to create these unconstitutional groups who are used to address the Maoist violence. These groups are unaccounted and more often than not end up in creating further disturbance by, for example, engaging in revenge killings. It is responses like these which instead of controlling the conflict end up actively contributing towards its prolongation. Thus the role of these responses does not

⁶⁰ Interview with the researcher in August 2017 in Delhi

end with its failure of addressing the conflict. Rather it adorns the additional role of contributing towards the already ongoing conflict by fomenting violence among various groups.

And once again reiterating the importance of political engagement, GOI's own report states, "*However, the Naxalite movement has to be recognised as a political movement with a strong base among the landless and poor peasantry and Adivasis. Its emergence and growth need to be contextualised in the social conditions and experience of people who form a part of it.*" (PC, p.57) Therefore political consideration is urgent even for the success of security led responses. This is because the issue of governance is intrinsically dovetailed with the redressal of grievances of these marginalised groups.

The perennial presence of security and the importance attached to it on the pretext of countering Maoist violence provides the legitimation to deal with the designated enemy. However, it is important to point out here, that on my visit to Jhargram in WB, I came across a number of police camps in the cleared areas. The argument for police camps goes like this, it acts as preventive measures to deny the Maoists any scope to regain their lost territory. This is indeed a wise strategy. However, what is missing out in such an analysis is the disruption of normal lives by the perennial presence of security forces in an area. The security forces gradually could have paved the way for a strong public administration dedicated to establishing normal lives for the local population and reach out to them through the welfare programmes of the government. To provide a sense of being there with the marginalised communities just the way Maoists have gained legitimation by staying with them; could bring about intended positive result from the security response.

5.2.3 **Reluctance for Peace Talks**

The absence of the government's identification of the political nature of Maoism and perennial emphasis on security approach as a solution to Maoism has another drawback. The reluctance for a constructive dialogue initiated by the Central government. On the issue of negotiation, the status paper reveals,

"(v) There will be no peace dialogue by the affected states with the naxal groups unless the latter agree to give up violence and arms."

Although there have been efforts undertaken at the regional levels by the governments of AP and WB to initiate peace process, central government's policy on dialogue with any group rest solely on the condition of surrendering of arms. Sujato Bhadro, the man in charge

of initiating dialogue in WB with the Maoists and who was later blamed by various civil rights groups for the death of Kishenji, accepted in an interview with me,

*“All had one policy not to discuss anything. Peace talk means that you have to identify there is a political problem. They are the people of India. They have different viewpoints, different mode of communications and fighting but they want to do good for the people. If you don’t identify this, if you don’t acknowledge this point, if you treat them as mere criminals the result will be extermination.”*⁶¹

The importance of political involvement alongwith security response has been discussed in the earlier segment. Politically addressing the conflict entails opening up a space for dialogue with the conflicting parties. But instead of such an opportunity, government has identified them as the enemy of the people who are disturbing the peace of the country. With enemy, counter insurgency measures become legitimised to eradicate them sometimes often in extra-constitutional manner. Being an enemy means the Maoists can be denied access to any legal rights otherwise granted to the citizens of the country. An enemy need not always be given the permission to follow procedures of legality. Hence to avoid the space for negotiation, government stresses on the condition of giving up weapons which is vehemently rejected by the Maoists. And this refusal by the Maoists to accept any condition for peace talks provide the perfect rationale for the government to emphasise on the security aspect.

Against such a background, Maoists are also not ready to trust the government because earlier instances of dialogue in AP, has been used by the government to its advantage. Immediately after the failure of the talks, top Maoist leader Azad was suddenly found dead in a combat with the security forces. Similar events followed after the failure of talks in WB where PB member Kishenji was killed in combat. Bhadra continues, *“To accept the fact that it is a conflict which is political in nature. Then they have to follow the laws of war. Laws of war compels you to open up a dialogue. It opens the gate of UN [United Nations] to interfere. Then the issue of war crime will come up. Arrested will be considered prisoner of war. So extra-legal disappearances cannot be continued. It will be highly condemned. But if you call them terrorist you have a freer space to kill them without going through much trouble of political solution.”*⁶²

⁶¹ Interview with the researcher November 2017 in Kolkata

⁶² Interview with the researcher

The option of peace talks is not even considered as a serious approach of addressing the conflict. The space for talks is highly constrained and conditional thereby making it impossible for either party to take the first step. Political consideration has been relegated to oblivion within the security framework adopted and pursued by GOI for decades. Important agendas like land could be discussed during negotiation. However, if the government has a pre-determined motif of not negotiating on issues like distribution of land to the landless for cultivation or distribution of natural resources with the Adivasis then the issue of talks become redundant. Such denial of sharing of collective resources explains the hegemony over it by the dominant groups who is reluctant to accommodate the 'Others' for a fair share.

These pre-conditions for talks do not help in trust building between the two parties. The attitude of the government is summed up by a senior police officer currently serving. On the question of peace process he said to me,

*“At some stage or the other they have been called to join the mainstream political parties and contest elections. It happened in all states where they have been called to give up arms and come to negotiation. I don't think that can happen. If the other side is not interested at all, then how do you initiate a peace process. Their leadership is also crippled. They are losing most of their politburo members. Their core members are in disarray. Besides, I don't think, even if you give a call, Ganapathy (Maoist general secretary when the interview took place) will come and negotiate.”*⁶³

States like AP and WB have initiated peace talks but there has been an absence of serious dialogue proposition from the central government. This step is significant because Maoism is not just about one or two states. Until it is dealt on a national level, addressing it on a regional level will only help to address it in that region and not across the country. Once again reiterating the importance of finding a political negotiation to the conflict, PC report has recommended, *“Since the goals of the movement are political it has to be addressed politically. Negotiation is the only political instrument of such a response in a democracy. An ameliorative approach with emphasis on a negotiated solution helps to generate greater confidence of alienated people in governance.”* (p. 60)

There is a responsibility upon the government because of it being the bigger player in this context. Hence setting of pre-conditions will not work unless the decade long schisms is

⁶³ Interview with the researcher July, 2017 in Delhi. His name is not mentioned for security reason.

acknowledged. Prafulla Samantaray who has been awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize, 2017 for his legal battle against Vedanta's Niyamgiri mines and for protecting the Dongria Kondh tribe commented in an interview with me,

*“State must first shun violence. They must accept it as a political movement. They [Maoists] should not be banned. Let there be dialogue atleast. Let the people decide. In this way many things can be settled. We are just outsiders. This shows a dark side of the State's policy.”*⁶⁴

In fact government has to walk the extra mile to ensure an atmosphere of trust building if it wants the conflict to settle amicably. Journalist Ashutosh Bhardwaj comments ,

*“I believe that's the only policy. If you want to end it, then bring them into mainstream, have talks with them walk more than an extra mile, release them, rehabilitate them, and give them State security. That's the only way out. It is arrogance which has stopped State from inviting the Maoist for peace talks. Why do I not hear any unconditional offer. Let's talk. Let's suspend operation for a month or two months. We will not go inside the jungle. Let's discuss it out.”*⁶⁵

However, it is necessary to point out that the ultimate aim of the Maoists is to destabilise the current system of government and establish their own political system through revolution. Therefore in such a situation, dialogue may not achieve all the objectives unless the Maoists suddenly decide to abandon their revolutionary goal. But discussions on issues of land or resources could go a long way in redressal of the grievances of the marginalised section of the population who can be constructively and not manipulatively weaned away from joining as Maoist cadres. And that will go a long way in reducing the Maoists' size (assumed to be 10,000-12,000 approx.) and challenge them at the root of the resource personnel. Instead government's policy of striking the leadership and killing them is actually working in favour of the Maoists by establishing an anti-people image of the government which is not ready to meet their demands.

So why is it that the government is so reluctant to sit across the table and offer peace talks with the Maoists. To sit across for peace dialogue, GOI has to address the basic demands of land and natural resources. Prakash Singh explains the situation,

⁶⁴ Interview with the researcher October, 2017 in Bhubaneswar

⁶⁵ Interview with the researcher September, 2017 in Delhi

*“In fact the peace talks, some round of peace talks that were held in AP, land reforms came up, but land reforms is now a forgotten agenda with any state government. So that’s why the basic issue has not been resolved. Hence what we are seeing is the containment of violence by the sheer deployment of massive security forces and not resolution of the issue.”*⁶⁶

With the further addition of natural resources, things have become more complicated. And solving this crisis of natural resources is impossible for the government because these natural resources are exploited for commercial purposes. To share it with the locals or not evicting them from their habitation or assuring them justice from a discriminatory caste structure are some of the non-negotiable options before the government. As I had kept a question unanswered earlier, what is the real intention behind fighting one ideology (Maoism) while peacefully coexisting with another (RSS sponsored Hindutva). This explanation probably answers, as articulately by Birendra Naik in this regard

*“By peaceful resolution can I have access to land, natural resources. So peaceful resolution means States will say you peacefully leave the place. Most of the profits of the capital in India is by selling raw materials.”*⁶⁷

Therefore the easy way out is engaging in battle where negotiation on these critical issues become obsolete and rendered redundant.

Biswapriyo Kanungo explains,

*“In the North East the so called statemen believe that the nationality movements can be suppressed. While Naxalism requires continuous political process. Moreover it is spread over the country. Their [Maoists] base is tribals, peasants, daily labourers, and Dalits of the country. So it is not easy to have a dialogue with them and conclude it. It is a political movement which wants to end the exploitation, unemployment, poverty, disparity, inequality. So it is a much bigger thing bigger than the nationality issue.”*⁶⁸

The fight in case of the Maoists are on certain non-negotiable options which directly attacks the structural limitations of the country.

⁶⁶ Interview with the researcher August, 2017 in Delhi

⁶⁷ Interview with the researcher October, 2017 in Bhubaneswar

⁶⁸ Interview with the researcher October, 2017 in Bhubaneswar

*“Firstly why should the State approach [for peace talks] because they cannot accommodate each other. Both are diametrically opposite. No chance of coexistence. Peaceful resolution is a smokescreen. The ruling class applies it when they feel weak to suppress the movement militarily or in a national crisis where it is not advisable to resort to civil war at the same time. Or if there is huge international pressure. In that case both the warring parties try to avail the opportunity to manoeuvre to their best advantage.”*⁶⁹

While the Maoists have their own rationale for taking advantage of peace talks, State has its own, of refusing to negotiate. Somewhere in between there is this complete absence of an understanding where talks could be a viable measure of addressing the conflict. There is a deadlock where either side neither advances nor retreats amidst the cycle of never ending attacks and counter attacks thereby creating an ideal situation of Conflict Impasse.

5.2.4 How is the security response a reflection of structural inadequacy?

Once we have understood the myriad nuances of security framework, we will now summarise how the security responses are an extension and reflection of the structural anomalies that the Indian society epitomises. To summarise, Indian political class has been dominated by certain caste and class groups. As the majority of Adivasis and lower caste have been excluded from this process, they have felt alienated. To regain their lost dignity and demand what is rightfully theirs, they have joined hands with the Maoists. Maoists may have provided the leadership, but the large flow of cadres may not have joined hands only out of fear. This is rather a conscious decision which have provided a conducive atmosphere for Maoism to thrive. Reducing the complex socio-economic dynamics of the conflict to issues of violence which can be dealt with securitising the conflict is a gross over-simplification. There is an inherent tendency to overlook the specific demands of the conflict relating to decade long injustices as claimed by the excluded communities. By refusing to assign any label to the conflict and analyse the context of violence, government is in fact refusing to acknowledge the reasons behind the conflict.

The excluded groups who have always been assigned the status of ‘Other’ is once again refused a fair hearing by labelling them as enemy which legitimises government’s right to indulge in violence to save the rest from the ‘Other’. The fact that the excluded communities could have joined out of conscious decision is relegated to the background amidst the

⁶⁹ A Maoist whom I met in Bhubaneswar

irresistible presence of dominant voices who claim that the Adivasis are simple people who have been tricked into Maoism. Absence of peace talks on a national level highlight the overwhelming urge to ignore the rightful demands like distribution of land or fair share in the natural resources. Being voiceless and invisible there would be fewer chances of these excluded communities getting justice because of indiscriminate violence pursued by the government. Therefore these responses are not just failing to address the conflict but actively contributing towards its further exacerbation.

5.3 The War of Words – Maoist Ideology v/s Management of Public Perception

Management of public perception is a central government response stated as one of the ways to deal with the perception of Maoism among the cadres, supporters and intellectuals. Although nothing is clarified as to what exactly constitutes managing the public perception, various regional governments have adopted this and implemented in its respective regions. Managing the public perception as is conceived constitutes two core aims - firstly, to act as a trust building initiative between the government administration and the locals in the areas dealing with Maoism. Secondly, to construct a negative image of the Maoists as anti-nationals who believe in an imported ideology based solely on violence. Such an approach will deal with two things. On one side it will create a positive support for the government and on the other it will help to create a negative image of the Maoists. While, attempting to achieve the former may not necessarily guarantee the latter, therefore separate and exclusive initiatives are undertaken to address the twin intention.

The various ways and means (to be discussed shortly) by which public perception is managed highlights the government's strategies of analysing Maoism as based on ideology and fear. I shall be discussing the two segments where I shall explain how such an interpretation is contributing to conflict prolongation. This will be followed by finding how this response is once again a reflection of the structural inadequacy that the socio-political framework of India has been experiencing.

5.3.2 Mobilisation on Ideology

Before I begin discussing this section, I would like to clarify on the word 'mobilisation'. While I personally prefer the term participation which allows space for the cadres to engage in conscious decision making over their participation, mobilisation, altogether, denies such an agency to the cadres. It rests solely on the strategies and functions of the Maoists in influencing the cadres through their propaganda to join hands with them. However, since the aim of this

chapter is to analyse how the government perceives these responses, I am using the word mobilisation to understand how it has perceived Maoism where, as earlier explained, agency of these communities is relegated to the background.

Along with all the levels at which the conflict is currently unfolding, waging a psychological battle is equally if not more important. And in this battle the GOI wants to establish the superiority of democratic discourse over Maoist ideology. Through the various measures initiated under this response the intention is to manifest that it is democracy after all as opposed to Maoism which will be able to deliver their needs and wants and provide a better life that they desire.

The upper level leadership who believe revolution as the only path are strict ideologues and are well versed in Maoism. But there are those who are either manipulated/forced to join as a result of Maoist propaganda or those who are joining voluntarily because of losing faith in the current political system. In addition to this, there is a section of the civil society actors and intellectuals who romanticise Maoism and directly or indirectly support them. Hence ideological warfare as directed by the GOI will have to take into account these various levels at which the consciousness about ideology and discourse play a role.

“In the ultimate analysis the war being waged in the Indian heartland is the war of ideology. It’s a battle between democracy and all that it stands for versus a dictatorship involving the suppression of the very freedom democracy believes in. Mao in his writings have repeatedly stated that the success of revolution is predicated 30% on arms strength and 70% on propaganda.” (CLAWS, p. 142)

Explaining how this strategy works, a senior Police officer explains to me, *“It’s more of a micro kind of thing. You cannot really dictate it from Delhi. That is something which has to be done by the state and intelligence agencies. If you ask my experience in Odisha, we successfully have managed public perception and told them that you are being influenced by the Telegu and Chattisgarh cadres. They have come and exploited you.”*⁷⁰

Such an analysis from a serving police officer explains the Adivasis and the villagers as simple people who are being manipulated to join Maoism. It considers that they are simply victims of the conflict. Such an understanding devoid the Adivasi of any agency where they are not considered capable enough to take decision. Construction of a positive image for the

⁷⁰ Interview with the researcher September, 2017 in Delhi

government is not an easy task specially after years of neglect and an already pre-constructed image of gun wielding State representatives in the form of police or forest guards who are a constant reminder to the locals about the exploitative system. Therefore in order to win the hearts and minds of the local population police organise initiatives like football matches, street theatres and blood donation camps in the interior most areas. The officers themselves participate in such football matches and mingle with the locals thereby helping to create a friendly image of the police. Street theatres are tools intended to showcase the various government initiatives for the benefits of the local population and how they can benefit from such schemes. It is also intended to portray the Maoists as someone who thrive on fear of the locals. The concept of blood donation camps is also similar to creating a humane side of the security personnel and display that they are also ordinary human beings just like them. Such an image helps to break the already constructed image among the locals of gun holding police officials and the absence of platforms to voice their demands and concerns.

Although it is wise to admit, that measures such as organising a football match is a one-time affair conducted by the government without any permanent presence of administration to whom the locals (the locals of the area where the Maoists are a dominant force) can turn to in case of their need. For the locals who form the support structure of the Maoists, government represents uniform clad people with guns in their arms because of the perennial presence of security camps as the one I have witnessed in Jhargram (mentioned earlier). Such an imagery cannot be overcome with minimalistic steps like managing of the perception. It needs continuous efforts to engage with the populace who are turning to the Maoists for help by providing them with basic facilities and assuring them of government justice in times of need. Building trust will require redressal of grievances and ensure prompt justice which has been denied to the marginalised to regain their faith in the system.

In addition to creating a positive image where the government administration needs to be portrayed as someone with the marginalised, there is another objective - to render the imagery of an all-powerful entity which is stronger than the Maoists. State is something which can never be defeated and hence fighting with the State is futile. *“It is important to convince the people that the State has the will and the power to defeat Maoist designs. If this is not done the mass of the public will gravitate towards the Maoists. It is hence imperative that the PLGA is either defeated or defanged. The presence of security forces in areas dominated by the PLGA would hence be necessary to give the local population a sense of security. This deployment would have to be long term to produce the necessary effect.”* (CLAWS, p. 185)

As already mentioned, on my visit to Jhargram I have come across a number of police camps. There is no doubt that it gives a sense of security to the locals. But my discussion with the locals also portrays that for them the government still remains true to the image of a gun wielding entity. For the inhabitants of the area, the lack of governance and social justice, government is nowhere visible except in uniforms who carries a gun. Therefore the endeavour to create a macho type image of the government, which is invincible, has this as its side effects which is in a way ruining the often achieved positive image from a football match or a street theatre to win the hearts and minds of the locals.

The other aspect of managing the public perception is to deliberately take steps to create negative images of the Maoists. One such example is the use of print and visual medium to reveal names of Maoists and their involvement in various activities like destruction of government buildings or attacks on security personnel, This is quite clearly stated as a strategy in the Status paper of 2006 point 4 (ix): *‘Mass media should also be extensively used to highlight the futility of naxal violence and loss of life and property caused by it and developmental schemes of the Government in the affected areas so as to restore people’s faith and confidence in the Government machinery’*. The aim is to show the destructive nature and violent dispossession of the Maoists which is claimed to have no place in a democratic country. The point is, that their activities and the basis of their ideology stands antithetical to the ideals and principles of what democracy stands for. Therefore what the Maoists are trying to achieve, and their methods have no place in democracy. The point here is to constrain their support from the various sections of the society including a section of the intellectual class who continue to extend their support and solidarity to the group.

“Information warfare – the government also needs to launch a well-orchestrated information campaign to expose intellectuals and other opinion makers supporting the Maoists. It would also be essential to get both the media and the intelligentsia to support the fight against the CPI (Maoist).” (CLAWS, p. 187) As mentioned in the earlier chapter how during the 1960’s Naxalbari uprising spreading across the streets of Calcutta, police have taken refuge in spreading misinformation/ rumours of deaths of young people and their abandonment of the movement. The aim of such information strategy is to instil a sense of fear for the State and a sense of hopelessness among the cadres of their success in the continuation of the fight. Police have claimed success in such strategies where people have substantially been disillusioned. In the current phase of Maoism, therefore other than the leadership, the focus remains on high profile intellectuals who are mostly classified as those who have spoken

against the government. The Status paper mentions, “(vii) *The states from where naxal activity/influence, and not naxal violence, is reported should have a different approach with special focus on accelerated socio-economic development of the backward areas and regular interaction with NGOs, intelligentsia, civil liberties groups etc. to minimize over ground support for the Naxalite ideology and activity.*”

There are also intellectuals and civil society members who directly support the cause of the Maoists. They are well educated and have extensive national and international networks. It helps them to spread their message and cause in support of the Maoists. “*Prominent personalities such as Agnivesh, Binayak Sen, Arundhati Roy consistently espouse the cause of the Maoists. The larger danger of such actions is that many young minds from our learning institutions get influenced by opinions espoused and start leaning towards Maoist ideology. people from the international community have also jumped onto the Maoist bandwagon. In the trial of Binayak Sen, some foreigners from European countries descended on Chattisgarh to witness the proceedings. Support was also extended by Nobel laureates which shows the extent and reach of the Maoist in this regard.*” (CLAWS, p.143)

The motif behind the Government response of managing the public perception is influenced by the strategy to create the constant imagery of violence being the only method used by the Maoists. This is done in order to equate the Maoists with death and destruction which has no place in a democratic country. The use of the derailment of the Gyaneswari train incident⁷¹ and its aftermath as a propaganda technique by the government was explained to me when I visited the location. I had the opportunity to discuss the details of the incident with a reporter who was residing in Jhargram and had covered the Maoist violence in the area for quite some time (and incidentally the train accident also). He pointed out that it is difficult to believe the police had no idea that the Maoists were planning such incident at a massive scale because of the fact that every phone in the area was being tapped. On the other hand, despite the fact that so many years have passed by, no effort has been made to remove the two coaches, leading to the death of so many innocent people, from the area. On my enquiring a local person, he pointed out that it is a deliberate way adopted by the security people to constantly remind the local inhabitants of the extent of destruction that the Maoists can commit. This is their [government] way of not allowing people to forget what happened. It is a creative way of constructing an image where the Maoists are portrayed as a band of criminals or terrorists

⁷¹ Gyaneswari train derailment was organised by the Maoists on 28th May, 2010 leading to the deaths of around 150 people.

killing people. On establishing and justifying such an imagery, any action undertaken by the government becomes legitimised.

Other such efforts made by the government include floating stories of Maoists leaders owning vast properties or sending their children to foreign countries for education while exploiting the poor Adivasis and the landless for their own profit. The motif behind such imagery is to try to paint a picture of the Maoists as opportunists. The idea is to claim that the Maoists are simply using the locals for their own benefits while their personal life is safe and comfortable. Let us examine the following examples from two newspaper reporting :

The Hindu (English national daily) reports on 8th May, 2018-

Properties of Maoist seized

“This seizure was made under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act .

The Home Ministry said on Tuesday that investigating agencies had seized more than ₹1.43 crore, 20 acres of land, several buildings in Bihar and Jharkhand and two flats in Kolkata bought by Maoist leaders.

This seizure was made under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

The Enforcement Directorate had recently seized cash and other properties of two prominent CPI(M) leaders of Bihar and Jharkhand.

As many as ₹1.43 crore, 20 acres of land, several buildings, cars, SUVs, excavators, bus and tractors were seized under the UAPA from Maoist leaders in Bihar and Jharkhand in the recent past, a Ministry official said.

The agencies also seized two flats purchased in Kolkata by a Maoist leader from Bihar.

The confiscated money included ₹ 27.5 lakh, which was seized from Prabhawati, wife of the late Maoist leader Arvindji, in Jehanabad in Bihar and ₹ 25.15 lakh, seized from Rohit, the son of Maoist leader Nandu Yadav, in Latehar in Jharkhand.

The seized properties, which were bought through the extorted money, include 7 acres of land bought by Maoist leader Yamuna Mistri in

Aurangabad, two acres of land purchased by Arjun Singh in Jehanabad, and 2.2 acres of land bought by Sunil Singh in Aurangabad (Bihar) among others , another official said.

Let us take another example: The Daily Pioneer (English Daily) reports on 29th October, 2018:

Maoist's assets of worth Rs 1.5 crore seized

In a bid to choke Naxal organisations in Giridih financially, the Giridih Police have seized properties of one Maoist namely Manoj Chaudhary so far worth Rs 1.5 crore.

Dumari SDPO Niraj Kumar told the Pioneer over mobile said that properties of several other Maoists were also under the scanner and they would be seized if the insurgents did not put down.

The latest being Manoj Chaudhary in Giridih on Saturday late in the evening , who had acquired properties of more than Rs 1.5 crore through levy, extortion and other illegal sources in Madhuwan area and Giridih town,” said SDPO (Dumari) Niraj Kumar.

“Properties of each and every Maoist within limits of different police station of Giridih are being identified which will be seized one by one. However, if they surrender themselves before police, their properties will not be seized,” he added.

Kumar said that CPI (Maoist) Manoj Chaudhary, who earlier used to sell parrots for a living who is still a BPL card holder, has amassed property worth crores in different parts of the district through extortion and levy collection after joining the Naxal organisation.

He said that objective behind seizing the property of Maoists is to choke the flow of funds to Naxal organizations as the State Government believes that financial lifeline is important to running an organisation.

“We will keep a tab on each and every financial activity of Maoists, right from their investments to education of their children, as they do not have any legal source of income,” he said.

Recently , NIA has been investigating the cases of Jharilal Mahto and Manoj Chaudhary, he added.

“So far properties worth Rs several crore of rebel Jharilal Mahto had been identified and seized by Giridih Police in the last month of October 30,2018 and properties worth several crores are being identified,” said Kumar.

The Giridih police led by Dumari SDPO Niraj Kumar,alongwith Town CO,Diraj Kumar Thakur, Pirtard CO,Vinay Prakash Ekka ,Town O/C ,Madhuwan O/C, namely Vinay Kumar Ram ,Bhaiya Ram Orawn and forces carried out an all out operation in different parts of Giridih.The operation, which started at 2pm and lasted late in the night.

These two examples show how the government is using the media to highlight those stories which would create an image of the Maoists where the latter can be portrayed as some criminals devoid of any ideology or some unprincipled gang members who are using the society's problems for their gains. The aim of the government by these measures is to garner support for its responses that it has been conducting. If the Maoists can be portrayed as enemies who are harming the country, then it logically follows that government being the protector has to take action to address the situation. And in such circumstances, any measure subsequently become legitimised and wins public approval.

“The State needs to have an effective and credible campaign to discredit Maoism and what it stands for if these ideologues are to be defeated. During the communist insurgency in Telangana enabling provisions had been enacted to prevent over ground support from progressive writers, peace movements activists, civil rights activists etc. This needs to be replicated now.” (CLAWS, p.143)

This is not a new technique. While governments have earlier used such techniques specially in the 1960's uprising by introducing anti socials within the ranks and files of the cadres who would discredit the movement from within. Ex-Naxalite Dipanjan Raichoudhury comments in this respect, *“The policy was there of introducing them [anti-socials] and therefore dissociating them from the commoners. When society is disintegrating in parts or to some extent tokhun jara society theke kichu pache na or jara parasites of society or dacoits (those who are getting nothing out of society or those who are parasites or dacoits), naturally they will come and join. So the Ccommunists have to be careful about these lumpen (the term has been used by the interviewee) people. These people turn out to be spy for the police.”*⁷² These people used to engage in all sorts of anti-social activities under the garb of Naxalism at the behest of the police and thereby discredit the credibility of the Naxalites before of the public eye. Common people became disillusioned with their activities and pulled their support from the Naxalites. This policy of the government worked in its favour by psychologically dealing with the Naxalites. It helped to gradually withdraw the public support that the Naxals had enjoyed during the earlier phases of their uprisings.

While this technique may have worked earlier, it is difficult to introduce such elements at the current phase merely because of the presence of the Maoists in the interior parts of the

⁷² Interview with the researcher November 2017, in Kolkata

forest where penetration has always been a challenge. They have remained out of the reach. What the security forces have been able to achieve, instead, is form extra-constitutional forces like Salwa Judum encouraging further violence in the name of security. Once again this is a stated policy option adopted officially by the GOI. The status paper of 2006 point 4 (ix) states, “Efforts will continue to be made to promote local resistance groups against naxalites but in a manner that the villagers are provided adequate security cover and the area is effectively dominated by the security forces.” If viewed from the perspective of security response this is a practical tactic. Primarily because, the locals know the Gondi (the primary Adivasi language in Maoist dominated areas in which the Maoists are fluent) language which the police personnel are unaware of. Secondly, due to the similarity in physical features they can easily mingle with the locals and collect information without creating suspicion. However, this has created a theatre of fratricidal killings among the various Adivasi groups where one groups supports the Maoists and the other act as security personnel. However, instead of building trust and creating an efficient spy system through the villagers themselves, government plans to achieve the same result by deploying spies from outside. But this has its negative impact. It disturbs harmony of the village and creates fratricidal enmity amongst the Adivasis. These have often resulted in killings for revenge over petty disputes and pass them as Naxals death.

Now there are two questions that remain to be answered: Firstly, are the Maoists seriously motivated. This will help us understand if the government is correct in its analysis on the Maoists. And secondly, if the techniques used by the government is enough to act as an ideological antidote to the Maoist doctrine. It is impossible to come to any ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer regarding both of the above questions. However, below is an attempt to engage in a discussion.

To the first question, Ajai Sahani replies,

“ Ideology defines the actions, motivations and purpose of the top leadership of the Maoists. It has no relevance below that or may be marginal relevance and in progressively marginalising relevance as you go down the cadres. I have interacted with many police officers who are always like the Maoists have no idea about Maoism. Then I ask how much does your Jawan know about the Constitution. How much does your inspector or sub inspector know about the Indian constitution. You are an IPS [Indian Police service] officer and so you have been forced to study Indian constitution. How much do you even understand the constitution. How much are you even ideologically motivated by the Indian constitution and democracy. I do not see that

*among the Maoists- the CC [Central Committee], the PB [Polit Bureau] and even members of the regional committee are very highly motivated. Beyond that I do not expect ideological motivation. I get a mish-mash. The Maoists make an effort to communicate to each of their levels to introduce a certain ideological component to their motivations*⁷³ (the process is called Bolshevization and is discussed in detail in the next chapter).

Journalist Bhardwaj explains the situation,

*“Without ideology they could not have sustained for so long. For 50 years you could not have run an army, the reason I call it an insurgency because it’s an ideological based insurgency. Random temporary groups of some bandits or dacoits cannot run for so long. There has to be a cohesive force for any armed group to be together in a fairly disciplined manner for so long for whatever purposes and that cohesive force can only come from an ideology.”*⁷⁴

Similarly Hridayesh Joshi explains,

*“Ideology still plays a role. There is no doubt that it is still ideological warfare. Fear also plays a role and that is why informers are still there. Although the level of ideological inspiration might be less than Naxalbari.”*⁷⁵

There are two things which needs to be understood. To try and argue that the Maoists are not ideologically motivated is not the adequate way of looking at the conflict. This response of the government (managing of public perception) is based on an understanding that the Maoists who enjoy support for their actions and sacrifice has to be discredited in front of the public eyes to reduce the support that they receive. This will also help the government to legitimise any actions that they undertake against the Maoists. Secondly, trying to portray the Maoists as criminals and terrorists may not achieve as much of a result as is expected. This is simply because just like many other political parties, Maoists consider themselves as a political party (even if the government does not). And just like individual corruption of any other political party does not tarnish the image of the entire political party, similarly news like possessing property by an individual Maoists party member may not dent the image of the entire Maoist party. This also proves that the cadres whom the State refuses to grant any agency,

⁷³ Interview with the researcher

⁷⁴ Interview with the researcher

⁷⁵ Interview with the researcher

has in fact conscious decision making abilities based on which they rationally discard such attempts by the government to discredit the Maoists.

It is the leadership which remains highly motivated. The cadres simply relate their situations to the cause of the Maoists. For the cadres knowing the nuances of Maoism, Marxism or Leninism is not that important and is even redundant. Therefore it is the relatable situation of poverty and injustice that acts as a motivating force behind their decision of joining the Maoists. It is not important to argue if the Maoists truly and sincerely represent the cause of the marginalised. That is a wrong question to ponder over. What is rather significant to understand is that, if the marginalised can relate their situation with that of the Maoists; If the marginalised think and believe that their cause can be represented by none other than the Maoists themselves then the purpose of the Maoists is served, which is to mobilise people, and which necessarily need not have anything to do with Maoism or Marxism.

Senior researcher of a New Delhi based think tank argues, *“To a great extent ideology, I would say, brought so many of those educated and upper caste brahmins from Andhra to the jungles and sacrificed their life and spend , so obviously left radical ideology driven by the Maoist principle and capturing the power has led to major major impact. The way they are leading the Adivasis to take up arms and fight has something to do with ideological elements - fight against the injustice and claim the land, they want to take up issues like minimum wages, issues of, you know, minor forest produce.”*⁷⁶

Government through the response of managing the public perception intends to wage an ideological battle against the Maoists. But this ideological battle fought by the government must include the two tiers of the people (leaders who are ideologically motivated and cadres who relate their socio-economic conditions) and direct its actions based on them. And I am not deliberately mentioning the intellectuals and the civil society members who cannot be easily manipulated based on some newspaper clippings and neither can they be forced to submit to government authority. Simply targeting the upper level leadership will not be sufficient because one set of ideologues will be replaced by another set. It will never be eradicated unless the followers, supporters and cadres are equally if not more disillusioned with the Maoists.

Retired police officer Prakash Singh explains, “If you are taking superficial views based on violence depending on the number of people killed has come down, districts affected have come down, number of surrenders have increased then you are on top of the problem. But have

⁷⁶ Interview with the researcher

you been able to resolve the basic issues? The problem has been contained. But the latest figures show inequality is rising and these figures give ammunition to ideologues.”⁷⁷ Therefore ideology has to be understood not as theories and ideals propagated by political scientist whose name does not even sound familiar to the hundreds and thousands of the cadres. Ideology needs to be understood as objective conditions of poverty, inequality and discrimination which is familiar to the cadres and with which they can easily relate.

Managing the public perception, therefore has broad objective but limited resonance. There is a misconception regarding ideology which is accepted and pursued by the government. Biswapriyo Kanungo explains,

*“Tribals are in the path of resistance movement. You may find some problem with their ideology. They know that they are suffering and the Naxals are sacrificing with them. They stay with the people. Tribals can identify with them. Naxals are eating with them and having meeting with them. While all other leaders are not approachable.”*⁷⁸

Therefore not only can the ordinary cadres relate their situation with the Maoists ideology, but they can easily relate to the Maoist leadership with whom they share bonds. These bonds have been the result of legitimation that the Maoist leadership has been able to establish and which the government representatives has failed. The fact that the Maoists share existential needs of their daily lives like food, shelter and clothing with the ordinary people give them a feeling of togetherness which is absent in any attempts of a football match or a blood donation camps. These initiatives are temporary in nature and do not pertain to their daily needs. Which is why participation in a football match may be temporarily engaging or a street theatre may be entertaining, what is missing in these initiatives are permanent redressal of their existential crisis and gross injustice.

A Maoist whom I have interacted has this to say about how government views their ideological stance,

“More or less everybody is guided by ideology. People follow certain ideology. That is the curse of humanity. Whether acquired or inherited. The role of the State is to protect itself. The very duty of the State has reached a stage where it is fearful. State is much more

⁷⁷ Interview with the researcher

⁷⁸ Interview with the researcher

fearful of the people than Maoism. State is not willing to suppress Maoism because then it will not get any pretext to suppress the mass movements and the people.”⁷⁹

For the Maoists, the ideological warfare initiated by the government is nothing more than ways and means to suppress the rightful demands of the people and to suppress the mass movements under the garb of Maoism. Government understands that the Maoists mobilise people on the basis of an ideology. This is true but only to certain extent. There are very few people who will understand the nuances of Maoism as the leaders want them to understand. There is another side to this story. The lower level Maoist cadres understand ideology by relating their living conditions to this ideology which may not necessarily have anything to do with the theoretical nuances. Hence government bases its response of managing the public perception without taking into account how the cadres relate to the ideology.

5.3.3 Mobilisation on fear:

Swadhin Pattanaik, *“Perhaps it [ideology] does play a role. They are still committed. To think that their ideology is only violence is unfair.”⁸⁰* This is yet another misconception where the Maoist ideology is equated with its sole dependence on violence. Government understanding of Maoism as extremist organisation stems largely from the fact that it is a violent organisation or that a substantial part of the Maoist ideology depends upon violence. Ashutosh Bhardwaj explains,

“Violence and fear emerged from ideology. The ideology is of violence. When I talk of ideology I do not talk about Leninism and Marxism. See if you are running an armed struggle, violence and fear will be created. You have to recruit regularly. Some will join by choice and some will join by force.”⁸¹

GOI often attributes the people’s support of the Maoists as based on intimidation tactics and label the Adivasis as victims of the opportunistic intentions of the Maoists. The latter understanding devoid the Adivasis of their own agency or consciousness which could have played a role in their decision to join the Maoists.

Ajai Sahani explains,

⁷⁹ Interview with the researcher

⁸⁰ Interview with the researcher October, 2017 in Bhubaneswar

⁸¹ Interview with the researcher

*“Yes fear is always there. That is why they capture a police [man], decapitate his body, allow it to lie for days and asks people not to touch it. Of course there is. A revolution is not a tea party. That’s part of the strategy and tactics. It is an accepted part. So intimidation is always there. In the lower level there is harnessing of grievances. Anybody walking with a gun in an area where there is no administration present is using intimidation.”*⁸²

While such an explanation devoid the cadres of any agency and explains it within the framework of the dominant group as the decision maker, it is true that fear does play a role. The question is, does fear as propagated by the Maoists play sufficient a role in winning the trust of the people. Getting a clear answer may not be that easy. The reason being forceful domination by the Maoists for a certain period of time might establish loyalty but that will be temporary in nature. People will defect as soon as there is leniency within the command structure in the area and will in fact search for opportunities at every time to escape from the Maoist domination. Establishment of legitimacy ensures loyalty even without the presence of someone guarding over the people Ashutosh Bhardwaj says,

*“One can recruit by force, but then they cannot be kept for long by force. He will eventually escape. He will escape after 6 months or a year. Forget about this. This can happen anywhere. If you are kept by force you will always be seeking ways to escape. This is human Psychology. Forget about Maoism.”*⁸³ Hence fear might have played a role in mobilising people but that may not be the only criteria. Fear along with winning the trust which will legitimise the Maoists’ position is equally important to ensure their safety. In similar situation GOI is failing. With police camps still in place in affected villages where Maoists no longer exists fail to win the trust of the people. Police then recruit extra-constitutional groups from amongst the locals to act as spy thereby creating a chasm instead of a bridge between them and the locals.

Gautam Navlakha continues,

*“Fear cannot last long. By inculcating fear only temporary objectives possible. Maoists have local support and popular backing. While State has failed because it is using fear.”*⁸⁴

⁸² Interview with the researcher

⁸³ Interview with the researcher

⁸⁴ Interview with the researcher

Support out of fear is only a part of the whole narrative. While this is partially true, what is missed out in such an analysis is that the longer and sustained period of support could not have been solely dependent on fear of the people. It is undeniable that fear plays a role in mobilising them, but sole dependence on fear would have achieved temporary loyalty.

The government responses emanate from a partial interpretation of the Maoist ideology as ideas which largely survives on fear and violence. This results in impulsive responses like banning of the organisations or arresting respected citizens who speak against government responses. The government rationale follows that the Maoists aims to overthrow the government through revolutionary violence. This is against the democratic structure of the Indian political system. Any dissent, therefore, must be constitutionally addressed, and violence is not one of the ways to do so.

CPIML (Liberation)⁸⁵ Politburo member Kavitha Krishnan comments, *“Similarly you are banning the Maoists parties. I would say that banning is counter-productive. Rather than banning the Maoist parties also, I would say that you should not ban any ideology based on that, certain forms of violence may be proscribed, that is fair enough. If they violate, that they might face legal consequences. But why are you proscribing an ideology. Why are you proscribing the membership of a certain party. That approach is something I would question. Certain forms of violence and certain forms of organised violence might invite certain forms of legal action but use of draconian laws to criminalise basically the sheer participation of a political party that is also something which is not going to go anywhere, something that makes it extremely difficult for people in those areas, members of the Maoist party who have not committed any crime.”*⁸⁶

The question that we are trying to find answer in this segment is, do the Maoists manipulate people into supporting them by threats i.e. by creating an atmosphere of fear. Sahoo, *“Yes of course of course any guerrilla warfare, any sort of insurgency they thrive in fear, they generate because once you join this sort of thing it becomes difficult to leave and then they generate fear anybody who leaves is killed, they hang and the way they take up punishment by setting an example sort of thing this is how they actually kind of send a message so fear of course. I have interacted with a number of surrendered Maoists, many of them say they were bobby trapped many of them have*

⁸⁵ This political outfit is a breakaway faction of the Maoists. It does not support the Maoists’ strategies and tactics and therefore regularly participates in the democratic process of the country.

⁸⁶ Interview with the researcher September, 2017 in Delhi

been trapped and they have come for some sort of village meetings were simply not allowed to go out. So you have to join."⁸⁷ Sahoo points to some interesting observations. Government can challenge this ideology only with some visible developments that are changing the lives of the people in a positive manner.

Senior researcher P.V Ramana explains how this ideology among the Maoists works, *"Ideology is still there. The top leadership is still committed to ideology. However, the Maoists pretty well know that this ideology will never succeed. Cadres don't even know the ideology. They join for various reasons. So there is a gap between leadership and cadres. It is only the hard core who rise up in the military. There is a certain self-respect which gets hit if they come back and then they become dogmatic even knowing that they will never succeed. They suffer from dilemmas. This ideology has caught the fascination and imagination of the people. And this ideology will never die."*⁸⁸

In 2009 Jharkhand police officer Francis Induwar was kidnapped and later beheaded by the Maoists. No doubt such extreme methods are adopted to create an atmosphere of fear psychosis. When asked by a reporter from the English Daily, *The Hindu*, to senior PB member Azad regarding the brutal methods adopted by the Maoists, the latter replied,

*"When our comrades hear of these cold-blooded murders committed by the APSIB [Andhra Pradesh Special Intelligence Bureau] or other officials of the state, it is natural that their blood would boil and they will not bat an eye-lid to hack any of the perpetrators of these inhuman crimes, say a man from APSIB or Grey Hounds, to pieces if he fell into their hands. In the war zone, the passions run with such intensity which one cannot even imagine in other areas or under normal circumstances."*⁸⁹

Not so surprisingly, when I visited Jhargram in WB, a reporter informed similar events. Shilda camp in Jhargram was attacked by the Maoists in February, 2010 resulting in the death of 24 Eastern Frontier Rifles (EFR) Jawans. The reporter informed me that when in 2011 Kishenji was caught by the police from the same area, there was no way he would be given an opportunity of a fair trial because the Shilda attack had reduced the morale of the security personnel which would be boosted with the death of Kishenji. In the war zone, many such attacks and counter attacks are the result of revenge where both parties have unabashedly

⁸⁷ Interview with the researcher

⁸⁸ Interview with the researcher

⁸⁹ Azad interview on peace talks, *The Hindu*, p. 14

justified their actions, many of which transgresses the line of democracy and the norms of civilisation. Therefore, there is no doubt that a gap of understanding exists of what constitutes Maoist principles and ideology among various levels of cadres and the leadership. The levels of consciousness vary as one goes top of the leadership.

Prashant Paikray sums it up, *“Some cadres do not have any knowledge of Maoism. There is no doubt a gap of ideological training exists. So what makes them join (I ask) - Because there is difference between wants and demands. It is dissatisfaction which makes them join, plus no jobs, young people are frustrated and there is rampant exploitation. Because of lack of education there is ideological gap.”*⁹⁰

However, the question that needs to be understood is, are the nuances of that understanding at all important for all levels of Maoists and if that can be exploited as a factor to malign the ideology to garner support in favour of the government responses of managing public perception. The attempts by various government forces to establish the fact that those who belong and fight for Maoism has no idea about it, is redundant. Because that is not a strong mobilising factor drawing them towards Maoism. The mobilising factor is not even fear. The inherent injustices and inequality are the factors drawing them towards Maoism. So it is a mixture of fear and motivation both acting simultaneously. This is true that the Maoist leadership too belong to the upper castes but that does not act as a constrain for them to establish themselves as representatives of the people. This is because of the legitimacy they have created by engaging with them at their level on a daily basis which the government has failed to do despite its attempts of artificially creating pro government imageries. However, the question still remains, are all the places having inequality and poverty dominated by Maoists. The answer is no. Similarly the government’s claim that the Maoists are stalling the pace of development and that is why it is necessary to remove them is equally untrue. Because the question then remains, are all those places not dominated by Maoists highly developed with all basic facilities for all the sections of the society taken care of. Then answer again lies in negative.

⁹⁰ Interview with the researcher October, 2017 in Bhubaneswar

5.3.4 How is the Management of Public perception a reflection of structural inadequacy?

There are three points that need to be understood when the government implements management of public perception. First, ideology is not just about some ideals. It helps the ordinary people to relate to their circumstances and that is what becomes instrumental in mobilising them. Countering Maoist ideology with some propaganda news through print or visual medium or organising temporary recreation is not enough. The ideology used by the Maoists helps them to legitimise their presence among these communities which is why they remain safe among them. Those places become their safe hideouts which is impossible for the government security agencies to penetrate. To establish that kind of trust and bridge the gap to address years of neglect, the understanding of ideology by the government has to be broadened. Reducing the argument solely on the fact that the cadres at the lower level are being deliberately trapped by the Maoists reflects dominant thinking. Because neither the cadres at the lower level nor are their leaders at the higher echelons interested in imparting or knowing the nuances of ideology. For them, the leadership of the Maoists and the circumstances in which they survive are relatable and that is the essence of the ordinary version of ideology. By broadening the scope of ideology as practiced by the 'Other' which has very little commonality practiced by the rest, allows the plethora of ideas to be considered which may not later come to haunt democracy. Without the broadening of the understanding of ideology, it becomes difficult for the administration to realise the conscious decision taken by the minorities towards this path. Rather the justification keeps belittling the Adivasis as mere victims of violence, once again highlighting the elitist perspective of the dominant and the powerful.

Secondly, understanding that fear play only a minor role in the mobilisation endeavour as pursued by the Maoists is extremely essential to counter the Maoists' ideology. Only fear would not have helped the Maoists to sustain and survive for such a long period. Without the acceptance among whom the Maoists reside, they would not have been able to establish a legitimate voice among the people. Had the support base been totally against the Maoist groups, intimidation and violence would have achieved limited result in terms of geographical spread. The extensive area of support among people from various walks of life indicates the faith in their actions. And this would not have been possible without inculcating and imbibing the essentials of Maoism.

Prof Nandini Sundar argues, “*Tribals also have ideology. Fear plays a role but varies from area to area. Like in Bastar fear did not play a role rather more people wanted to join but had to be let go because no more weapons available. People do not join out of fear but fearful of opposing the Maoists. Ideology and fear play a role together.*”⁹¹

Finally, it is an incomplete approach to try and understand what the Maoist ideology constitute of. The attempt by the government to malign the Maoist leadership that the latter are dishonest and not true to their ideals will not work as a successful tactics among the Adivasis and the Dalits. The reason being the support to the Maoist by these marginalised groups is not rendered after a careful analysis of their ideology. The support is rendered purely on the basis of a situation which is relatable to these groups where they perceive the Maoists as partaking in it and fighting with them for their demands. Therefore it is unimportant if the Maoists are actually true to their ideology as long as the Adivasis and the Dalits think they are. So long as the Maoists will be able to maintain the image of the saviour of the people, any attempt by the government to manipulate this perception without the simultaneous effort to legitimise its own position, will not be successful. To mobilise the people, it is the people who need to believe in the authenticity of the Maoists. To break this authenticity, government has to broaden its horizon of what constitutes as ideology among the ordinary people and not how ideology is construed and practiced among the leaders. Therefore once again, the responses are not only failing to address the conflict but also contributing towards its further exacerbation by refusing to acknowledge the perspective and significance of people’s participation in the conflict.

5.4 Development / Welfare Response

Development discourse has become the most important cause for mobilising the marginalised in support of the Maoists. The number of people organising for a violent fight to demand their share of rights is on the rise. There are definitely organised agitation and protests against government policies of development, but the modus operandi of such protests falls within the defined and accepted patterns of democratic protests, unlike the kind propagated by the Maoists. Hence governments do not feel threatened with such protests.

⁹¹ Interview with the researcher

The causes for dissatisfaction and alienation already exist even before the arrival of the Maoists in an area. The Maoists do not invent the causes. The contribution of the Maoists in mobilisation, is to present the problem in a particular way and juxtapose it with adequate ways to find a solution for the problem which motivates the dissatisfied people to join the Maoists. Whether the methods adopted by the Maoists have been successful in addressing the situation is not the focus of attention here. What is important is, if the people supporting the Maoists consider that the Maoists are the ones who will be able to improve their lot by delivering upon their promises unlike the government. The decision rests with these communities. And as long as these people have faith in the Maoists over and above the government, the latter has limited scope of challenging the Maoists.

“Articles 14, 15 and 16 of Indian Constitution provide the framework for a harmonious conjuncture of equality as citizens and compensatory discrimination and affirmative action in favour of SCs/STs and the other backward sections in certain areas. The Directive Principles cast an obligation on the State to promote the educational and economic interests of these sections, and social and economic justice and equality.” (PC, p.20) Keeping the specific needs and situation of these people in mind the forefathers of the Indian Constitution guaranteed them special privileges enshrined in the Constitution. However, they have remained just as some other principle which, although has received institutional validation, has never been socio-culturally acceptable. *“If natural resources must be exploited then the local communities which bear the brunt of suffering and burden due to displacement and pollution and therefore must benefit the most. This is possible only when the public administration system is decentralised to ensure that local government feel responsible for their people. That is why the fifth and sixth schedules under article 244 of the Indian constitution were enshrined in it in 1950.”* (CLAWS, p. 176)

Lt. Gen Gurmit Singh sums it up in a clear and in no uncertain terms, *“There has been for long time no development, no quality of life. Our polity is largely based on the politics of North. There are many issues at the same time. For example- tribal problem, mines, and natural resources etc. No progress in health, education, no benefits of the development percolating from Delhi. Extremism would not have come had they not been extremely exploited. The whole existence of the tribals was based on forest and natural resources which have been taken away. Government urbanisation stands in contrast to forest. The whole battle is of*

governance and administration and law and order. We should be cleared about our development goals.”⁹²

“In an atmosphere of terror the development is selective. In some case this furthers the cause of the Maoists. Also with regard to development, the government can only be an enabler in terms of infrastructure and security. Quality development can only come by public-private partnership.” (CLAWS, p. 137)

On analysing the welfare schemes there are three trends which are visible. Firstly, peaceful protests against government projects or mass movements protesting government development drive which are affecting the Adivasis are quite common. However, government is using this garb of tackling Maoism to actually crush these movements which are constitutionally approved. Secondly, oftentimes mass movements and protests are severely crushed discouraging people to lose hope in the constitutionally approved means of raising voice. Finally, many of the development/welfare initiatives are implemented in parts which often fail to address the intended holistic approach that the government often calls attention to.

The first and the second points work simultaneously. Demanding for rights guaranteed by the constitution falls within the government approved legalities, especially when it is done in a constitutionally approved means of peaceful protests or agitation. For example, On 22nd May, 2018 in Tuticorin police fired on protesters protesting against the expansion of Sterlite Copper factory believed to be causing pollution in the area. The firing led to the death of 13 protesters. (The Hindu) Government has often times taken harsh measures to curb protest against its development drives. These actions by the government to violently address peaceful protests have discouraged people to engage in constitutionally approved means.

PC reports, *“However the right to protest, even peacefully, is often not recognized by the authorities and even non-violent agitations are met with severe repression.” (PC, p.30)*

In addition, such disillusionment among the people are well taken advantage of by the Maoists in explaining the futility of protests and joining the ranks of Maoism to challenge the government from an equal platform.

⁹² Interview with the researcher September, 2017 in Delhi

On the other hand government too wants to create an enemy against which it can direct its accusations for failing to provide basic facilities or bring in development in certain areas even after so many years post-independence. And this enemy is the Maoist against whom security responses find legitimation because of the latter's objection against indiscriminate development at the cost of the locals. Take for example the point stated in the Status Paper,

“(xiii) Another related issue is that development activities are not undertaken in some of the naxalite affected areas mainly due to extortion, threat or fear from the naxalite cadres. In these areas, even contractors are not coming forward to take up developmental work. Adequate security and other measures would need to be taken to facilitate uninterrupted developmental activities in the naxal affected areas.”

Biswapriyo Kanungo explains this scenario, *“State wants to project it as a problem. And therefore wants to continue its repression. State is for the billionaires and wants to represent inequality, exploitation and arbitrary force and undemocratic values, starvation death, unemployment. If the naxals are not there State cannot deploy paramilitary forces. Then people will say withdraw the forces. And thus the mass movements will become difficult to suppress.”*⁹³

The Adivasis demand certain basic facilities or sometimes just to live in the place that they have been living for generations and with which they attach sentimental values.

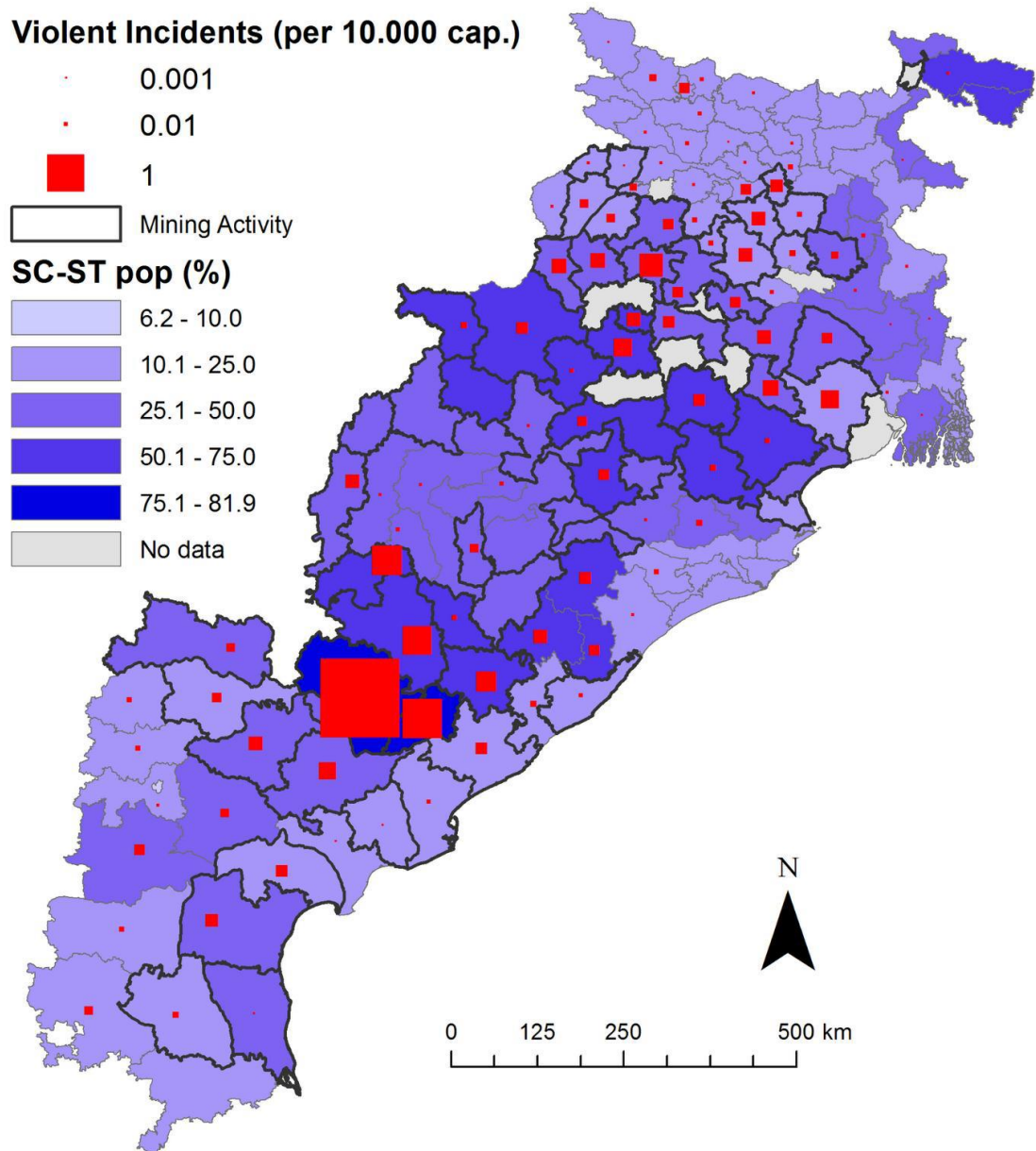
Subrangshu Chowdhury explains, *The hidden agenda [of the State] is to remove the tribals. Naxals did not intent to have the tribals because they are not politically conscious. Naxals rather went to Dandakaranya [the central location of the Maoists] to hide. It is the farmers and the peasants who are the main cadres. They are the ones who would be circling Delhi. It is tribal problem which has been minimised and simplified as a Maoists conflict. An entire discourse is created around it. State wants to create a monster and then justify its actions based on that. State has no policy. It is not serious.*⁹⁴

The following map shows the overlapping location of mineral resources , Maoist conflict and the Adivasis and the lower caste population residing in the regions. It helps to

⁹³ Interview with the researcher

⁹⁴ Interview with the researcher

contextualise the development drive of the government which comes into conflict with the types of people residing in the areas and subsequently making of the bases by the Maoists.



Map. 5: Maoist Conflict, Mining districts and SC and ST population share

(Map designed by Jan Ketil Rød and Krishna Vadlamannati)

Notes:

- (a) Districts with thicker border lines are the ones with the presence of some mining activities.
- (b) Dark blue colour indicates SC and ST population share greater than 75%.

(c) Red spots are conflict lethal events per 10000 capita.⁹⁵

It is not that the government is unaware of these complexities surrounding its much hyped development discourse.

“The real tragedy of the matter is that it is not as if the authorities are not aware of the oppression and exploitation of our tribal people. The SC [Supreme Court] while dealing with a case relating to the acquisition of tribal land in Sundergarh district of Odisha by the Mahanadi coalfields LTD, a government of India enterprise found that people whose lands were taken two decades ago were still not paid any compensation. In a stunning rebuke to the government a bench of the court comprising justices Aftab Alam and BS Mohanty termed its development policies ‘blinkered’ and held it responsible for ‘fuelling extreme discontent and giving rise to naxalism and militancy. The court also referred to the large scale displacement of tribals from forest land in the name of mining and development and said that ‘non-settlement of their rights and non-provision of timely compensation of their lost land has created the worst kind of hatred among them towards development, possibly giving rise to extremism.’”(CLAWS, p. 153)

It is not to argue that there has not been any development and all the problems of Maoism would be resolved with the addressal of these issues. But one has to accept the fact that lack of social justice and years of neglect is definitely reason enough for the adivasis to continue to fight for the basic dignity. Prafulla Samantaray explains, *“Every human being needs dignity. We have to understand that indigenous people are different. With displacement their entire life system changes. While in jungle [forest] they are the owners. If we cannot give them alternative better life let them stay where they are. People are being displaced. We build democratic movements. No police have ever been targeted by us. While it is us who are being killed. Now the government’s whole agenda is to suppress the democratic movement; so everything is done in the name of Maoists”*⁹⁶

One of the questions that we have been overlooking is, development for whom. And the answer will vary accordingly. Framing a development discourse universally applicable for such a diverse country like India is creating a gap between wants and needs. In a country like

⁹⁵ Refer, Hoelscher, K & Miklian, J “Hearts and Mines: A District-Level Analysis of the Maoist Conflict in India” Alfred-Weber-Institute for Economics University of Heidelberg, Germany available at <https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/md/awi/professuren/intwipol/india.pdf>

⁹⁶ Interview with the researcher

India with its complex social structure and unequal economic prosperity, basic demands of these myriads of people vary substantially. Building up industries close to the source of raw materials and natural resources which are inevitably the habitation of the Adivasis is changing the entire life course of these people. The existential demands and basic rights, like education and health, of these people have not yet been addressed. Their places of worship or habitation constitutes their identity and their being. Charting out a course of action involving setting up industries in areas that is close to their identity is, instead of bringing the welfare closer to them is actually pushing them further apart. These are not just any other place which can be compensated by relocating them to some other place. Taking away their land or drawing water from the river to which they offer prayers cannot be replaced by another place or another river.

“Development which is insensitive to the needs of these communities has invariably caused displacement and reduced them to a sub-human existence. In the case of tribes in particular it has ended up in destroying their social organisation, cultural identity, and resource base and generated multiple conflicts, undermining their communal solidarity, which cumulatively makes them increasingly vulnerable to exploitation.” (PC, p. 29)

Development drives are closely intertwined with the survival and unique identity of the Adivasis. Hence the definition and grammar of development approach as a method to win over the Adivasis has exceedingly failed to incorporate the sensitivity of the people inhabiting the areas.

Ranjana Pari explains, *“State’s notion and people’s notion of development is different. People want school and education while State wants industries. It is part of global capitalism. The proposal for the breaking up of the state of Jharkhand and Chattisgarh happened in the 1990’s during LPG [Liberalisation Privatisation Globalisation]. The new states did not have time to think about economic development. They naturally grew part of the new economy. The operations are meant to suppress the land acquisition movement with the smokescreen of naxalism.”*⁹⁷

Although I do not fully agree with the above statement. It is a fact that often time government has sanctioned anti-government agitations and has booked NGO’s and certain people associated with it under the laws. There are increasing instances of firing at peaceful protests against land grab, like the one in Nandigram (in WB) where 14 innocent villagers were

⁹⁷ Interview with the researcher October, 2017 in Bhubaneswar

killed in 2007 when the locals protested against land grab for a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) (The Hindu)

It is equally true that compensating for their property often had negative results on their lives who possess least awareness about their spending and expenditure. With such huge amount of money, they often end up spending without saving. Citing one such example, Prashant Paikray explains,

“There are 3 panchayats affected by POSCO⁹⁸. When IOC [Indian Oil Corporation] came in 1998 people were displaced. They were given compensation with which people bought cars and jewellery; within a few years they exhausted everything of their money and now they have migrated to cities. So people already had an idea what happens in such circumstances so when POSCO came they spontaneously joined the anti-resistance agitation. Some were given jobs. So it is these people who had to be mobilised and others joined spontaneously.”⁹⁹

Recounting similar experiences Swadhin Pattanaik comments,

“At Sunabeda there is a MIG [first Soviet and later Russian aerospace joint stock company] factory and another NALCO [National Aluminium Company Ltd], the evicted people were given compensation and many of the women were reduced to prostitution. I have seen what the tribal population has been reduced to.”¹⁰⁰

Once again, we need to remind ourselves that there is already an inherent inequality prevalent in the Indian society. And this inequality is not the result of economic disparity alone. The issue of caste and its associated caste mentality which legitimise this graded and hierarchical structures, and which cannot be redressed with economic improvement. At the lowermost level of this ladder lie the Adivasis. As already stated, neither are all poverty stricken areas supporting the Maoists nor are all those areas not under the Maoist dominance adequately developed. Inequality, presence of the natural resources in the central part of the country and

⁹⁸ A multi-national Steel making company of South Korea called Pohang Iron and Steel Company. “On June 22, 2005, POSCO signed a MoU with the Odisha government, outlining a proposal to invest in the mining industry for the purpose of building a steel plant, a captive power station and port in the Erasama Block of Jagatsinghpur district. The project area was spread over the three panchayats of Dinkia, Nuagaon and Gadakujang”. (refer, <https://thewire.in/environment/posco-odisha-tribal-land>)

⁹⁹ Interview with the researcher

¹⁰⁰ Interview with the researcher

the location of the Adivasis who are not that developed as their north-east counter parts – together form a unique opportunity for the Maoists to survive and function.

Swadhin Pattanaik explains,

*“Inegalitarian society and our attitude have been like this ever since. In this atmosphere we can never think of people addressing it. Apart from few places occupied by the naxals there are no problem, then why haven’t things improved in those areas.”*¹⁰¹

And this is an important question that should inform the government responses as well. The normative discourse explains the Maoist as the biggest hurdle in the path of development. The counter question reveals what happens in those areas which are not dominated by Maoist. Are all the welfare issues taken care of in the areas outside the Maoist reach? Hence these core issues are only partially affected by the presence of Maoists.

The presence of natural resources in these regions adds to the already complicated matter. On one side is the issue of welfare of the Adivasis, followed by combating the Maoist presence, and eventually, the allocation of resources for commercial exploitation. While it is acceptable that use of natural resources when India already owns it, is economically a very strategic decision; at the same time overlooking the concerns of the people residing in the areas in terms of their relocation has often put the two parties in conflict with each other. *“Protest action becomes an inevitable consequence of displacement, such as in Kalinganagar and in Kashipur people’s movement against Utkal Alumina Rayagada district, Orissa.”* (PC, p.16)

Kavitha Krishnan explains, *“My point is, the State has an agenda and that is to hand over resources for example in Bastar to Essar and Tata and all. They had eyes on it, and they want that property. The point is the repression is unleashed on the Adivasis in the areas in the name of controlling extremism.”*¹⁰²

And here we shall examine the third feature of this government welfare response. Let us consider the following example: India has a separate mining policy but that does not form part of holistic approach planned by the government to address the issue of Maoism. The point remains, if dissatisfaction related to such actions including exploitation of natural resources become instrumental in mobilising people against the government, it is prudent to include the

¹⁰¹ Interview with the researcher

¹⁰² Interview with the researcher

policies related to mining within the broader framework of government welfare responses as well.

“The state owned national Mineral Development Corporations giant iron-ore extraction project is at Bailadila in Bastar’s Dantewada district. Instead of bringing prosperity to the local people it has done irrevocable harm. Few benefits of this economic exploitation have trickled down to the tribals while the ecological degradation of the area has been devastating. Even worse has been the social degradation that has visited the Koitur Gond in general and the sexual exploitation of their women in particular by people from the so called civilised sections and regions of India. In Kalinganagar the Tata’s got Adivasi lands at a fraction of their market value. Tata’s and others now want to exploit Bastar’s iron-ore. In 2007 the AP government in complete contravention of the laws governing the conversion of the notified forests and tribal homelands and in a total reversal of the pre-election commitments of the congress party has signed agreements with Jindal South West of the Jindal group and the An Rak company of Ras- Al- Khaimah to mine bauxite in the picturesque Araku valley in the eastern district of Vizagapatam. This is estimated to displace over 1,00,000 tribals while creating jobs for a mere 400. The state government expects to receive a royalty of Rs 64.5 crore while the two companies are slated to rake in Rs. 1260 crore and Rs 2350 crore respectively.”
(CLAWS, p. 152)

Prof. Nandini Sundar explains, *“State has never responded to people’s grievances like health, education etc. and when people have responded the State has reacted with forces. For ex. Narmada Bachao Andolon - instead of addressing the problem of rehabilitation, government arrested Medha Patkar. The standard way of operation is crisis - people responding with armed struggle-response with forces-buying of people-co-opting them-introducing few policies measures-over a period crush the movement and not address the real issue-unless there is a politico economic change.”*¹⁰³.

The much talked about Forest Rights Act, 2006, for example, also suffer from these limitations.¹⁰⁴ *“And the recently enacted Forest Dwellers Act of 2007 may now put an end to the State’s confrontation with them. However, a legal problem remains. The Presidential order issued under Art 342 of the Constitution declares the list of Scheduled tribes State-wise. A tribe*

¹⁰³ Interview with the researcher

¹⁰⁴ Details of the Act has already been explained in Chapter 5.

that migrates from one State to another where it is not habitually resident would not be a Scheduled tribe in that State and would get none of the protection the law offers. The immigrants from Orissa were initially identified as the Samantha tribe, which finds no mention in the list of Scheduled tribes in A.P.” (PC, p.48) Thus mobility to another state devoid them of special privileges guaranteed by the Constitution, thereby exposing them to different kinds of vulnerabilities both from the Maoists as well as from the government.

When such laws are framed with protection of these groups taken into consideration, its multiple ramifications should form the core of the holistic approach claimed by the government in dealing with the Maoists. Lesser attention is paid to these details thereby exposing ordinary people to intersectional vulnerabilities, dealing with which becomes impossible in a conflict zone. In such scenarios instead of waiting for the law to modify, the local administration chooses to ignore the provisions which come into conflict with their stated objective and implement that, which creates the least trouble. Take for example, *“PESA - put the powers of managing the forests in the hands of the panchayats run by the tribes who reside there. Amongst the districts affected by LWE, 32 are PESA districts. PESA is a progressive piece of legislation which overrules all land acquisitions acts. Its implementation, however, leaves much to be desired as the states continually overrule PESA and apply the central Land Acquisition Act of 1894 vintage to acquire tribal land. There is speculation that mining lobbies, which are experiencing a boom, do not want its stringent clauses implemented. It must be ensured that constitutional provisions are strictly adhered to.”(CLAWS, p.177)*

Apart from it being side-lined by the various executive branches, the initiatives under PESA also has some other practical hurdles which is hampering its successful implementation. *“Consultation with ‘GS [Gram Sabha, the lowest administrative body in the decentralisation hierarchy] or Panchayats at appropriate level’ is mandatory in the case of land acquisition, as also rehabilitation of project affected people under Section 4(i), and in respect of grant of license etc of minor minerals under Sections 4 (k) and 4 (l) of PESA. The multiple ambiguity in this provision has served to defeat its purpose. What exactly does ‘consultation’ mean, whether both the GS and the panchayat must be consulted, and whether the word ‘appropriate’ leaves the matter to the discretion of the Government.” (PC, p.40)*

Let us consider another example, *“The tribals in the scheduled areas enjoy presumptive right of ownership of the land and minerals (Refer SC judgment in CA Nos. 4601-02 of 1997 on SLP Nos. 17080-81 in Samata vs State of Andhra Pradesh and others). Also, the Fifth Schedule requires the Government to review any law before it can be extended to the notified*

areas, so as to ensure that such a law is appropriately adapted to safeguard the interests of the tribals. In view of this, as far as the notified areas are concerned, projects that cause displacement need to be avoided. Even if the setting up of a project becomes inevitable strictly on the ground of public interest, as laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the Samata judgment, it should be on the basis of the prior consent given by the Gram Sabhas and through involvement of the tribals as owners of the projects.” (PC, p. 15)

In this context let us study the struggles of the Dongria Kondh Tribe. This tribe reside in the Niyamgiri hills spread across two districts of Rayagada and Kalahandi of Odisha. These hills are rich in Bauxite, raw material for aluminium. They have been fighting against the multinational mining conglomerate Vedanta's plan to mine the areas. In 2013 in a meeting they unanimously voted against the plan. This group is classified as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) and are entitled to make decisions through Gram Sabhas under FRA, 2006 (Roshan, 2019). The Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti (NSS), the organisation which has been spearheading the anti-Vedanta fight has been classified by the MHA as having links with the Maoists. Additionally, *“The Government should also pay heed to the wisdom of the Supreme Court expressed in the case of 'Nandini Sundar vs The State of Chhattisgarh' (Writ Petition (Civil) No. 250 OF 2007), also referred to as the Salwa Judum Judgement. In this judgment, the SC reiterated that the current social order which treats any person speaking for human rights and questioning the current paradigm of the State, as a 'Maoist' or a 'Maoist' sympathizer, has become a serious problem affecting our nation”* (PUCL, 2017)

The demand for Constitutionally approved rights is reduced to fight between the government and the Adivasis with links to Maoism. Not only, do these measures increase the gap between the locals and the government, it also helps in reducing the gaps between the Maoists and the locals. This is where the concept of legitimacy helps us understand why despite welfare efforts targeting these communities, government fails to win them over to their side. As most of these extremely sensitive acts suffer from severe implementation crisis, the chasm between the marginalised and the State continues to widen.

Maoist extremism are often used as an excuse to curb anti-development protests. Additionally, the already marginalised people who are systematically deprived through the graded system fall victims to the government responses against Maoism. These aggravates the conflict in two ways. Firstly by creating anti-government sentiments where people lose faith in peacefully demanding what is rightfully theirs. Secondly, this acts as a tool for the Maoists to garner support in their favour by exploiting the anti-government sentiments where they become the legitimate alternative to the current system of government. A combination of these

situations within the government responses fails to produce the desired outcome. Instead it contributes to the conflict by legitimising the position of the Maoists among these communities challenging which, becomes an arduous task for the government.

5.4.1 How is the Development response a reflection of structural inadequacy?

While the frustration-aggression paradigm of this conflict is not surprising, searching for reasons behind the development approach as pursued by GOI, points towards other possibilities. The reluctance to negotiate where the discussion on fair share of the resources is an option is generally overlooked by the establishment over much convenient path of designating the enemy status to the groups on the pretext that the latter is steeped into violence which is antithetical to the Indian Constitution. Even where there is legal precedence which allows to right the wrong, either they suffer from negative interpretation or absence of implementation. Therefore, the probable cause behind the response once again reflects the same standards of structural inadequacy which gave rise to the conflict at the first place. Poor implementation of the law or denying the opportunity of discussion with the local community members (despite legal jurisdiction) are only certain features which adorn the ultimate objective of excluding groups who are below in the hierarchy.

5.5 Discussions and Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to understand how the responses, instead of its designated role of addressing the causes of the conflict, are in fact contributing towards its further exacerbation. The significant inference to draw is the invisibility of the Adivasis involved in the fight. In none of the responses, are their perspective considered which would have ultimately helped these responses to bridge the gap and ensure the necessary legitimacy. Veteran Communist leader Janardhan Pati commented, *“It is not finished and would never be. Because it is based on ideology. Ideology will never be erased. Armed forces should also be condemned because they use torture against people. No civilised people can treat their people in this way. Naxals are not enemies.”*¹⁰⁵

While both the conflicting parties are in this to win the support of the local population to ensure the conflict continue for prolonged period, successive governments have ignored their

¹⁰⁵ Interview with the researcher October, 2017 in Bhubaneswar

agency. While on one hand an all-out war cannot be declared by the government because of the involvement of these very common people. On the other hand, the alternatives in the form of the responses, as envisaged, are failing to perform its designated role. The epitaph of the government responses is summarised as *“In the life of a nation, things are never too late, and government can still make amends. But in a sense India has already lost this war. It has lost it gradually, over the last 20 years, by mistaking industrialisation for development - by thinking that it could launch its economy into the 20st century without modernising its political structures and justice system alongwith it or preventing the corruption that worsens the inequality that development aid from New Delhi is supposed to rectify.”* (CLAWS, p. 125)

6 GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TOWARDS MAOISM – SOURCES OF LEGITIMATION FOR MAOISM

Searching for the causes of prolongation of this conflict within the government responses, throws light on its acting as instruments of legitimation as deployed and used by the Maoists. The aim of this chapter is to understand how the Maoists analyse the government responses and use it as a source of legitimation among the cadres and supporters. The reason for attempting this is to infer that these responses are in fact acting as a boon for the Maoists in their purpose thereby prolonging the conflict. Absence of legitimacy for the government does not naturally ensure legitimacy for the Maoists. The aim of this chapter is to emphasise the activities and propaganda undertaken by the Maoists to create trust for themselves and active opposition for the government using the same responses to their advantage. By arguing from the perspective of the Maoists, this chapter will try and understand the rationale and effectiveness of the responses as viewed by the other side to the conflict. The aim is to prove that what the government is doing is in fact helping the Maoists to achieve their objectives thereby contributing towards conflict prolongation.

However, it is important to clarify that the existence of Maoists is not simply defined by the responses of the government or the actions of the government. It has an autonomy of its own. For the objective of this study in finding the role of the responses in prolonging the conflict, I shall limit myself in understanding how the responses become instruments of legitimation for the Maoists. It does not necessarily imply that the Maoists are devoid of other instruments of legitimation or their sources of legitimation is determined by government actions only. The idea is to argue the unintended consequences of government responses in dealing with the Maoists where within the responses itself the Maoists have found a very viable source of legitimacy which they have been.

Before we start, I shall briefly focus on the sources used for this chapter. The references used in this chapter are part of banned literature in India, the site of which can be accessed from Germany. Most of the writings, interviews and pamphlets of the Maoists in India are available in the banned website. Two prominent Maoists who will be frequently quoted are Muppala Lakshmana Rao alias Ganapathy and Cherukuri Rajkumar alias Azad. Ganapathy was the former General Secretary of the CPI (Maoist). Azad was the spokesperson of the organisation, assassinated in 2010. Both were senior PB members of the party. In addition to that, literature collected by me or shared by some Maoists during field visits have also been used. Therefore, the names of the Maoists whom I have directly met shall not be used but shall be represented

through meta data, specifying the broader location or time of the meeting. This is done to ensure the safety of the respondents. However, those which are available in the websites have been directly quoted by me. Additionally, I shall not be quoting directly from the writings of Mao or other revolutionaries whom the Maoists have been following. Rather I would use the literature prepared and distributed by the Indian Maoists to draw attention to the adaptation of these writings specific to Indian context. This will help to counter the government's claim that the Indian Maoists are blindly following the 'foreign' writings. Rather it will highlight how these writing have been acclimatised to fit into Indian context, a point often missed when accusing the Maoists of getting inspiration from foreign sources.

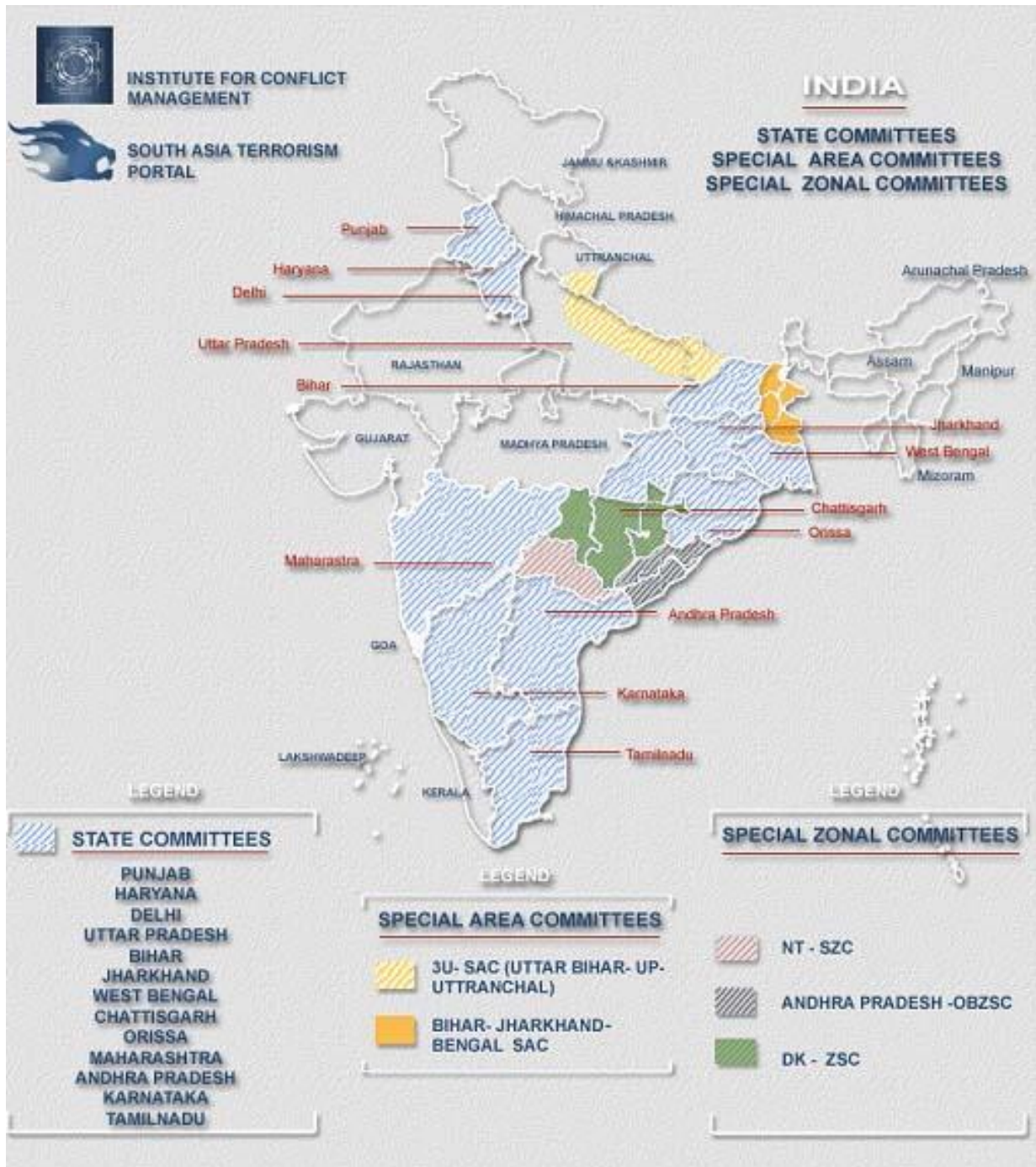
Before delving further I would like to share a few interesting observations noted by me while reading the Maoist literature which could well be characterised as sheets of propaganda. Firstly, it is the similarities in the writings over and over again. It appears if one is continuously reading their writings, they are trying to make you believe in their causes by repeating the same thing over the period. Therefore after a point of time, it becomes clear what is intended in the details of the writings. These writings are generally published, apart from in English, in a number of other Indian languages particularly Hindi and Tamil. Therefore the reach of these writings transcends beyond just the leadership of the Maoists who are well versed in English but the local cadres as well. This is a particularly important strategy to influence and garner support among the ordinary people by spreading their ideologies.

Although it would be naïve to assume that it is just about propaganda. The Maoists have detailed knowledge of how to use these government responses to characterise the government as an enemy of the people. And the process to achieve this is well documented in their literature as *Tactics and Strategy* to win wars and battles when fighting an asymmetrical war. Therefore, it is necessary for the government not to reduce the Maoists' analysis of its responses simply as propaganda tactics. It is much more than that. It is broader in scope and extensive in its scrutiny. The way the Maoists have examined these responses highlights the depth of their understanding of their battle tactics and organisation of their methods in dealing with the administration. By understanding the responses from the Maoists perspective will highlight the reasons not only for the absence of a successful redressal of Maoism but in fact ensuring its survival for a long time to come.

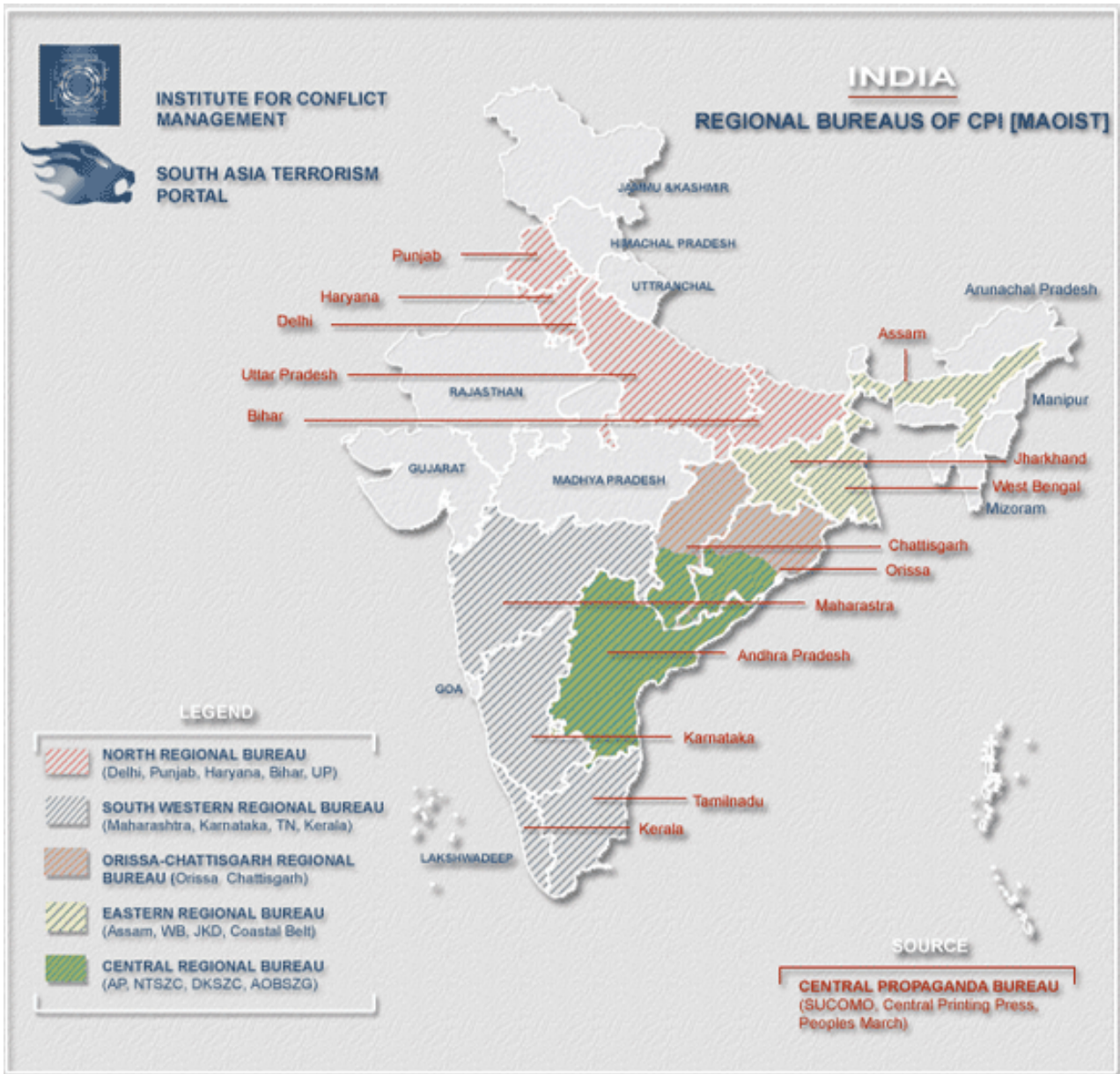
Another important aspect of the literature is the emphasis on details. One would be surprised from the range of readings the Maoists possess which cuts across from global events in the international scenario to smaller yet powerful events in the most interior of Indian

villages. This points to two aspects of their propaganda techniques through networking. Firstly, for the local events a strong network of local sources is in place to get information about events happening across the length and breadth of the country despite the unavailability of communication sources. And these events are not the ones available in the media but about cadres getting killed in one part of the country to villages being attacked by the security personnel in another part (many of which generally do not get space in the newspapers). Secondly, they possess massive information about international events. The leaders reside in the most interior of the forests which is beyond human and technological reach. Despite this, they are well versed in, for example, various operations undertaken by military forces in different parts of the world (most of which I had to Google, for example operation Bayanihan in Philippines). They have their connections in urban locales who regularly provide them with these literatures. All these point to not only the range of their study but also the reach of their networks both in urban and rural areas. It also highlights the scope of their preparedness in the face of extreme logistical challenges.

To get a sense of their networks, below are two maps showing their state committees and regional bureaus.



Map 6: State Committees; Special Area Committees; Special Zonal Committees (Source: South Asia Terrorism Portal)



Map 7: Regional Bureaus of CPI (Maoist) (Source: South Asia Terrorism Portal)

6.1 Putting Theory into Practice

Before I embark on deciphering each of the response, this segment is significant to comprehend. The question might arise how will this broaden our understanding of the government responses. As mentioned towards the end of the previous chapter that the government is not dealing with a band of unorganised criminals who are simply searching for capturing power. Rather the government is dealing with a highly organised group who are extremely motivated ideologically. They want to capture power based on certain principles and

ideas. And this is important to understand. This chapter is aiming towards unravelling those ideas which the Maoists have used as instruments to delegitimise the government and legitimise themselves. Hence this segment contextualises the modus operandi of the Maoists where they plan to put their theories into action. Their action draws legitimation not on the basis of some random rationality or impulsive reactions. Their actions can be easier to understand if we contextualise each of the response within their planned strategy and deep-rooted ideals.

Indian Maoists have clarified their manner of functioning on the basis of Mao Tse-tung's writings which they have been following. In their book *Strategy and Tactics of the Indian Revolution* (henceforth STIR), they write "We must adopt the "**Three Great Styles of Work**" which are one of the hallmarks distinguishing the proletarian Party from the bourgeois and revisionist Parties. These are: the style of integrating theory with practice, maintaining close ties with the masses, and practicing criticism and self-criticism. Ideological-political education is the key link to be grasped in uniting the whole Party for great political struggles. Unless this is done, the Party cannot accomplish any of its political tasks." (p.40) The first point becomes the essence of this chapter. Although it is interesting to note that the other two are intrinsically dovetailed with the first one. Engaging the people for uprising and not solely depending on armed resistance has been adopted for quite sometimes. As pointed in previous chapters, government has often been under the influence that Maoism is only about propagating violence. This has made the administration to often overlook the significance of the Maoists' efforts of politically organising people at the grass root level and concentrate on the security aspect only. Even where the government has targeted the grassroots movements against development projects, securitising the responses or labelling them as anti-national has further encouraged Maoist agenda. The case in point are Tuticorin and Nandigram explained in the previous chapter.

However, the first task as a revolutionary and as member of a proletarian party is always to integrate theory with practice as claimed by the Indian Maoists. Therefore, their studies and understanding of their ideology is firmly rooted into practise and applicability. Putting their studied theory into action is one of the bases of their readings. Simply confining their ideology as some ideas which is regulating their actions is not the objective of the Maoists. Their belief is based on the praxis. Therefore it is necessary to understand the context in which they apply their theories and whether they are prone to modifications.

Azad in this context remarked,

"When we hear such an attacking tone from our enemies we are doubly assured that we are going in the correct direction. In China, the reactionary ruler and traitor

Chiang Kai-shek, who was an agent of the Anglo-American imperialists, described the Communist Party of China as a bandit party and the communists as red bandits. Comrade Mao took it as a complement and said that if the communist revolutionaries expected good words from the enemy then there must be something basically wrong with their line and practice. Even supposing we are red bandits who rob the rich to feed the poor, like some sort of robin hoods, as some believe, it is still not too bad a thing.”
(Azad, p.64)

Labelling the Maoists as the biggest internal security challenge signified that the Maoists receive the much needed recognition that they have been wanting for a long time. While on the one hand, it securitised the conflict to the next level on the other hand it dignified the Maoists by assigning the most coveted status of the greatest enemy of the country. This gave them confidence to believe that they are on the right track as pronounced in their writings from which they draw inspiration. The fact that all along they have adhered to the theories and put them to correct practice has been legitimised by the government through such a statement.

The chapter has been divided into three sections based on the dominant strategic culture of the government towards Maoism – security, management of public perception and development / welfare. Each section will draw in references regarding the Maoists’ tactics of interpretation of that response and how they are using it to their advantage.

6.2 Security v/s violence

There are three ways by which the Maoists are using the State’s security response to their advantage.

6.2.1 Characterisation of the government

The Maoists have persistently used the securitisation of the conflict to their fullest advantage. For the ordinary people they have become the saviours who are fighting on their behalf against atrocities. Besides creating an image that is relatable to the cadres, Maoists have also constructed an image of the administration. And this image is of an enemy who is anti-people. The deployment of paramilitary forces or the use of private militias is characterised by the Maoists as engaging in violence against the common, unarmed, and marginalised section of the society. Therefore the elected government is labelled as the enemy which is unleashing

violence against its own people. This is the part of the propaganda. But on closer analysis it is found that they want the administration to behave in this particular way because it is classified as such in the writings of their ideologues. The fact that government should behave in this particular way actually helps them to put their theory into practise. It helps them to have confidence in the authenticity of the writings and the literature which inspires them. This makes their conviction stronger and turns them into highly motivated beings for whom compromise is not even an option to be reckoned with.

Take for example the writings of Brazilian revolutionary leader Carlos Marighella¹⁰⁶, stressing this point in his book *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla*, “ *The people refuse to collaborate with the government, and the general sentiment is that this government is unjust, incapable of solving problems, and that it resorts simply to the physical liquidation of its opponents. The political situation in the country is transformed into a military situation in which the "gorillas" appear more and more to be the ones responsible for violence, while the lives of the people grow worse.*”¹⁰⁷

Lenin in this regard remarked, “ *Social-democracy has never taken a sentimental view of war. It unreservedly condemns war as a bestial means of settling conflicts in human society, But Social-democracy knows that so long as society is divided into classes, so long as there is exploitation of man by man, wars are inevitable. This exploitation cannot be destroyed without war, and war is always and everywhere begun by the exploiters, by the ruling and oppressing classes.*” (pp. 560-561) It is no longer about who initiated this violence because people have been fighting for far too long. It is the current condition in which the conflict is ensuing that people are concerned with.

Once their use of violence becomes justified as legitimated in their theories, the revolutionary movement becomes the most acceptable course of action. According to Lenin, “*Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.*”¹⁰⁸ Armed with such an understanding of the revolution the Maoists in India are planning their strategy and tactics. The law of contradictions provides the basis for their survival and existence for the last fifty years. Lenin said, “*Dialectics is the teaching which shows how opposites can be and how they*

¹⁰⁶ The book was quite often found among the arrested Naxalites in Calcutta.

¹⁰⁷ Marighella, Carlos. (1969) *Popular Support in Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla* Retrieved from <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marighella-carlos/1969/06/minimanual-urban-guerrilla/ch38.htm>

¹⁰⁸ Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich. (1902). ‘ *Dogmatism and Freedom of Criticism What Is To Be Done? Burning Questions Of Our Movement*’ is a political pamphlet. . Retrived from <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1901/witbd/i.htm>

happen to be (how they become) identical--under what conditions they are identical, transforming themselves into one another,--why the human mind should take these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, transforming themselves into one another.” (pp.97-98)

Mao explains in *On Contradiction*, “*This is what Lenin means when he says that dialectics studies "how opposites can be ... identical". How then can they be identical? Because each is the condition for the other's existence. This is the first meaning of identity.*”¹⁰⁹ If such is the understanding of the contradictions by the Maoists, the securitisation espoused by the government forms the logical basis of the legitimacy of the Maoists among the marginalised and the downtrodden. Government and the Maoists, therefore, create conducive conditions for each other’s existence.

On the Third Anniversary of the Founding of the Chinese people's Anti-Japanese Military and Political College on May 26, 1939 Mao said, “*I hold that it is bad as far as we are concerned if a person, a political party, an army or a school is not attacked by the enemy for in that case it would mean that we have sunk to the level of the enemy. It is good if we are attacked by the enemy, since it proves that we have drawn a clear line of demarcation between the enemy and ourselves. It is still better if the enemy attacks us wildly and paints us as utterly black and without a single virtue, since it demonstrates that we have not only drawn a clear line of demarcation between the enemy and ourselves but achieved a great deal in our work.*” (p.3) Mao reiterated that to be attacked by the enemy is not a bad thing but a good thing. Maoists in India have taken full advantage of this saying in their plan of action. They have used government’s military offensive and turned it into their positive propaganda.

At the current stage of the conflict, they aim not to convince the urban middle class people. Their target population is the marginalised Adivasis and rural population affected in various ways. To them, their line of argument follows, “*The enemy forces have been unleashing state violence and white terror in various forms with its Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) policies. They are attacking the villages and the people in a big way and killing people, assaulting women sexually, and destroying the property and the crops of the people. They are trying to create rifts among the people. They are suppressing the people with iron boots to smother the*

¹⁰⁹ Mao Tse-tung. “On Contradictions” refer, https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_17.htm

aspirations of the people for new democracy, for socialist society and to scuttle their collective spirit.”¹¹⁰

Once again, I am refraining from passing any judgemental values regarding the veracity of the claims of either party. Instead what I intend to point out is that the responses adopted by the government is in fact ensuring the Maoist survival, thereby persistently leading to the failure of those responses. And herein the role of legitimacy becomes more prominent. Administration might wonder and question why are not the welfare programmes helping them to win the people over. The answer lies in failing to address the issue of legitimacy which the government is claiming but failing to earn for itself. Whatever the Maoists are planning and executing are according to certain principles to which they are strictly adhering to. In fact the government approaches and the Maoists are mutually reinforcing. The conditions created by the government is used by the Maoists following the lines of Lenin and Mao to sustain and establish their legitimacy among their supporters. Hence to club them as a bunch of disorganised people who have gone astray, is indeed a misconception and simplification of the multi-layered aspects of the Maoist phenomenon.

Let us examine another quote from Mao-Tse-Tung, *“Without imperialist oppression of nations, there would be no colonies or semi-colonies; without colonies or semicolonies, there would be no imperialist oppression of nations. It is so with all opposites; in given conditions, on the one hand they are opposed to each other, and on the other they are interconnected, interpenetrating, interpermeating and interdependent, and this character is described as identity. In given conditions, all contradictory aspects possess the character of non-identity and hence are described as being in contradiction. But they also possess the character of identity and hence are interconnected.”¹¹¹*

The essence of the two quotations from Lenin and Mao are similar. For the Indian Maoists, government’s responses are tools of propaganda incorporated in the writings of their philosophies. Every strike conducted by the administration and every offensive carried out by the security personnel is viewed as an acknowledgement of their success and approval of their theories. As Indian Maoists observes,

¹¹⁰ Communist Party of India (Maoists) Central Committee 12th anniversary on the celebration of the 12th anniversary of the Party

¹¹¹ Refer, Mao Tse-tung, *On Contradiction* available at https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_17.htm

*“They [state] have declared a war on the people in the areas of the Maoist movement. They have deployed nearly five lakh police and paramilitary forces. Drones and half a dozen helicopters of the air force are guarding from the skies. By the end of 2015, the Indian government permitted to conduct aerial attacks. This has to be seen as a turning point in the Indian revolutionary movement. Garuda Commandos of the air force are conducting rehearsals for aerial attacks, thus terrorizing the people. The fake encounter killings of the struggling people by the police have increased. The police are virtually immune to any atrocities on women also. Mercenary police are resorting to cruel torture of the people. They are rubbing chilli powder and salt on people. They are tying rope to the hands and then dragging the people on road by tying them to vehicles. Women’s breasts are squeezed by the police.”¹¹² **

What the government perceives as responses to deal with the Maoists, are interpreted by the Maoists as violence perpetrated by the latter which justifies their struggle to overcome it. In this labyrinth of violence and security, Maoists are using this gap to garner their support even among certain sections of the educated urban intellectuals and spreading their territory of dominance. Whether such responses employed are yielding any result is difficult to ascertain and beyond the scope of this research. However, what is important to observe is that 2017 marked the 50th anniversary of Naxalbari uprising and Maoists are currently spread to more than 100 districts of the country. The actions of the government are legitimating the presence of the Maoists and proving the veracity of their theories. They have observed these responses as acknowledgements of their success and used them to characterise the government as enemy of the people, all according to designated theories and programmes.

6.2.2 Assess the asymmetric nature of conflict and focus on grassroot movements

The security aspect of the response towards the conflict has been mired into attacks and counter attacks. This has helped the Maoists to acknowledge the weaker position that they possess compared to the Indian security forces. Hence, they mostly concentrate their actions in and surrounding the forest and interior rural areas. *“This factor underscores the need to wage our revolutionary war from the weakest links of enemy rule - the vast tracts of the backward*

¹¹² Communist Party of India (Maoists) Central Committee 12th anniversary on the celebration of the 12th anniversary of the Party

*Security personnel use this method of identifying if a woman is a Maoist cadre or not. At Maoists camps, women recruits are neither allowed to marry nor become pregnant. So the police would raid villages and squeeze the breasts of the women to check if they are lactating. If she is, then she isn't a Maoist or else she is branded a Maoist. It would be naïve to state that the security forces are unaware of the unscientific basis of this identification

Indian countryside. It also warns us against engaging in strategically decisive battles with the enemy's armed forces for a long time, and to use the tactics of guerrilla warfare and preservation of our forces while destroying the enemy's forces bit by bit through guerrilla methods of warfare, to accumulate strength by extending and deepening the armed struggle over ever-wider areas and to make the best use of the favourable terrain in the strategic regions in the countryside.” (STIR, p.22)

This phase of the Maoist campaign needs to be understood along with their efforts to create a mass organisation among the people. It is absolutely wrong to assume that the Maoists are solely dependent on violence for their objectives. One of their primary aims is to organise various groups of people from different segments of society. *“Lenin taught us that, "The Proletariat, in its struggle for power, has no weapon other than organization.” (STIR, p. 39)* The question that needs to be pondered over is why is there a need to create this base. The Maoists are more than aware of the asymmetrical nature of the warfare. In this context, they remarked, manifesting their well-preparedness, *“In all these areas, particularly where there is relatively more capitalist development with greater infrastructure and influence of the market, and where the influence of the bourgeois and revisionist-reformist ideology and politics hold the sway and our movement's influence is relatively weak in the present situation, we have to lay stress on taking up mass issues and politically mobilizing the masses into militant struggles against the State, making the necessary preparation for building guerrilla warfare. It is only thus we can gradually bring the vast masses in these areas into our fold by placing the revolutionary alternative before them.” (STIR, p.29)*

They plan to compensate what is lacking in their military power by mass movements. *“The inferiority in arms and other things can be made up by relying on the mobilization of the vast masses as correctly observed by Mao: "The mobilization of the common people throughout the country will create a vast sea in which to drown the enemy, create the conditions that will make up for our inferiority in arms and other things, and create the prerequisites for overcoming every difficulty in the war.....To wish for victory and yet neglect political mobilization is like wishing to "go south by driving the chariot north", and the result would inevitably be to forfeit victory.” (STIR, p.22)* The Maoists are very much aware of the asymmetric situation where sole dependence on violence may not produce the desired results. Hence their plan based and drawn primarily from the writings of their ideologues reflects their application of their readings into practice. *“the enemy is big and powerful with a centralized state machinery and a well-equipped, well-trained modern army, Paramilitary and other*

forces-makes it imperative for the Party of the proletariat to take extreme caution from the very beginning in conducting the revolutionary war.” (STIR, p.22) Therefore this reflects not only superior preparedness on the basis of their ideology but also preparedness on their part to embrace changes. Hence, they have converted their asymmetric disadvantage into organising people for various anti-government movements, for example related to development projects or rights of land.

The level of grassroot movements and the issues on which support is garnered varies with the geo-political situation of every region. Therefore this displays an immense amount of flexibility in terms of their tactics while remaining fixed with their strategy. The dominant discourse of the government responses fails to communicate with this aspect of flexibility with regard to the Maoist tactics. *“Whereas the Strategy of the Indian Revolution remains the same throughout the country, the uneven economic, political, social and cultural development in the country the fighting zeal and the level of consciousness of the people and the ebb and flow of the movement underscore the need for different tactics, which are obviously subordinate to strategy, to be pursued in different region at any given time. The intensity of class struggle in various regions and the uneven economic, political, social and cultural development should be concretely analysed in the respective areas and basing on that analysis, tactics (i.e., forms of struggle and forms of organisation) should be formulated.”* (STIR, p.5) Therefore, the often critical analyses by government agencies blaming the Maoists of blindly following an imported ideology stands on false premises. The Maoists have studied the Indian scenario and modelled their tactics according to the specificities of each condition.

Analysing Operation Green Hunt, in a completely different light, Maoists have used it as a tool for unification and construction of mass base for their objectives. For the Maoists, these kinds of operations have become a rallying point of uniting like-minded people against the administration. *“The third phase of Operation Green Hunt is creating an objective basis for the unification of pro people forces. Basing on this, the party has been striving for the past one year to build people’s movements and people’s resistance movements against operation green hunt by uniting workers, peasants, students, women, revolutionary intellectuals, democratic, patriotic and pro-people forces, and the well-wishers of the adivasis.”*¹¹³ While their reach to the media is extremely limited, their voices have been persistently raised by the intellectuals, activists, and academicians. Democratic movements and peaceful resistance have

¹¹³ Communist Party of India (Maoists) Central Committee 12th anniversary on the celebration of the 12th anniversary of the Party

united people to raise their voices against these security operations all across the country. Organisations having wider mass base like *Sanhati* issued a statement titled, ‘A Sensible Democratic Alternative to the proposed Military Offensive’ putting the entire blame on the State,

*“The Home Minister has stated that in a “democracy”, such negotiations can only be held if CPI(Maoist) “abjures violence. When the government is sending in thousands of paramilitary troops, encircling key areas and continuing military action on the rebels, asking the rebels and the people to give up arms as a precondition for negotiations, is certain to ensure that no negotiations take place.”*¹¹⁴ The responses are not only creating a distance between these democratic groups who are against armed conflict and the government but also manifesting the government in a poor light.

An immediate reaction against such statements by urban educated crowd gets restricted by the government. Administration comes out with circulars limiting the freedom of speech. Let us explain this with an example. In one such circular on May 6, 2010 MHA issued a statement titled, ‘Government Asks People to Be Vigilant of CPI (Maoist) Propaganda’

“It has come to the notice of the Government that some Maoist leaders have been directly contacting certain NGOs/intellectuals to propagate their ideology and persuade them to take steps as would provide support to the CPI (Maoist) ideology.

“It is brought to the notice of the general public that under Section 39 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, any person who commits the offence of supporting such a terrorist organization with inter alia intention to further the activities of such terrorist organizations would be liable to be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years or with fine or with both. General public are informed to be extremely vigilant of the propaganda of CPI (Maoist) and not unwittingly become a victim of such propaganda.”

“This is being issued in public interest so that the general public are aware that the Communist Party of India (Maoist) and all its formations and front organizations are terrorist organizations whose sole aim is armed overthrow of the Indian State and that they have no place in India’s

¹¹⁴ Refer, “A Sensible Democratic Alternative To The Proposed Military Offensive” (October, 2009). *Sanhati* available at <http://sanhati.com/articles/1875/>

*parliamentary democracy. CPI (Maoist) continues to kill innocent civilians including tribals in cold blood and destroy crucial infrastructure like roads, culverts, school buildings, gram panchayat buildings, etc. so as to prevent development from reaching these underdeveloped areas.”*¹¹⁵

Activist Gautam Navlakha of the Peoples Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) has said that the warning from the government harks back to the years of the Emergency.

“In two months, it is going to be 35 years of the Emergency (imposed by Indira Gandhi from 1975-1977) and UPA-II [United Progressive Alliance] is de facto recreating the conditions of that period,” he continued, *“Instead of exploring more sensible and imaginative policies to deal with the Maoists and the tribals who live in the same zones where huge mining deals have been signed, the government is taking recourse to authoritarian and dictatorial measures,”* he said.¹¹⁶

The main objective of using the government’s approaches is to unite the people against the Maoists. With such ripple effects the Maoists generally succeed in transforming any action by the government as anti-people. I am not in the least claiming the actions are not originally anti or pro people. What the intention here is to perceive every government response from the Maoists’ perspective and try and find out how they are transforming their principles into praxis by using the government response as a source of their legitimation. Additionally, the objective is to reflect how the responses are reinforcing the Maoists ideas and principles and therefore failing to address what it is intended for.

These kinds of impulsive reactions (like the circulars) are actually what the Maoists need the government to pursue, so that it can be portrayed as anti-people and anti-democratic. Additionally, it helps them to be in the spotlight which generally does not come to them. The publications in the Dailies, the next day, helps them to garner publicity. These reactions on the part of the administration fails to realise the broader objective therefore falling into the trap of negative propaganda. Eventually such acts, metamorphose into ‘an attack on democracy.’ Maoists then claim, supported by their peers in the urban locales, *“Politically, it suppresses the democratic rights of the masses”* (STIR, p.10) and *“The aim of this police state under the leadership of this BJP government under Fascist leadership is to eliminate political opponents by accusing them of being Maoists and Maoist sympathisers. We can establish real democracy*

¹¹⁵ Refer “Government asks people to be Vigilant of CPI (Maoist) Propaganda” (2010) Press Information Bureau, Government of India available at <http://pibmumbai.gov.in/scripts/detail.asp?releaseId=E2010PR798>

¹¹⁶ “India stifles all inquiry into Maoist/Naxal movements.” May 7, 2010. Available at <http://www.bannedthought.net/India/Fascism/News/StiflesAllInquiry-100507.pdf> p.2

when the revolutionary movement emerges as a political alternative by destroying state violence.” (STIR, p.7) Whether BJP is actually a fascist political power is not the debate here. Rather it is through such propaganda they are able to garner tremendous support among people who are willing to have faith in the Maoists over and above the government or the administration. Although in the last example they have mentioned a particular political party in lieu of its currently being in power. Otherwise their propaganda is in general against the government as a whole.

The Maoists continue lending their support to educated middle class people who have been fighting for the rights of the marginalised and Adivasis and who are also known for their vocal opposition against the Maoists violence as well. The Maoists are attempting to build a grassroots support from people across society who are fighting for the rights of the marginalised but at the same time who may not follow the modus operandi of the Maoists.

The Propaganda Bureau of the Maoists remarks in one such writings, *“The extent of state violence on the tribal and non tribals of Dandakaranya does not allow anyone to respond. But the state does not tolerate such people. It tries to suppress the protest voices. As a part of this it is attacking the democratic organisations, democrats, journalists and opposition parties through police and sponsored organisations.”* (p. 14)¹¹⁷

Government has been consistently alienating this class of people who could have acted as negotiator and mediator in these kinds of conflicts by continuously labelling them as urban naxals and arresting them on sedition charges. In a recent crackdown on human rights activists, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reports, *“Maharashtra police arrested Sudha Bharadwaj, Gautam Navlakha, Vernon Gonsalves, Arun Ferreira, and Varavara Rao under India’s principal counterterrorism law, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), and sections of the Indian Penal Code. At the same time, police conducted raids across the country, including at the homes of Dalit scholars K. Satyanarayana and Anand Teltumbde, civil rights activist Stan Swamy, and journalists Kranthi Tekula and K.V. Kurmanath.”*¹¹⁸ The arrests of prominent intellectuals on serious charges have alienated the government further leading the democratic forces to align their cause with those of the Maoists with whom some of them may not have earlier agreed on principles.

The reach of the national media is strictly limited in these areas and the alternative being vernacular language medium. This is a helpful factor in the propaganda tactics of the Maoists.

¹¹⁷ Propaganda Bureau Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee Communist Party of India (Maoist)

¹¹⁸ “India: 5 More Rights Activists Detained” (2018) refer, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/08/30/india-5-more-rights-activists-detained>

More than an English daily in a rural area, the demand for vernacular press is higher. And as stated above from their tactics they are currently concentrating in the rural areas. Therefore vernacular press is increasing the reach of the Maoists by spreading their ideas in the language most acceptable among the people in the region. Therefore while the national media is celebrating the strikes that has killed a particular number of Maoists, the vernacular medium in the interior regions have unofficially acted as the mouth-piece of the Maoists in spreading their propaganda and ideas. This has often prompted the government to restrict the reporting and movement of these local journalists further creating tensions and gap between the administration and the locals.

The Maoists on the other hand, have extended their support to the media people, particularly who work in the local areas on the field, reporting about the Adivasis and the ongoing conflict. Maoists write, “*The media is facing a lot of sanctions in order that it does not throw light on the repression on the people. It could be remembered that during *salva judum* any reporter who goes to the interior area for information was ordered to kill by the then SP in a wireless message.*”¹¹⁹ At various levels the Maoists are trying to create a base where people from different segments of the society can be united against the government. These groups are continuously lending their support to the cause of the Maoists (not necessarily directly), forcing the government to react by putting limits to their functioning. Subsequently such actions of the government are interpreted as anti-democratic because of its restriction on freedom of speech and expression. Hence the Maoists have quite early on realised their weakness vis-à-vis Indian paramilitary forces. Their attempt towards uniting these groups direct towards compensating for that weakness.

6.2.3 Question Peace Talks intention

CPI (Maoist) is a banned organisation classified under UAPA. The violent nature of the organisation to overthrow and challenge the elected government is the primary reason behind such an action initiated by the Indian government. Maoists, however, use the situation in a different manner. Arguing their position from the perspective of the violence committed by other mainstream groups, Azad argues,

“The question of imposing or not imposing a ban on a certain party or organization depends on several factors. It would be too simplistic to conclude that just because a Party believes in armed struggle and indulges in acts of violence it is being banned while those who

¹¹⁹ Propaganda Bureau Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee Communist Party of India (Maoist), p. 14

pursue open, legal forms of struggle are allowed to function freely. During the Emergency, as we all know, both the revolutionary Left as well as the reactionary Right parties were banned. Even at the height of sectarian violence indulged in by the Hindu fascist gangs, they are allowed a field day. They carry arms, display them openly, threaten the religious minorities with genocide, indulge in violence against the Muslims and Christians, and yet are deemed as legitimate organizations since they are part of the ruling classes and their integral culture of violence.” (p. 10)¹²⁰ Political or religious violence in India is not a new phenomenon. However, owing to the involvement of political parties who regularly participate in elections and therefore uphold the Constitutional obligations, the violence perpetrated by these groups become largely acceptable within the broader paradigm. This violence is treated as aberration of law and are disciplined following the legal formalities. However, owing to the Maoist objective of overthrowing of Constitutional rule in India, violence perpetrated by them become a tabooed aspect of their functioning. Such a position become a potent weapon in the hands of the Maoist to expose the hypocrisy of the Indian government in its handling of the conflict.

Maoists justify their violence on the basis of violence perpetrated by other groups which are legitimate organisations and manifest the dominant ideas.

“To put so much emphasis on the violence of the Maoists appears to divert the issue, where, in the present system the masses have to face violence everyday of their lives. Hundreds die each day of hunger, starvation and easily curable illnesses. Semi-feudal authority in the villages has only force as its major instrument of control. Workers in all but the big industries (some time even there) have to regularly face the hoodlums maintained by the management and even the police. The women of our country have to face daily patriarchal violence and there are many so-called dowry deaths each year. Dalits have to face humiliation and abuse on a daily basis. And over and above all this is the violence of the state, the Hindutva fascists, the mafia linked to the mainstream political parties, big business, and so on.” (Azad, p.6)

Therefore violence pursued by the dominant groups in the society (the ruling class and the upper castes) is challenged by the Maoists and used as a ground to legitimise its violence and criticise the government of its biasness. *“These simpletons resort to the method of simple reductionism: Maoists believe in violence and armed struggle to overthrow the state; hence they indulge in endless violence; there is no use of talking to people whose very ideology is*

¹²⁰ Interview with Azad. *The Hindu*.

rooted in violence; and hence there is no other way than to crush the Maoists with all the means at the disposal of the state. Such goes their argument.”¹²¹

Government has refused to negotiate with the Maoists unless the latter give up practising violence. Maoists have used this refusal by the government to argue in the following manner:

“The CC, CPI (Maoist), makes it crystal-clear that laying down arms means a betrayal of the people’s interests. We have taken up arms for the defence of people’s rights and for achieving their liberation from all types of exploitation and oppression. As long as oppression and exploitation exist, people will continue to be armed in ever greater number. However, an agreement could be reached by both sides on a cease-fire if Manmohan [the ex-PM] and Chidambaram [the ex- HM] give up their irrational, illogical, impractical, absurd and obstinate stand that the Maoists should abjure violence.”¹²²

Hence the talks always fall prey to who should be the first to give up their ways of dealing with the other, one of whose critical components comprises armed measures. The vicious circle engulfs these debates and the merit of further progress gets lost in the labyrinth of this circularity as the Maoists argue, “*On the contrary, it is the other way round. It is the imposition of the ban that had led the Party and mass organisations to take up arms in the first place. People are easily misled to believe that it is the violence of the Maoists that had compelled the government to impose the ban.*”¹²³

On the subject of banning in a democratic country, Prof Bhattacharyya of Jadavpur University (JU) provides some interesting arguments which actually locates some loopholes and stands contrary to the perspective delineated by the State itself. He argues, “*First, by banning the CPI (Maoist), both the central and state governments have clearly admitted the fact that the Maoists are a formidable enemy to reckon with.*”¹²⁴ By stressing the importance of politically dealing with Maoism in its COIN strategy adopted by GOI, Bhattacharyya argues, that such banning in fact is an acknowledgement on the part of the government of its failure to politically deal with the conflict.

Therefore, the securitisation of the responses has been utilised by the Maoists according to their theories to bridge the gap with praxis. They have successfully been able to garner

¹²¹ Interview with Azad. *The Hindu*.

¹²² Press Released issued by Communist Party Of India (Maoist) Central Committee, p. 1

¹²³ Interview with Azad. *The Hindu*.

¹²⁴ Bhattacharyya, Amit. (2009). “Democracy and Ban Cannot go together” *Countercurrents*. Available at <https://www.countercurrents.org/bhattacharyya291109.htm>

support among the marginalised, the intellectuals and other democratic voices for their cause. India has a Constitution which provides the legal framework of its functioning. Violence perpetrated by the Maoists are rejected on the ground that it does not have a place in a democracy as established by the constitution of the country. However, oftentimes the Maoists have argued that they do not acknowledge the constitution, but government does acknowledge the Constitution. Then why does government fail to follow its own written document when it raises arms against its own people. Such responses other than managing the conflict temporarily fails in its ultimate objective because the Maoists' interpretation helps the latter to legitimise their position among its cadres.

6.3 Ideology v/s Managing Public Perception

Management of public perception is a formal response designated by the Indian government to create favourable opinion on its behalf. It is also used as a propaganda tool against the Maoists. Maoists, on the other hand, use the propaganda tool to clarify their positions as per their theories. Government reports and interviews with various representatives of the administration provided me with a glimpse of how this particular response functions on the ground and what is the ultimate reason behind this response. This response of the government stems from the understanding that the cadres whom the Maoists are using for their gains are misinformed and that they are simple people caught between cross fires. Such an analysis of the Adivasis itself reflects a dominant and superior attitude where the cadres are accepted to be devoid of any agency and consciousness of their own surrounding which might have influenced them to join the Maoists for their own betterment. In this section I shall argue how the Maoists have been using ideology to draw cadres and challenge this response of the government whose ultimate aim is to create a favourable image for the administration by managing the perception of the public. There are three ways in which the Maoists are achieving this aim:

6.3.1 Adaptability

On one hand the government through such responses of managing the perception often advertises that the Maoists are blindly following an imported ideology and hence have been misled (detailed in previous chapter). On the other hand Maoists have, in fact, adapted to particularities of Indian social and political demand, a point often missed in considering the government responses towards the Maoists. In this section, I shall argue how the Maoists have

modified their tactics from over the period and adapted themselves with changing socio-political scenario thereby challenging the very premise on which such a response is based.

According to Mohanty, HM P. Chidambaram differentiating between the terrorists and the Naxalites have remarked that ‘Naxalites are our own people who have been misled.’ (2009) Stating that they have been misled, pins the blame on an outside entity who is responsible for the misleading. With such an analysis, the Maoists have been devoid of agency and reduced to a group of people blindly following a source of inspiration which is misleading, and which has no place in the Indian context. Secondly, talking about ‘misleading’ implies that there is an absence of acknowledgement on the part of the government of its avowed duties towards that section of the society which continues to support the Maoists; and that the Maoists have simply gone astray from the accepted path of the ‘mainstream.’ In both the scenarios, there is an apparent lack of adequate and comprehensive analysis of who the Maoists are, how they have been functioning and further failing to acknowledge where the root of the problem lies.

Quoting Marx, Ganapathy says, *“That is what Marxism says, not to do revolutions mechanically or dogmatically but creatively. But whatever may be the modifications they would always have to lie within the purview of revolutions. That is why revolution is a must. However, it has to be carried out in the specific characteristics of a particular country.”*¹²⁵ This needs to be understood in the context of the prolongation of the conflict. The theories have not been applied as it is. It has been modified according to the Indian context. Oftentimes Maoists have accepted their mistakes during the 1960’s and early 1970’s uprising carried out under Charu Majumder. They have not only rectified these mistakes in terms of application but also modified it according to the changed circumstances. For example, when the earlier phases of the conflict concentrated on land, the current phases have also included development related dissatisfactions among the marginalised as causes to fight for. This has ensured their survival not only for fifty years but also their spread in more than 100 districts. Something which began in a handful of villages in the 60’s and 70’s has spread to half of the country forcing the PM to label it as the single biggest internal security challenge. This is mainly because of their changing tactics according to the changing scenario and not blind adaptation of an ideology.

What is often argued by the government against the Maoists is that application of imported ideology has no space in Indian democratic structure. Here the myopic meaning of

¹²⁵ Maoist Information Bulletin interview with CPI (Maoist) General Secretary Comrade Ganapathy on the Occasion of the Tenth Anniversary Celebrations of the Formation of the United Party, p. 11.

imported is noteworthy. 'Imported' in this sense is considered as Maoism coming from China! The word 'imported' has no contextual meaning per se. These are ideas which has the innate capacity to travel across continents and cross boundaries without having to go through any legal or bureaucratic permission for its admission. Therefore reducing the entire debate to negation of an imported ideology manifests absence of acknowledgement of the skills of the Maoists to adapt to changing scenario. In this context Maoists commented, "*The Strategy and Tactics of the Indian Revolution should be formulated by creatively applying the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism Maoism to the concrete conditions prevailing in our country. This means that the Strategy and Tactics should be evolved by basing on an objective class analysis of the Indian society; the character of the Indian State; the Fundamental contradictions and the Principal contradiction; and by taking into account the specific characteristics, the special features as well as the peculiarities of the Indian situation.*" (STIR, p.3).

Although the origin of the ideology came from a different country, but their application has been modified to suit the specific needs of the Indian social, economic, and political context. Once again quoting Mao, Indian Maoists remarked, "*As comrade Mao said: "The seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war, is the central task and highest form of revolution. But while the principle remains the same (for all countries), its application by the Party of the proletariat finds expression in various ways according to the varying conditions.*" (STIR, p.19) Thus while the government is still arguing on the age old rationale of non-functionality of an imported ideology in Indian context, Maoists have acclimatised themselves with the changing scenario. This is how they have not only been able to sustain themselves for this prolonged time period but in fact have expanded their geographical reach over the period. Government has underestimated the adeptness and prowess of its enemy by trying to demean it through its systemic ignorance or presumed superiority complex.

6.3.2 The missing element of Politics

One of the most glaring bases of the responses adopted by the government is refusing to accept the political nature of the Maoist. Although the COIN policy specifically mentioned about the significance of a political approach towards addressing the conflict, government still refuses to account for the political nature of the Maoists. Kavita Krishnan who is a Politburo member of CPI (ML) Liberation (this is a Parliamentary party which participates in election) commented in this regard while speaking to me, "*I don't think the right thing to see it as a*

problem. The point is, the Maoist party is a political party with certain points, right. The point is to engage politically with their politics, it is not a question of their engaging with their politics. But the point is to see it as a political party and as a political movement and then find political ways of addressing whatever it is."¹²⁶ There appears to be a gap, on one side, the government labels it a terrorist or extremist organisation and on the other designates adoption of political solution to address this conflict in its COIN strategy. Journalist Ashutosh Bhardwaj commented in this regard, "*CPI (Maoist), PWG or MCC, they are essentially political party, yes they call for revolution, but essentially they are political party. They will not hesitate to play political games, political compromises, or political contracts, wherever it suits them. We have seen that in Bengal and Bihar also. Because several Kurmi leaders were Naxals and they supported Nitish (the CM of Bihar). In Chattisgarh we see it. In Telangana I hear they support the present CM. They have some soft corner for him.*"¹²⁷ Maoists have often supported various political parties as part of their tactics to wage war against the Indian government, both at the centre and the states. This essentially adds a political character to their modus operandi, in addition to organising a number of grassroots movements (as explained in the previous chapter). Hence to bridge the gap between the Maoists and the government, the latter has to identify and recognise the importance of politics as an essential feature of its redressal mechanism. This will help to build a trust between the conflicting parties by ascertaining similar status to the Maoists as like any other so called mainstream political parties both of which have often formed alliances and more often than not engaged in violence to 'democratically' win election.

Maoists quoted, "*And comrade Mao explained: "If there is to be revolution, there must be a revolutionary party. Without a revolutionary party, without a party built on the Marxist – Leninist revolutionary theory and in the Marxist - Leninist revolutionary style, it is impossible to lead the working class and the broad masses of the people in defeating imperialism and its running dogs."* (STIR, p. 39) Therefore the idea to collude during elections with various political parties by the Maoists emanates from a systematic planning and tactics without any change in strategy.

Basing their arguments on Stalin, Indian Maoists repeats the importance of a political party, "*After a correct political line has been worked out and tested in practice, the party cadres become the decisive force in the leadership exercised by the Party in order to carry a correct political line into effect, we must have cadres, people who understand the political line*

¹²⁶ Interview with the researcher in September, 2017 in New Delhi

¹²⁷ Interview with the researcher in September, 2017 in New Delhi

of the Party, who accept it as their own line, who are prepared to carry it into effect, who are able to put it into effect, who are able to put into practice and are capable of answering for it, defending it and fighting for it. Failing this, a correct political line runs the risk of being purely nominal". (STIR, p.44)

Azad remarks, *"Now I wish to make three points on Chidambaram's refusal to recognize the CPI (Maoist) as a political party. Firstly, this guy is too enamoured of a military solution to the Naxal issue; he wants to just bomb us out of existence by describing us as terrorists. If he recognizes the CPI (Maoist) as a political party, then he would have to logically try the political solution to begin with. But once you describe your enemy as a terrorist and a bandit engaged in ruthless, mindless violence, then you have no hassles in bombing him out of existence. Not a political party, hence no political solution-so runs the perverted logic of this gentleman heading the Union Home Ministry who received his apprenticeship in the thriving "war on terror" industry from the American imperialists. (Azad, p.63)*

By not recognising the political element within the Maoist functioning, also contributes to an inadequate analysis of the Maoists whose political nature and political motives are reduced to a unilateral understanding of an organisation steeped into violence based on an imported ideology. The multi-faceted and layered aspects of the organisation, its political activities and their adherents who are leading the conflict are ignored over a simplistic and acceptable argument dovetailed within the dominant discourse of labelling some disgruntled citizens of the country as enemy. *"It is important to bear in mind the guidelines given by Com. Stalin that theory should guide the Program; Program should guide the Strategy; and Strategy should guide the Tactics. The strategy can be correctly worked out only by basing itself on the data provided by, and the conclusions drawn from, the theory and program of MLM [Marxism Leninism Maoism]."* (STIR, p.3) Therefore while the Maoists are fighting their struggle by following certain rules and regulations where politics is an integral part of their functioning (which explains their growing mass organisations), Indian government is lagging behind by its refusal to recognise the political element within the Maoist operations, thereby leading to the failure of its responses to win over the people supporting the Maoists.

The government can manage the public perception only after it is clear what it is, trying to manage. If the government reduces the entire argument on Maoism as based on violence and fear, its responses of managing the perception centres around these aspects. For example, like the printing stories of Maoist violence in the newspaper. However, the Maoist on the other hand considers itself as a political party and engages in various political activities with many

mainstream political parties. The government has overlooked the significance of such activities allowing the Maoists to establish their credibility among sections of mainstream society. CLAWS report comments on, *“Elections and writ of state - “ In Bihar too, the panchayat elections were conducted successfully’ reporting that even some Maoists have been elected. However, the report adds a note of caution that either this will help in democratisation of the Maoists and bring them to the mainstream, or this is a ploy ‘to further entrench into the system for subsequent capture of power in conformity with their central committee.’ (CLAWS, p. 131)* Without accepting the significant role that politics play among the Maoists, the government has failed in its endeavour to classify Maoism accurately (which explains the confusion regarding the various labels of extremism and insurgency). Additionally, within this inaccurate analysis, it has failed to give due recognition to the various political activities like organising protests under various banners, engaged by the Maoists which is helping them to legitimise their position which is not always achieved through violence and fear as generally understood by the government.

6.3.3 Bolshevization

To imbibe political culture among its cadres and thereby prevent further surrender, (countering the lucrative surrender offers by the various state governments) Maoists have undertaken Bolshevization program. *“The second reason for surrenders is that some persons are not being able to understand the nature of enemy repression and some temporary losses in the movement and are therefore getting confused. The personal weaknesses of some, are another reason. The solution for these problems is in raising the political consciousness and commitment of the cadres at all levels, putting up more formidable fight against the psy-war of the enemy and making them understand how surrender turns us against our own people and is therefore not a solution. The present Bolshevisation campaign in the party is dealing with this aspect too.”*¹²⁸

Maoists have undertaken this programme of teaching political awareness among its supporters and cadres. The basic understanding of what the struggle is and on which it is based are some of the agendas which are part of this programme. Once again, the general argument follows that it is only the top leadership who are aware of the theories and are trying to

¹²⁸ Maoist Information Bulletin Interview CPI(Maoist) General Secretary Comrade Ganapathy on the Occasion of the Tenth Anniversary Celebrations of the Formation of the United Party, p. 8. I would like to point out that this programme suffers from similar display of superiority on the part of the Maoists who are inclined towards ‘teaching’ the people about enemy repression which they think the people are unable to infer by themselves.

manipulate those in the lower rungs and using them for their benefits.¹²⁹ While the veracity of such an argument cannot be completely ignored, it is equally true that there are certain degrees of consciousness about the conditions in which the cadres reside. The leaders may try to present it with theoretical underpinnings, but the overall structural framework of poverty, exploitation and deprivation remains relatable to the supporters. Therefore to argue that everybody may not have a high degree of knowledge of Marx or Mao becomes irrelevant. What has often been repeated by respondents across aisle is the fact that the Maoists remain highly and strongly motivated to their cause and relevant in the times of current exploitative system.

Explaining how ideology is understood among the cadres, one respondent who is a professor at a renowned University in Kolkata explains, “*Ideology comes from material conditions i.e the social reality- oppression, landlessness, poverty, hunger. Ideology comes from all these factors; they do not fall from sky. If material conditions are there, ideology will take its root. Only ideology will not do anything. It comes from within the society. If conditions are right for social change if people realise then ideology will come. It can be operative only when the social conditions exist.*”¹³⁰ The knowledge of ideology as only a set of ideas and principle to be followed is a partial understanding of the essence of ideology. Cadres residing in the interior of the forest or the masses supporting the Maoists may not have nuanced understanding of Marx and Mao, it is their social conditions which create the conditions for the ideology to germinate and make it acceptable to them. Echoing similar sentiment, Dilip Simeon, one time Naxalite commented, “*The military machine of the Naxals becomes reified and it requires constant supply in terms of people, arms etc. and that is provided by ideology. Fear plays a role but only to a certain extent. For example to forcibly asking people to keep quiet etc. However, it is ideology which recruits people. But the trickling of ideology is not the same among all the cadres. The top leadership is highly motivated and well read. But the people under, understands ideology in terms of injustice, oppression state atrocities etc and may not have read Mao or Marx. Ideology is a mix of fact and sentiment.*”¹³¹

“*It is impossible to arm the people ideologically, make them conscious and organise them for the people’s war without the widest propaganda of people’s democratic culture based on Maoism. As Mao said: "In overthrowing a political power the first and regular task is to work in on the ideological front and to create public opinion." To overthrow the exploiting*

¹²⁹ As explained earlier, based on such an analysis often comes the State response of neutralising the leadership while dealing with the lower rung through welfare and development.

¹³⁰ Interview with the researcher on December, 15th, 2017 in Kolkata

¹³¹ Interview with the researcher in September, 2017 in New Delhi

classes and their state machinery, the first and foremost task throughout the course of the new democratic revolution is to wage ideological struggle and create public opinion in favour of agrarian revolutionary war and the protracted people's war." (STIR, p.18) This is how ideology is viewed and planned to be used by the Indian Maoists to raise consciousness among the cadres. Summing up the government's attitude towards it, "As one CRPF officer who has done a stint in Chhattisgarh said: *"The Maoists are in this fight for life, we are there just for our terms, and many of us are just waiting to get out, it's not a battle that inspires the jawans [soldiers] or their officers."*¹³² One respondent who also happens to be a Maoists whom I met in Kolkata echoed similar feeling. He said and quite passionately so, *"We carry the pictures of our family members hung in front of us, unlike the security personnel for whom the very thought of their family members is what pulls them from behind."*¹³³

Thus, the Maoists have started a new campaign called the Bolshevization (study and application) which clarifies the issue of ideology among its supporters and its application to specific Indian context. This is a method of strategic learning provided to the cadres at various levels to share the knowledge of ideology on a relatable scale, according to their socio-political and economic conditions, as understood by the party cadres. *"The theoretical and political understanding of the Party ranks has enhanced in the past three years due to the bolshevization campaign taken up to strengthen our Party. Their confidence to fight back the enemy offensive has increased and they are more active in the People's War. So they are mobilizing the people on problems of their daily lives, on social, political fundamental issues, against the state violence in a larger way, with the aim to overcome the difficult condition the Party is presently facing."*¹³⁴

This unique way tackles the often resorted criticism against the Maoists, of leaders monopolising ideology. The Bolshevization of the party teaches, by relating the daily lives of the cadres, with its associated social, political, and economic challenges with Marxist, Leninist, and Maoist ideals. This helps to explain difficult ideas in the simplest way ensuring its spread and acceptance among the people in a language easily understood and related to them. As a result, the political awareness enhances which enables the people to be more conscious of their rights and demands. *"The party plena at various levels have reviewed and drawn conclusions*

¹³² Thakur, Sankarshan. "PC becomes the flaming arrowhead Minister adds a sharp edge to Maoist fight", *The Telegraph*. October, 12th 2009 available at <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/pc-becomes-the-flaming-arrowhead-minister-adds-a-sharp-edge-to-maoist-fight/cid/582961>

¹³³ I met him in Kolkata at his residence

¹³⁴ Message of CC, CPI (Maoist), p. 3

that two year task of Bolshevization (Study and Application) have been yielding some positive results in the expected ways. In some areas they have taken decisions to conduct the campaign for one more year. The leadership at the higher level has resolved to enhance their theoretical and political level and to bolshevize themselves as per the rapidly changing circumstances.”

¹³⁵ Ganapathy remarks, *“So studying the new changes that occurred in the revolutionary war and strengths and weaknesses of both the enemy’s and ours along with study of the overall social, economic, political and cultural changes that occurred in the country is very crucial to bringing about acceleration in our guerrilla warfare. This is one of the main aspects that we are seeking to achieve through our Bolshevisation. Increasing the mass base, putting efforts to mobilise the masses and increasing their active role in the guerrilla warfare and in all PW activities are all very important to regain the upper hand.”*¹³⁶

Maoists are arming and tackling government’s management of public perception by enhancing their political consciousness. Their sole aim is concentrated on manifesting a strong political outlook of the party which according to their stated objective is necessary to achieve revolution. One has to question the accepted notion that just because there is lesser representation of different class and caste groups at the various political platforms of the country does not mean that these groups are politically less aware. Ignoring the fact that the Adivasis and the Dalits who are the cadres strength of the Maoists could be equally conscious of their conditions and can therefore fight for their rights, would be a dominant notion. Denying these marginalised sections of the society, their agency manifests only a partial understanding of this multi-layered aspects of this conflict on the part of the government. The dominant nature of our politics has created this cocoon where we tend to have faith in the superiority of our strata alongside a perceived inferiority of the ‘lower’ strata. Hence the government tends to think that the Maoists are taking advantage of the innocent and poor Adivasis who are simply caught in between the government and the Maoists, denying the Adivasis any awareness regarding their own conditions.

¹³⁵ On the 12th anniversary of the party. Communist Party Of India (Maoist) Central Committee, p.2

¹³⁶ Maoist Information Bulletin (MIB) Interviews CPI(Maoist) General Secretary Comrade Ganapathy on the Occasion of the Tenth Anniversary Celebrations of the Formation of the United Party. pp. 5&6

6.4 Development - Engage in vicious cycle

One of the extraordinary features of this kind of asymmetric conflict is the nature of circularity. Let us understand this with an example. As explained earlier, Maoists have characterised government and its nature in a certain way. The development drive of the Indian government is used by the Maoists to vindicate its justification of the behaviour and nature of Indian government. This takes a circular nature with each party to the conflict blaming the other for being anti-development and insensitive to the people's demands. Anti-development characterisation of the Maoists have become the most acceptable drive to influence public opinion against them. Most of the areas in the interior parts of the country have been bereft of basic human facilities for survival like roads, schools, and health centres for decades. Instead of acknowledging the failure of not having provided the facilities even 70 years after independence, government's attempts to label the Maoists' activities as anti-development, has conveyed wrong message. Additionally, the question remains, there are still places outside the reach of the Maoists, have people of all those places received the basic minimum. Government emphasises on these aspects of development for the benefit of the local population. Maoists, on the other hand have their own narrative of targeting the public infrastructures particularly the roads and the schools.

According to the Maoists roads are built for the easy and swift movement of the security forces to deal with the Maoists residing in the locality. *“The so-called development that you are referring to is the development that India had seen under the British colonialists. The talk of roads in remote areas is not for the benefit of the people, who are without food and drinking water, but only for the speedier movement of the raw materials from the hinterland to the cities, to help the mining sharks to transport the mineral wealth and forest produce. And, of course, for rushing in the state's troops to quell any militant people's struggle against the rapacious plunder by the tiny parasitic class of blood-sucking leaches.”*¹³⁷

Schools, on the other hand, are the places which instead of imparting education, become the residing centres of the security personnel. Similar is the construction of mobile towers. For the government, the justification is to ensure communication for the people in the forests but for the Maoists it become symbol of surveillance system constructed by the administration.

“Few schools in few villages have turned into police and Para-military camps. The Supreme Court directed to lift police camps from schools, in January 2011. The state

¹³⁷ *The Hindu* interview with Azad. p. 16

government agreed to this and requested four months' time. It is now four years since the direction, but the police did not leave the schools. This is severely affecting the studies of the children, mainly girls."¹³⁸

Thus, when the Maoists target these infrastructures, they become a group of people who represent anti-development collective who are against the government and its visible endeavours to bring about a qualitative change in the lives of the poor and the marginalised. The narratives and counter narratives keep moving in circularity for the indefinite period draining heavily on the national exchequer funding these projects. Speaking against the private exploitation of the natural resources, Ganapathy explains, "*Multi National Corporations (MNCs) and Comprador Bureaucratic Bourgeoise (CBB), the collaborators of imperialists are concentrated on the large tracts extended from Lalgah in Bengal to Surjagarh in Maharashtra. To exploit this rich region, primarily Adivasi (tribal) region, state and central governments have signed 100s of MOUs (Memorandum of Understanding). Indiscriminate loot of this region will destroy environment and bring long term ecological changes. The most oppressed community of Indian society, the Adivasis and local people have come under a great threat.*" ¹³⁹

Speaking against the current government on these issues Maoists are of the opinion, "*Neo-colonial stranglehold will tighten over the country as a result of the aggressive implementation of the LPG [Liberalisation Privatisation Globalisation] agenda. To deflect the consequent anger of the masses, Sangh Parivar will resort to fanning up jingoism and false talk of nationalism. Such tricks must be challenged by presenting the true picture of the wholesale sell-out of the country by Modi's government. We must carry out wide propaganda exposing the pro-imperialist, pro-feudal nature of Modi's agenda.*"¹⁴⁰

There is another murky side to this story which is equally unpleasant and that is the element of corruption. These contracts become a huge source of funding for the Maoists' functioning. No contractor will be able to operate in these conflict areas without paying to the Maoists which guarantee the former's security. Apart from this, there is an element of collusion between the contractor and the Maoists. It goes like this: a contractor builds, say for example, 5 kms roads for which he is paid by the government. The Maoists come and destroy half of it.

¹³⁸ Propaganda Bureau Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee Communist Party of India (Maoist). p 17

¹³⁹ An interview with Ganapathy General Secretary of CPI(Maoist) by Jan Myrdal and Gautam Navlakha, January 2010. p. 8

¹⁴⁰ Maoist Information Bulletin (MIB) Interviews CPI(Maoist) General Secretary Comrade Ganapathy on the Occasion of the Tenth Anniversary Celebrations of the Formation of the United Party. p. 14

and here comes the collusion. The contractor not only has been earlier paid for the entire 5 kms but will again be paid for the 5 kms for reconstruction because it is claimed to have been destroyed by the Maoists. Maoists take a share from this entire channel of money distribution. This is just one example of collusion. There are many such projects both by government and private organisations whose safety is guaranteed by the Maoists in exchange of a hefty sum. However, the positive side is the employment of the locals in these projects. I have visited one such road construction site in Jhargram (WB) where the local Adivasi population is employed as workers.

CLAWS report states, *“The Maoist generally do not hinder infrastructure development activity as long as they get their desired levy. They are however, very sensitive to projects which compromise the security of their bases and strongholds. The same is the case with the mining industry. Only those mine owners who do not pay levy to the Maoists or refuse to provide cover to the illegal mining activities by the Maoists are being targeted. The officials also maintain that there are unscrupulous business and engineering concerns which have been using the excuse of Maoist threat to cover up their non-performance. Basic development therefore does impact on Maoism but only to the extent of making recruitment and mobilisation of Maoist cadres difficult. It is only a temporary reprieve because development is a relative phenomenon.”* (CLAWS, p.144)

The Maoists have analysed such government projects as not only anti-people but used the dissatisfaction of the local population for fight against displacement, thereby broadening and updating their struggle based on changing circumstances. *“In the revolutionary movement areas, and especially in Eastern and Central India, central and state governments have signed MOUs with MNCs and CBBs like Tatas, Essar, Mittal, Jindal, Neco, Vedanta, Posco for various projects like mining projects, huge dams, reserved forests and parks, mega steel plants, thermal power plants, open cast mines, railroads etc. Powerful people’s resistance movements are going on against these MOUs and against the thousands of police forces deployed for enforcing the MOUs. With the result, many MOUs were stopped from being implemented.”*¹⁴¹ Stressing the significance of land as one of the most important causes of their fight, reiteration of it in the context of development projects regains more acceptability among the supporters.

PESA is yet another development initiative undertaken by the government surrounding the Adivasis rights, but which has often suffered from neglect in its implementation allowing

¹⁴¹ Message of CC, CPI (Maoist). p. 3

the Maoists to use it to their advantage. *“While the people are demanding to implement PESA [Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas Act)] in the fifth schedule areas the police are paying a deaf year. They are also ill propagating that this is a demand instigated by the Maoists. The police are instructing to arrange gram sabhas in the villages as per their instructions.”*¹⁴²

The vicious cycle of development functions in the following ways. For the government, development is an uncompromising agenda to bring welfare in the erstwhile neglected regions. However, in its drive towards such development, displacement and insensitivity towards the Adivasi culture also exists. Dissatisfactions out of these are further used by the Maoists to create anti-government sentiment. On one side, these projects are necessary but on the other Maoists are constructing an image where the government is portrayed as enemy of the people. It is here that the concept of governance needs to be widened which will help to realise the specificities of development. The decade long neglect of basic facilities cannot be compensated by some scattered welfare projects which are insensitive to the unique culture of the Adivasis and their lifestyle.

Hence to come out of this circularity, government needs to understand the specificities of the development drive and how it should be practiced in these areas which are Maoist dominated so that it does not become a source for legitimation in the hands of the Maoists. There is no doubt that reckless development drive, instead of bridging the gap between the locals and the government has actually widened the schisms. CLAWS report states, *“The impact of mining of minerals in Chattisgarh and Jharkhand has been severe. Revenues from mineral extraction from these two states topped \$20b in 2008 and more than \$ 1 trillion in proven reserves still sit in the ground. But this geological inheritance has been managed so disastrously that many locals uprooted, unemployed and living in a toxic and dangerous environment due to the mining operations have thrown in their lot with the Maoists. The mines are also cash register for the Maoist war chest.”* (CLAWS, p. 152)

6.5 Discussions and Conclusion

Although revolution seems a far-fetched idea at the current moment. But the unity of the forces and the massive support are an indication of organisation of the people successfully planned by the Maoists. This puts democratic India in a dilemma which prevents declaration

¹⁴² Propaganda Bureau Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee Communist Party of India (Maoist). p 14

or even an attempt of a total war against the Maoists an impossibility. *“All our plans, policies, strategy and tactics will be based entirely on the active involvement of the vast masses of people in this war of self-defence. The enemy class cannot decimate us without decimating the entire population in the regions we control. And if it dares to go into an all-out war of extermination of the tribal population the entire socio-political scene in India will undergo a fundamental shift and will witness a radical realignment of class forces.”* (Azad, p.48)

At the same time the current responses are working in favour of the Maoists, proving the success of the responses really difficult. There is a visible gap creating opinions based on miscommunications between the rural and the urban platforms. Maoists, at the current stage of their struggle do not appear to be bothered about forming public opinion favouring them in the urban sector. They are currently based out of these rural areas and henceforth creating a favourable public opinion is what the Maoists currently intend to achieve in these areas.

Reiterating their position on using the government responses to their advantage, Azad remarks, *“Repression breeds resistance. And the more Chidambaram’s men go about terrorizing people, killing, torturing, raping and creating havoc in the adivasi areas, the more intense and extensive will be the armed resistance of the masses, and the stronger will our army become. This is the logic of historical development. Hence we will utilize the situation created by the enemy’s white terror to organize armed resistance on a far wider and extensive scale than ever before.”* (Azad, p.59)

The Historian and literary scholar Hayden White once commented, "The facts do not speak for themselves," he wrote. "The historian speaks for them, speaks on their behalf, and fashions the fragments of the past into a whole whose integrity is ... a purely discursive one."¹⁴³ The government responses might appear to be possessing the quality of being analysed separately. On weaving them together, there appears to be an underlying theme which pertains to a dominant strategic discourse, the legacy of which India has been bearing. Maoists have interpreted these responses not as separate facts but as a whole, which tells a story. A story that can be interpreted from the perspective of the writings of the people they have idealised. Therefore the way the Maoists have interpreted and analysed the responses directly challenges the very rationale for which the responses were designed at the first place. Maoists have not only succeeded in establishing an identity of its own but has created a narrative which is anti-government. Azad remarked, *“If there are excessive losses, the causes have to be found and*

¹⁴³ Fallon, S.(2019). “The Rise of the Pedantic Professor When academic self-regard becomes an intellectual style” *The Chronicle Review*. Available at <https://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Rise-of-the-Pedantic/245808>

corrections made, but to expect revolution without sacrifice is illusory.”(Azad, p. 13) The Maoists have established an aura of righteousness surrounding their sacrifice and death which is becoming excessively difficult for the government to challenge.

Another important fact that the government must accept is that it is unnecessary to argue if the Maoists are actually righteous, honest, ideologically loyal and true to their cause. What is important to understand that Maoists have based their struggle on the believe that they will survive as long as the commoners and the locals think that they are all of the above. It is the people who are their strength. Therefore while the government responses are successively failing to bridge the gap between them and the people, using the very responses Maoists are bridging that gap. This ensures not only their legitimacy but also prevents the government from declaring war on the Maoists without incurring huge collateral damages. Noted American civil rights activist Angela Davis, once remarked that, “In a racist society it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be anti-racist.” And that is exactly what the Maoists are trying to achieve – create their legitimacy and challenge the legitimacy of the government.

It is not to suggest that the guiding forces of these responses have failed to understand the methods to successfully deal with the Maoists. Neither does it mean that the responses have not addressed the conflict at all. It has and it will. After fifty years, the question that we are still trying to find answer to is, how to win. But it is no more about that. The question that we really need to find answer to is ‘how not to lose anymore’. The manner in which the Maoists have interpreted the responses and used it to their advantage does not seem that the government is enjoying any superiority in terms of winning. However, the framework of dominant culture has reduced the creative space to think of responses beyond these parameters. The current stage in which the conflict stands, no party appears to be retracting their steps. The conflict is in a permanent state of impasse suffering from a Tragedy of Approach.

In this mind-game, each is trying to analyse the other to keep oneself ahead in the fight. This is an age-old strategy. While strategies can be replaced by modifying the current one or replacing it with a more advanced one. What remains irreplaceable in this decade old fight is the loss of human lives. One police officer in conflict ridden Jhargram commended me for travelling all the way to the conflict area, because according to him, “*People residing in far-off cities only write negatives about the police as if we are not suffering, our families are not sacrificing, and our colleagues are not laying down their lives.*”¹⁴⁴ Not one side but both the

¹⁴⁴ Interview with the researcher in December, 2017 in Jhargram.

sides are suffering because of certain responses which refuse to yield any result in addressing the conflict once and for all.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 The Beginning of The End

7.1.1 The Structure

People participation have forced government to look for different means to deal with the conflict. But these approaches instead of mitigating the conflict are contributing to the conflict because they reflect the similar structural inadequacies that gave rise to the conflict at the first place. Besides, this chasm within the central government approach is used by the Maoists to their advantage by legitimising their position and delegitimising that of the government's.

One of the essential characteristics of this thought process is perspective about others against whom one's entitlements are measured and identified. Attitude towards the others, therefore, is determined by these deep seated prejudices which remains beyond the legal and constitutional obligations. A law can only prohibit discrimination which are more visible. But it has no control over hidden bias and the subsequent actions based on it. Mistreating the Adivasis which denies them basic dignity or misbehaving with the lower castes which denies them minimum self-respect cannot be measured against any law. The reason being there is no handbook which institutionalises what good or acceptable behaviour entails. Hence the socially constructed behaviour continuing for generations passed on as customs become the acceptable one without much argumentation. Extrapolating such a behaviour beyond the confines of the caste system is what give rise to entitled superior positions. This elitism is institutionalised. This elitism is normalised. This elitism is accepted beyond question. Therefore it is no surprise that the Adivasi consent is ignored over any project which requires them to be uprooted or they are killed with impunity and identified as collateral damage or labelled as enemy because of their association with the Maoists who use violent means while similar measures are resorted to by other organisations (like RSS) or the culture of violence promoted during elections among the contesting political parties. Hence dominant groups cater to this dominant mentality which obscures the presence of others as equal. More than the caste system as a practice what is dangerous is the caste mentality which is obscure and guides our behaviour towards other as legitimate. Therefore denial of legitimate status to this State by the Adivasis and the lower castes is an outcome of this systemic denial to them as equal citizens of the country.

Indian government has manifested qualities of hegemony to a large section of the population. The responses planned by the government has characteristics of such ingrained

discriminatory tendencies and normalised processes of otherisation which institutionalises exclusion. This mindset transcends federal obligations and political ideologies. Treating those below in the hierarchy with utter disdain and humiliation forms part of this mindset. One needs to understand that it is due to these privileges entitled to those higher up in the hierarchy, more often than not these groups also are economically more affluent. There are exceptions made possible through reservations. But on a wider scale jobs, for example, are still allotted on the basis of castes. For example manual scavengers¹⁴⁵ are people who invariably are from the lower castes.

Therefore one has to keep in mind when looking at the Indian society that most behaviour and perspective is determined by this frame of mind. This reference point is manipulated by deep rooted prejudice and in turn influenced subsequent behaviour of the people. Within such a socio-cultural framework, the responses are bound to posit elements that have these inherent biases. It would not be surprising to observe a pattern of discrimination ingrained within these responses.

7.2 ‘The Danger of a Single Story’ - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Maoism is the result of inherent exclusionary social and political conditions that thrive in Indian structural framework. And this exclusion has nothing in general to do with economic inequality, although its role in the sustenance of the conflict cannot be denied. The exclusive exclusion that I am talking about is the normalisation of the dominant structure in politics and society where the role of caste has to be observed as a mentality and not just as a status group. The voices of lower castes, the Adivasis, the political outliers, have been co-opted within this dominant structure thereby relegating the specificity of these voices to the background. This is what Chimamanda has referred to as ‘The danger of a Single Story’. Although she was referring it in the context of feminist struggle. Using it in this reference will not be too far-fetched. Cynics might argue on the point of diversity that Indian culture has been manifesting and holding dear to its core ideals. I would argue, Indian diversity is almost like that costly showpiece in our room which adorns the household but has no use-value. Indian diversity over the period has lost its voice amidst the resounding cacophony of majoritarianism and

¹⁴⁵ Manual Scavenging is defined as removal of human excreta from streets, dry latrines, drains and sewers alongwith cleaning of septic tanks.

homogeneity. The large land mass of India with its diversity can only survive if there is space for different voices to demand what is rightfully theirs.

One has to look into the abyss of social core to understand the failure of these responses in creating a believable story for the marginalised to relate to or identify with. The responses have been making the rounds for quite some time. The pattern of the responses remains similar although changes have been incorporated to address newer dimensions over time. Why has those patterns or the essence of its rationale refuse to undergo any change? It is at this juncture that one is forced to look beyond the realms of those responses to find the answer.

Inclusion in a diverse country like India is only an elusive term applicable so long it does not demand a seat at the table. It is embraced as long as it is ready to follow the dominant groups and not lead them. Over the years this society has lost its legitimacy among those people who have chosen the Maoists over a democratically elected government. The government is acting like a hegemon while claiming to be legitimate. It wants to extract the legitimacy from those sections who have never been allowed to give any voice to their own existence. Being treated like an outlier for generations, the government now demands to be their legitimate representative falling into the same labyrinth of exploitation. Exploitation and discrimination which have been masked under centuries old traditions and values forced to be uphold at the cost of human dignity. This entitled superior mentality is the legacy carried by every generation as inherent right. Within such a framework, the pattern of the responses has failed to evolve, daring to challenge the glaring injustices carried out in the name of social and cultural values.

The need to address the chasm between India's claim for legitimacy and manifesting hegemonic legitimacy and the gap between the dominant and the dominated voices have failed to find a place in the response structure of the government. Hierarchical privilege is so ingrained in the system that we accept it as part of the life. The responses of the government have always aimed towards short sighted relief than, if not address it, at least acknowledge the exclusion that the structure has helped to sustain and thrive without ever being subjected to question or criticism.

Society which nurtured the symptoms of the conflict has to be guided to accept the inherent problems which rationalise hierarchical discrimination among people and groups. Without identifying where the problem lies mere dependence on superficial responses will only succeed in managing the conflict temporarily. Indian society is too proud and shrouded in ego to accept this. This is probably the reason behind absence of any substantive call for dialogue

by the central government to negotiate. The superiority complex of the Indian ruling elites has assured them of victory without having to compromise in any manner, whatsoever. The reluctance to modify the pattern by trying out new measures since the older ones did not prove to be that effective, originates from a complex mindset that favours confidence in tried and tested methods. The superiority complex is shrouded in egoistic behaviour that denies acceptance of past failures and subsequently adopt new changes.

I would like to affirm that legitimation is not possible without sacrificing the perceived superiority complex from which the political and social class in India suffer. One is acting as the hindrance against the other. Coercion can only act for some time. It will fail to achieve lasting result in a divided society with immense social and economic inequalities. There is no doubt that newer features have been added to address newer dimensions of the conflict over this period. However, as I have consistently argued that there has not been any change in how the government perceive the Maoists or their cadres.

It is particularly important to acknowledge the humiliation and the neglect meted out to these communities who form the core of the Maoist conflict. There is no defeat in this humility. Because when we are talking about Maoists, they are not just a band of criminals engaged in a killing spree. They have a strong ideological commitment which forms the basis of their fight. Whether one accepts that ideology or rejects it is not the point of concern here. It is the Maoists and the marginalised who have joined hands. It appears to be a deadly combination for the government to handle when ideology pairs with exclusion. The vacuum created by the absence of legitimacy of the government has been filled by the Maoists. And it is the persistent and systematic exclusion of certain groups and communities which have created a conducive space for the Maoists to survive. In such scenarios, certain welfare measures which are taking place simultaneously with development drives and security responses are further helping in this alienation process.

Indian democracy is far away from evolving into a democratic nation comparable to standards set by western democracies. Indian democracy is different. We are offended by the silliest of remarks which clashes with our accepted notions. We have been trained to walk with straitjackets fixed to our minds. Dissent is not accepted as a constituent part which strengthen democracy. Dissent is considered to be insubordination to a higher authority to whom we should bow and who remains beyond question. India's claim and popularity as the world's biggest democracy which the western world love to celebrate is shrouded in mystery. If the

regularity of electoral process is considered to be the parameter of a functioning democracy, then we really have serious problems with what democracy really stand for. This façade has helped India to remain outside of standards to which other developing democratic countries are generally held accountable to.

It is even more impossible to seek better results now from the responses due to the Hindu majoritarian rule which is limiting the space for the minorities' rights at every step. Securitising the conflict and limiting the scope for negotiation might yield temporary result. But someday it will once again raise its ugly head from the ashes to demand what has been denied to them and what is rightfully theirs. To borrow a phrase from V.S. Naipaul 'rejecting rejection', the Adivasis and the marginalised of India have attempted to reject the rejection imposed upon them by the society. Every time there will be rejection, the rejected will challenge this rejection. And there will always be some Maoists (today it may be the Maoists; tomorrow it might be some other group) who will come to lend their support ensuring that the cycle, continues.

The danger of a single story is opportunistic. The danger of a single story is claustrophobic. The danger of a single story is imposing. Every ending is the beginning of some story written by someone, somewhere. When I began this thesis, I spoke of our story and their story. And that we are enemies in each other's stories. It will be sometime before our stories will cross paths. And that will be the beginning of a new story. Being an optimist myself I haven't lost hope when our stories will mingle with each other and we will no longer be enemies. We will be just some characters who have met at the cross-roads in the biggest stage of life without any regrets. We will interact in the moment and then move on with our journey. But what remains unchanged is the fact that our different stories will confront the danger of a single story by not portraying each other as enemy!

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APPENDIX A

| List of Maoist Literature | | |
|---------------------------|---|------|
| Sl. No. | Publication | Year |
| 1 | Message of the Central Committee on the 12 th anniversary of the Party | 2016 |
| 2 | Booklet against massacre in Dandakaranya | 2016 |
| 3 | Message on the Martyr's week | 2017 |
| 4 | Maoists in India – Writings and Interviews of Azad | 2010 |
| 5 | Press Release on proposed aerial attacks on Adivasi area | 2015 |
| 6 | Interview of Ganapathy, ex- general secretary | 2009 |
| 7 | Interview with Ganapathy by Jan Myrdal and Gautam Navlakha | 2010 |
| 8 | LIC is the latest Counter-Insurgency doctrine of the Imperialists -Defeat LIC through protracted people's war | 2008 |
| 9 | MIB interview of Ganapathy on 10 th anniversary | 2014 |
| 10 | Statement denying Gyaneswari train derailment | 2010 |
| 11 | Statement on the assassination of Azad | 2010 |
| 12 | Press release on the question of Talks | 2009 |
| 13 | Strategy and Tactics of Indian Revolution | 2004 |