

Reducing Maoist Influence- Government Initiatives

September 28, 2021

The geographical influence of Maoists has contracted to only 41 districts in the country, a sharp reduction from 96 such districts in 10 States in 2010, according to data provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to Chief Ministers and other officials at a meeting. In this context, it is prudent to learn the government initiatives related to LWE.

In news: Maoist influence down from 96 to 41 districts: Home Ministry

Placing it in syllabus: Security

Dimensions:

- Who are Naxialites?
- Statistics on their reducing influence
- Causes for the decline
- History of Counter insurgency measures by Indian Government
- Central government strategies to counter Naxalism

Content:

Who are Naxialites?

- The Naxalites or Naxals are a group of far-left radical communists that are regarded as one of the most dreaded terror groups within India.
- Though they are part of an organization that once stood for the weaker sections of the society and against their exploitation, today, their objective has deviated.
- They have been involved in unlawful activities like terror attacks, money extortion, illegal occupation, etc.

When we talk about Naxalites, their roots are associated with the Communist Party of India (Marxist) or CPI(M) which later was split to form the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) or CPI(ML).

From CPI(ML), several groups were formed and one of the groups was CPI(Maoist). Today, when we relate to Naxalites, they are majorly part of this group.

The Communist Party of India (Maoist) is a communist party in India that follows Maoism principles.

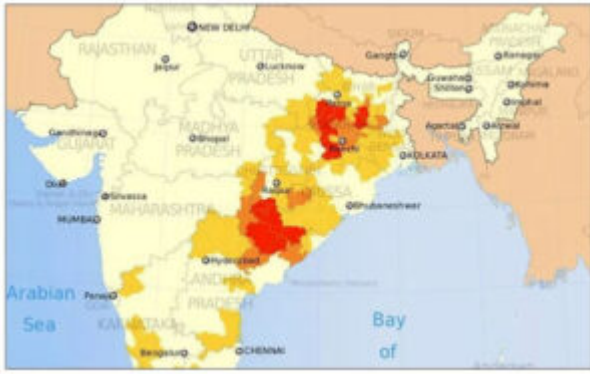
Currently, it has been designated as a terror outfit due to its philosophy, guerilla warfare, and terror-based activities. The party aims to topple the government of India using the “protracted people’s war”, a strategy defined by Mao Zedong.

CPI(Maoist) was regarded as a terror outfit under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in 2009.

Statistics on their reducing influence:

Data Provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs shows:

- The geographical influence of Maoists has contracted to only 41 districts in the country, a sharp reduction from 96 such districts in 10 States in 2010
- They have been pushed to a few pockets with only 25 districts accounting for 85% of the LWE
- (Left Wing Extremism) violence in the country
- There has been a gradual decline in the number of LWE incidents in the last decade.
- The incidents have reduced from 2,258 in 2009 to 349 incidents till August 31, 2021.
- The number of deaths reduced from 908 to 110 during the same period.



Causes for the decline:

- The ideology of revolution has lost its old appeal (evident in the lack of interest among locals to join the militia)
- An improved performance from the state on the development and governance fronts makes it difficult for the insurgents to grow in the same manner as they managed at their peak.
- The Centre initiated development and good-governance measures denied the insurgents the support of the affected populations.
- The most significant steps taken by the Centre are in terms of enacting few landmark legislations recognising the rights of adivasis to access forest resources and for self-governance. The passage of the Forest Dwellers Act in 2006 despite stiff resistance from environmentalists and NGOs.
- Strengthened security-centric measures to address the growing Maoist movement.
- Security forces in recent years have achieved the seemingly impossible by eliminating many top leaders.
- They have captured more than 7,000 active cadres in the last three years, while an equal number of Maoists have surrendered before authorities in various states.
- Loss of strongholds, declining appeal of ideology and leadership crisis, along with improved performance from the affected states on socio-economic fronts, may make

it difficult for the insurgency to regain the momentum it once had decades ago.

- The final death knell would come from significant improvements in security agencies, particularly the police forces, improved security and intelligence infrastructure, and better command and control system to keep track of the rebels and their movements.

History of counter insurgency measures by Indian Government:

- Given that India is a federal country and the subject of law and order is vested in the states, the Union government has largely led the counter-insurgency efforts from behind.
- Successive governments at the Centre have provided the resources—security and financial, paramilitary, intelligence and strategic direction—to find sustainable solutions to the Maoist insurgency.
- The government between 2004 and 2014 laid down the building blocks for India's anti-Maoist response with **Counter Insurgency (COIN) Strategy**
- The current National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government has accelerated its pace.
- Governments at the Centre have adopted a **mix of methods—population-centric and enemy-centric**—to quell the Maoist movement.
- The overall aim has been to complement state initiatives.
- The Government of India has adopted a **holistic approach focusing on development and security-related interventions**, to tackle the LWE problem.
- It has also worked in ensuring rights and entitlements of local communities, improvement in governance and public perception management.

The law and order approach

The law and order approach continues to be the key pillar of the Centre's counterinsurgency strategy.

This is best exemplified by the deployment of 532 companies of central paramilitary forces in the affected states.

In 2006 the Central government under then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for the first time issued a security blueprint to tackle the Maoist threat.

The blueprint was prominently featured in the **government's 14-Point Policy** and subsequently took the form of a series of security-centric measures to address the growing Maoist movement.

- Modernisation of police forces
- Strengthening intelligence networks
- Aiding states in security-related infrastructure
- Deployment of central paramilitary forces
- Special infrastructure scheme
- The NDA government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's launch of SAMADHAN scheme in May 2017.
- Ban on the CPI (Maoist) and the UAPA Act, 2009
- Strengthening monitoring and coordination mechanisms through a series of steps, including the creation of a Unified Command.

The components of **SAMADHAN strategy** are as follows:

- S for Smart Leadership
- A for Aggressive Strategy
- M for Motivation and Training
- A for Actionable Intelligence
- D for Dashboard-based Key Result Areas and Key Performance Indicators
- H for Harnessing Technology
- A for Action Plan for Each Theatre
- N for No access to Financing.

Development programmes

- The Centre initiated a series of development and good-governance measures to deny the insurgents the support of the affected populations.
- This approach was best illustrated in the Union government's appointment of an expert committee (headed by **D. Bandyopadhyay**, the architect of "Operation Barga") to carry out a detailed study of socio-economic developments in the affected regions and suggest measures to address these deficits.
- Following the suggestions of the Expert Committee and the government's own assessment of the situation, an unprecedented amount of resources were transferred to areas affected by the Maoist insurgency.
- One of them is the flagship **Integrated Action Plan (IAP)** launched to implement a special scheme which **addresses the development deficiencies** in LWE-affected districts; the **financial package was over INR 6,000 crore per annum.**
- The government later disbanded the IAP scheme; it has been replaced by **Special Central Assistance (SCA)** to **cover 35 most LWE-affected districts.**
- The most significant steps taken by the Centre are in terms of enacting few landmark **legislations recognising the rights of adivasis to access forest resources** and for **self-governance.**
- The passage of **Forest Dwellers Act in 2006** despite stiff resistance from environmentalists and NGOs is a clear statement of the Centre's resolve to address the grievances of tribal populations living in the Naxal-affected areas.

Central government strategies to counter Naxalism

In order to holistically address the LWE problem in an effective manner, the Government has formulated a **National Policy and Action Plan** adopting a multi-pronged strategy in

the areas of security, development, ensuring rights & entitlement of local communities etc.

Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme:

Under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme, the central Govt. **reimburses to the State Governments** of 10 LWE affected **States Security Related Expenditure of 70 districts** relating to:

- training and operational needs of security forces,
- ex-gratia payment to the family of civilians/security forces killed/injured 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

Special Central Assistance (SCA) for 30 most LWE affected districts:

- The main objective of the Scheme is to fill the critical gaps in Public infrastructure and Services, which are of emergent nature.
- Rs. 2598.24 crore have been released to the States during the last 4 years.

Scheme of Fortified Police stations:

The Ministry of Home Affairs had sanctioned construction of 400 Fortified Police Stations in 10 LWE affected States. Of these 399 of PSs have been completed.

Civic Action Programme (CAP):

- CAP in LWE affected areas has been 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 very successful in achieving its goal.
- Under the Scheme, funds are released to the CAPFs, deployed in LWE affected areas, for conducting various civic activities for the welfare of the local people.

Media Plan:

- 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.

Road connectivity 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.

Aspirational District:

- The Ministry of Home Affairs has been tasked with the monitoring of Aspirational districts programme in 35 LWE affected districts.
- Aspirational Districts' programme aims to quickly and effectively transform these districts.
- With States as the main drivers, this program will focus on the strength of each district, identify low-hanging fruits for immediate improvement, measure progress, and rank districts.

Operation Steeplechase:

- The Government of India organized joint operations by the army and the police in the bordering district of West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa which were particularly affected by Naxalite depredations.
- The operations were undertaken from July 1 to August 15, **1971** and were code-named **Operation Steeplechase**.
- The broad strategy of the Security forces was to surround as large an area as possible and seal the routes of entry and exit.
- The Army formed the outer cordon and the CRPF the inner ring. The local police, which was generally accompanied by a magistrate, carried out a thorough search of the area.
- Suspected naxalites were arrested, illicit weapons, ammunition and explosives seized.
- Wherever possible, simultaneous action was taken in the neighboring area also so that the naxalites sneaking out were caught while attempting to escape.
- These operations covered West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.
- The operation achieved the desired result, though not to the extent anticipated by the administration.

Operation Green Hunt

- Operation Green Hunt is the name used by the Indian media to describe the “all-out offensive by paramilitary forces and the states forces” against the Naxalites.
- The operation is believed to have begun in November 2009 along five states in the “Red Corridor.”
- The term was coined by the Chhattisgarh police officials to describe one successful drive against the Communist Party of India (Maoist) in the state.
- Later, the term was erroneously used by the media to describe the wider anti-Naxalite operations.
- On the other hand, the Union Government does not use the term Operation Green Hunt to describe its anti-Naxalite

offensive.

Mould your thought: Why has the naxalite movement declining in India? What has been the Indian government's strategy to counter Left Wing Extremism?

Approach to the answer:

- Introduction
- Give statistics for the decline of naxalite movement in India
- Mention the reasons for the declining trend
- Discuss the strategy used by Union government
- Mention different components of the strategy
- Conclusion