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Countering Left-Wing Extremism in India

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Abstract

Left Wing Extremism (LWE) is embedded in the communist political movement, which started in 1920 and has grown in numerous streams since then. However, their basic ideology is to establish a classless society in India, but they differ in achieving their ends. Communist Party India(CPI) adopted the electoral process in 1951. A few radical elements broke away from the CPI in 1964 to form CPI (Marxist). And when CPI-M adopted electoral democracy, a more radical Maoist faction within CPI-M initiated the violent Naxalite movement. In 1969 Charu Muzamdar formed a new group called CPI-M&L based on Marxist and Lenin philosophies. By 1972 the communist movement in India was defeated.

From 1972-1991, Naxalism remained in a dormant state. It was repeatedly fragmented on ideological grounds, strategies and personality clashes. Then the second phase of Naxalite violence commenced. The origin of Maoist violence can be traced to two factions of Naxalites: the People's War Group (PWG) of Andhra Pradesh and the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) of Bihar.

It is believed that the Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980 deprived the fundamental rights of forest produce. Colossal dislocation of tribal population in the Naxalism-affected states due to development projects, mining operations and other reasons. A socio-economic vacuum was created and exploited by the Maoists to mobilise such people into Naxalism by Maoists. The national strategy to counter LWE was formed in 2015. It was a multi-pronged approach to combat LWE. Its main aim was to ensure participatory governance and the protection of the rights of local tribals, among other things. Left Wing Extremist activities have dropped remarkably by 77% from the highest level of 2,258 in 2009 to 509 in 2021. The influence of Maoists has also come down notably in districts, from 96 districts in 2010 to only 39 districts in 2022.¹ Bihar is free of Naxal terror as of today.

Key Word: Extremism, Insurgency, Ideologies, Communist, Tribals

Introduction:

Left Wing Extremism (LWE) has made its presence felt from our neighbouring country Nepal to down south in India. As left-wing parties and groups consolidate their positions, the influence of LWE has been spread over to eleven states, which was earlier restricted to Andhra Pradesh and Bihar only. The problem of LWE has been in various parts of India since the late 60s and has been affected by violence. About 90 districts of the eleven states still affected by the LWE are Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, MP, UP, Kerala and West Bengal.ⁱⁱ The cavities of discontentment in these areas for long in social, cultural and political arenas have now been turned into political, social, cultural and developmental issues.

The LWE, sometimes called the Marxist-Maoist insurgency, has grown in terms of operational synergy and potency and makes a red corridor. It is now spread in many cities, towns, and villages on north-south and east-west lines of communication, which is a potentially hazardous sign. Therefore LWE is posing the biggest threat to the developmental projects in India.ⁱⁱⁱ

Govt of India and state Govts have initiated various measures to fight this menace. Though the presence of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) has increased; yet, the stress is being laid on the 'capacity building' of the State Police Forces.

The latest report shows an almost 77% fall in LWE-related violent activities, with 2258 incidents in 2019 and 509 reported incidents in 2021. Incidents of deaths of civilians and security forces have decreased by 85%, from an all-time peak of 1005 in 2010 to 147 in 2021.^{iv} However, LWE violence-related incidents in India have decreased from 2019-2021. Yet, the death tolls of security forces personnel have doubled in Chattisgarh as per the reply submitted by Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai in Rajya Sabha on 20 July 2022.^v

Roots and causes of the rise of Left-Wing Extremism in India.

In India, the political movement for communism was initiated in 1920 and has grown into many branches. They all desire to create a classless society, but their ways and means of achieving such desires differ. These groups and political parties range from election-contesting political parties such as the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Lenin) (CPI-ML) to underground groups like the Communist Party of India (Maoist).

CPI joined the electoral process in 1951. Some of the staunch followers of CPI formed CPI-Maoist in 1964, but again, when CPI-Maoist joined the electoral process, hardcore followers started the Naxalite movement in 1969. A new group called CPI- Marxist and Lenin was formed by Charu Mazumdar in 1969. It opposed

the electoral process and believed in violent ways and means to achieve political ends. Violent activities started all over India, but the significant concentration was in West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. By the end of 1972, this movement faded away due to strict actions by the centre and 'State Govts'.

The elements of the movement remained dormant from 1972 to 1991 till it started activities again. This new insurgency phase is attributed to the Maoist revolution, which traces its history to two prominent groups of Naxalites, the People War Group (PWG) in Andhra Pradesh and the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI) in Bihar.^{vi}

In 2004 the tide was turned in favour of the insurgents of LWE when the CPI(Maoist-Lenin), the PWG, MCCI, and forty other armed groups merged and formed the CPI (Maoist). The erstwhile People War Group leader, Lakshmana Rao alias 'Ganapathi', was appointed general secretary. This revolution spread across the country, brought large areas under its influence, and surpassed the terrorist groups operating in Jammu & Kashmir and North-East. By 2006 it posed a significant threat to the internal security of India.^{vii} And in May 2014, the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Naxalbari also merged with CPI (Maoist).^{viii} The main objectives of CPI(Maoist) were to overthrow the 'Indian Govt' through an armed struggle, build a people's army, infiltrate trade unions, and mass mobilisation of people for their movement.

What are the causes of the rise of LWE? Numerous explanations have been put forward for explaining the reasons for the increase of LWE in India. The LWE activities increased in those tribal areas where the administrative vacuum was created due to a lack of presence of government officials from various agencies. These insurgents established their bases in such regions and indoctrinated the local populace. Generally, such areas lack basic infrastructure, schools, hospitals, etc., and govt officials don't opt for posting. Those posted on punishment take the punishment on these people, thus causing further isolation. Without development facilities, these people don't obey law and order. These insurgents exploited the feelings of isolation. The common causes could be ending the injustice, deprivation, and oppression suffered by the tribal people. The other reasons that could be attributed to facilitating the rise of LWE could be the quasi-mafias nature of the organisation, monetary benefits and self-importance driven by the conflict. Factors responsible for the increase of LWE could be summarised:^{ix}

1. The main reason for the rise of the LWE was the severe lack of development in these regions despite abundant mineral and natural resources.
2. They were predominantly tribal belts and were neglected by the government and mainstream media.

3. There were gross violations and mishandling of the Govt machinery. Sleaze was widespread, which led to desolation for the people of these tribal areas.

4. Many people's unfriendliness and social segregation caused the feeling of disconnectedness from the mainstream of Govt and society.

5. The problem of 'Jal-Jangle-Jameen' was the centre of these movements and protests. The people of this area were regularly subjugated for their land, which was rich in minerals and other natural resources. It is alleged that there were several instances when the illegal encroachment of the land happened, and these forest dwellers were stripped of their land rights and were rendered landless.

Weak Govts with ineffectual State Police Forces were the most significant causes for the LWE insurgency to take shape, survive and thrive for an extended period. Because whenever states fail, then they facilitate revolution to take place. Further, the interaction amongst local grievances, weak governance, greed and corruption upsurges the probability of the outbreak of revolts.

Modus Operandi of LWE.

It traces its ideology to the Chinese leader Mao Tse Tung's 'organised peasant insurrection' theory in 1927. As per him, the critical aspect of guerrilla warfare is the dependence on the people themselves where they operate. Mao related the local populace to water and insurgents to fish, requiring water for survival.^x

It discards the legislative republic and has faith in seizing political power, ensuing long-drawn-out armed struggle based on guerrilla warfare. This strategy necessitates establishing centres in rural and far-flung areas and converting them first into guerrilla regions and then as independent sectors, in addition, to area-wise capturing and surrounding cities and towns. The ultimate aim is to put in a *people's government* through the *people's war*. LWE wishes to relish a New Democratic Revolution (NDR).^{xi}

Violence is the driving force of LWE ideology, so insurgents often kill and kidnap targeted people. Violence is the prime means to take over the prevailing socio, economic and political establishments. The Peoples Liberation Guerilla Army (PLGA), the military wing of the CPI (Maoist), was formed to spread extremism and violence. Initially, the PLGA resorted to guerrilla warfare. It aimed to create a fear psychosis in the local populace and govt functionaries. They eliminated government officials, including the elected representatives working at grass root levels.

In areas under LWE control, government paralysis was created by their violent methods. The service delivery systems were disrupted by killing, kidnapping,

terrorisation and coercion. The abduction of targets like ‘Districts Magistrates’ was done to bargain the release of their arrested cadres by the govt. The cadres often see insurgency as a source of revenue and extortion.

Various forward organisations are formed to garner the support of the masses by mobilising people in cities and towns through apparently natural ways and means. Many of these front-running bodies are led by educated people inclined toward the insurgency-driven doctrine and provide psychological backing to the drive to contest the abuse of the tribal population. These people act as facades to hide the malicious nature of LWE ideology and thinking. These ideologists elevate apprehensions about human rights violations whenever insurgents are killed in counter-insurgency operations. On the other hand, when insurgents kill people, they are totally hushed up. They frequently act as negotiators when the insurgents abduct officers. This tendency is perceptible in the insolence of so-called educators of universities. They also create the misinformation apparatus about these insurgents. They often raise the issues of ‘displacement of tribals’, ‘corporate exploitation’, ‘human rights violations by security forces etc., and carry out the targeted audiences. Also, they intelligently use govt machinery and legal procedures to fulfil their desires and derail the state machinery. These organisations recruit people, raise funds for the insurgency, create safe houses for underground cadres, provide legal support to arrested insurgents and indulge in amassing people for agitations over issues of significance. Similarly, they have deliberate plans to create a united front with concurring insurgents/terrorist organisations operating in India.^{xii}

The CPI(Maoist) consists of the Central Committee (CC), the Politbureau (PB) and the Central Military Commission (CMC). The undermentioned divisions are directly under the command and control of CMC:^{xiii}

- The Central Technical Committee (CTC).
- Regional Commands (RCs).
- Special Action Teams (SATs) to carry out selective killings.
- Military Intelligence (MI)
- Publications and Editorial Board of the magazine called Jung.
- Central Military Instructors Team (CMIT).
- Communications.
- Tactical Counter Offensive Campaign (TCOC).
- Peoples’ Liberation Guerilla Army (PLGA).

The CPI (Maoist) also have an intelligence set-up known as the Peoples Security Service (PSS). At the state level, there are State Committees, State Military Commissions, etc., going down to Zonal Committees, Area Committees, etc.

Further, the PLGA^{xiv} entails three main forces:

- Main Force which consists of Companies, Platoons, Special Action Teams and Intelligence and Security Units
- The secondary force comprises Special Guerilla Squads, Local Guerilla Squads, Platoons, District/Divisional level action teams
- The Base Force has the significant components of Peoples Militia, Gram Rakshak Dal, Aatma Rakshak Dal, Self-defense Squads

In their areas of influence, the LWE has established 'Revolutionary Peoples Committees' (RPC), a civilian administrative apparatus that performs elementary administrative functions and delivers logistics sustenance to their military functionaries.

Impact of LWE.

The spectrum of LWE in India goes beyond mere security issues. More than 12,000 lives have been lost in the last two decades due to LWE in India.

• **Causing obstruction in the democratic process:** Indian democracy is based on the free formation of opinion and equal suffrage. This belief in a democratic system is built by representing all citizens' equal worth and conducting free and fair elections. This is the broad acceptance of the 'rule of law'. Further, a precondition for vibrant and sustainable democracy is that each individual should be able to influence and have power in the decision-making process that affects our daily lives.

However, these insurgents don't accept the foundation on which the society of India has been built and flourished over a period of time. They intimidate the local populace prior to elections and force them not to vote. It encroaches upon the principle of the participative democratic process. They indulge in extremely violent activities through guerrilla tactics and enforce their government in the local villages. The fear created by these insurgents creates distortion in public debates, discredits moderates, generates political extremes and divides people. They regularly carry out targeted killings to eliminate elected representatives at the grassroots levels, in Panchayats, etc., to stop people from participating in the democratic process. They intend to create a vacuum in the low levels paving the way for their entrenchment in a parallel system of governance there.

• **Economic impact.** The destruction of the roads, transport system and government resources by the LWE insurgents create an interruption in governance and last-mile connectivity. From 2009 to 2011, about 1,183 incidents of damage to infrastructure by the LWE insurgents were carried out. The devastated structures comprise property belonging to public/private sector units, railway property, telephone exchanges/mobile towers, power infrastructure, roads, schools and panchayat

buildings. Estimated damage runs in crores of rupees.^{xv} In a rough estimate, the total cost of losses caused by LWE insurgents destroying railways, roads, electricity, government buildings, forest, education, vehicles, mining, industries, agriculture, commerce and trade is conservatively estimated at Rs. 200 billion per annum.^{xvi} The Naxalite movement has significantly downgraded the performance of some extremely occupant states on various economic activities. The effect includes low tourism, less long-term investment in agriculture and other sectors, low school enrollment, minimum job, and substantial opportunities.

- **Illegal activities:** They resort to extorting and aborting famous personalities like politicians, bureaucrats, police personnel, etc. These insurgents also engage in drug trafficking. They indulge in murders, abductions, extortions, etc. They often commit high-profile murders and kidnappings to instil fear in their opponents and civilians.

- **Challenges to the trustworthiness of govt:** The survival of LWE shows a failure of governance, thereby eroding the faith of the masses in government and impacting the unity and integrity of the nation.

- **Isolating Tribal Villages:** These extremist movements have disconnected several tribal villages from the national mainstream. The primary sufferers in LWE are primarily the population's tribal and poor sections. The LWE insurgents are not afraid of killing the tribal people themselves if they are suspected of being *informers*.

The impact of LWE on the development of the affected states is undoubtedly negative if measured concerning the conventional economic markers employed for measuring growth, namely GDP and per capita income. LWE's social and political impacts on development are all in a fix. There have been multiple opinions about these aspects. The confusing bit is that all factions seem convinced of their part of the story and have logical reasons and events supporting it. In my view, this is bound to happen, considering this movement's duration and proportion. Though a common ideology binds all Naxal groups, they tend to act and react differently and affect a diverse population, leading to varied opinions. In India, many states were seriously disturbed by these anti-social activities.

Measures to thwart the menace posed by LWE from India.

Left Wing Extremism (LWE) poses a significant threat to India's Internal Security. There is a need for a detailed and synchronised policy response from both the security as well as development aspects. The problem of the LWE could be described as *a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma first used by Wilston Churchill about Russia in 1939*. To confuse others and hide their identity, the LWE has been described by various nomenclatures such as the 'Democratic revolution', a 'class

struggle’ or ‘social justice. No riddle, mystery, enigma etc., can be unravelled lacking the misplaced links or the keys.

The US’s Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) describes an insurgency as “a protracted political-military struggle directed toward subverting or displacing the legitimacy of constituted government or occupying power and completely or partially controlling the territory’s resources through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organisations.”^{xvii}

In light of the above ‘definition’ and ‘Modus Operandi’, the LWE insurgency could be described as a political and military campaign by nonstate actors to overthrow the legitimate regime. LWE comprises the clandestine insurgent groups that plan and execute activities such as recruitment, training, fundraising, information warfare, procurement of arms and war-like stores, outside support etc.

The political goal is the primary agenda of any insurgency; without this aim, an uprising can’t survive. To fulfil this aim, insurgency must mobilise the masses voluntarily or at gunpoint. Emphasising the importance of people for any revolution, Mao Tse-Tung said, “Without question, the fundamental of guerrilla warfare is in masses of the people.”

Thus a successful counter-insurgency should be political and ‘Security Forces’ actions to prevent insurgents from toppling the legitimate government or seceding from the country. It must include political, security, economic, psychological, and other relevant welfare measures to weaken the insurgents’ willpower and bolster the government machinery. Outside support can play a crucial role in tilting the war in favour of insurgents; hence it should be denied to them at all costs.

The LWE was not considered a grave ‘Internal Security’ problem for long. The insurgents have been able to embed themselves in a few inaccessible and distant tribal areas of the affected states. Gradually, government officials withdrew to the remote and inaccessible areas, thus creating security and a development vacuum. This created environment suited the extremists, who had set up some basic corresponding supervision arrangements in these areas. Nevertheless, the Maoist insurgency has now been acknowledged as a significant ‘Internal Security’ problem. The prevalence of LWE poses a threat to the process of nation-building. Henceforth, the government has started multi-pronged actions to tackle security issues and developmental shortfalls. These measures have successfully stopped the expansion of the LWE to new areas and brought about the shrinkage of their area of influence. Now, the central areas of the problem are being progressively looked into. Eventually, these actions would produce the desired results to diminish the impact of LWE to inconsequential levels.

The perspective of the government of India to tackle the problems posed by LWE.

To deal with LWE holistically in the areas of security, development, safeguarding rights and prerogatives of the local populace, enhancement in governance and public perception management, the govt of India set up a Left Wing Extremism Division under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in 2006. The Division also oversees the LWE state of affairs and curative actions undertaken by the States affected by the LWE insurgency. The LWE Division manages the execution of numerous development plans of the Ministries/Departments of Govt. of India in the LWE-affected States. The role and functions of the LWE Division are as under:^{xviii}

- Capacity building of States to combat LWE through schemes of MHA.
- Earmarking the resources of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) in LWE-affected states.
- To provide funds to the CAPFs for consolidation of infrastructure development.
- Swotting the security state of affairs and issuing advisories accordingly.
- Assisting states to combat insurgency by providing funds.
- Managing the execution of insurgency-related schemes of the Central Govt.

While tackling the LWE for quite some time and interactions with the affected State Govts, it has been felt that an integrated approach aimed at the relatively more affected areas would deliver results. Keeping this in mind, many districts in the affected states have been given special attention to planning, implementing and monitoring various interventions.

Since security is the subject of the states, the Central Government closely monitors the situation and coordinates its efforts. These measures include:

- Provisioning of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)
- Approval and sanction of India Reserve (IR) battalions for the states
- Establishing Counter Insurgency and Anti Terrorism (CIAT) schools and training centres
- Modernisation and up-gradation of the State Police Forces and their Intelligence gathering system
- Reimbursement of security-related expenditure
- Providing helicopters for anti-LWE operations,
- Coordination and collaboration of the Ministry of Defence, Central Police Organisations and the Bureau of Police Research and Development for the training of the State Police Forces.

- Sharing of Intelligence;
- Enabling inter-state coordination, assistance in community policing and civic action programmes etc.

The fundamental philosophy is to improve the ‘State Government’ capacity to tackle the Maoist menace concertedly. The Home Minister of India and other officials such as the Home Secy & the Special Secy/ Addl Secy and a Review Group headed by the Cabinet Secretary evaluate the LWE situation regularly. MHA regularly monitors the progress of the various schemes through meetings and Video Conferencing with the Central Ministries/ Departments concerned and State Governments. During the recent review meeting of the Chief Ministers of the LWE-affected States in May 2017, the Union Home Minister enunciated an integrated strategy through which the LWE can be countered with full force and competence. During a review meeting with CMs of the affected states, the Union Home Minister conceived and shared a strategy called SAMADHAN, which stands for:^{xix}

- S- Smart Leadership
- Aggressive strategy
- M- Motivation and Training
- Actionable Intelligence
- D- Dashboard Based KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and KRAs (Key Result Areas)
- H- Harnessing Technology
- Action plan for each theatre
- N- No access to Financing

The security-related projects, about Rs 991 crore, were expanded for 2017-20 to strengthen State Police Forces (SPFs) and construct 250 fortified police stations; additionally, Rs 871.75 crore was approved under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme. On the development front, actions initiated by the Central Govt, including road and telecom connectivity and financial inclusion by improving banking facilities, post offices, skill development, education facilities etc. Also, funds have been provided to the States under Special Central Assistance (SCA) to fill the severe public infrastructure and services gaps. Rs 2423.24 crore were released to 30 most LWE-affected districts. Under the Road Requirement Plan-I (RRP-I) and Road Connectivity Project(RCPLWEA), with a combined outlay of over Rs 20,000 crore, approximately 4700 km of roads and 110 bridges have been constructed during the last three years.^{xx}

Recommendations:

A policy to tackle LWE should essentially solve the fundamental issues related to the problem. The denial of rights to these tribal people, their manipulation and dislocation due to mining at a large scale are the sources of disaffection. So far, the developmental projects launched have failed to sufficiently reinstate the local populace as they do not have the required skills and training. Young people often lag behind in wealth creation, even in mineral and resource-rich areas. Disgruntled youth are easy prey for the insurgents and become their foot soldiers and field commanders. The government should pay attention to the genuine ambitions of the tribal people by delivering development along with honouring their age-old rights and traditions. The requirement is a noticeable enhancement in governance, a translucent justice system, and appropriate reform in the land. The security forces are undertaking a remarkable job, but there is a need to strengthen actions in certain other crucial areas:

- Efforts should be undertaken to implement an integrated approach. The LWE have footprints in various states and is connected to its central leadership through a shared political ideology. We have different political parties with different perceptions in the different states that hinder the adoption of united action. There is a need to evolve a common political and legal framework to counter the threat posed by the LWE in different states, and the centre ought to lead. It is pertinent to mention that insurgencies in Punjab, Tripura and Andhra Pradesh were controlled due to the united front posed by the political leadership.
- Gathering of real-time Intelligence and dissemination for counter-insurgencies operations. This is the mainstay of successful counter-LWE operations. The efforts of central intelligence agencies, the State, and the Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) must be corroborated and coordinated to shape a reliable scenario. State Police Forces could be essential in accessing an early warning of LWE actions.
- ‘State Police Forces’ should be encouraged to lead from the front. The CAPFs have more firepower, training, and superior logistics/discipline and ‘State Police Forces’ have better local networks being sons of the soil. State-of-the-art measures need to be implemented to accomplish healthier collaboration. Tribal youth are at ease in jungle topography and could be employed as scouts.
- Training. Before deploying, all personnel must meet benchmarks in basic skills such as marksmanship, physical fitness, tactical drills, counter-IED precautions, first aid, orientation to LWE strategy and tactics, terrain, and local culture familiarisation. Likewise, having a small team concept with proper leadership skills is essential.

- Centre and state Govts should fight the most critical battle on the ideological front. De-radicalisation and rehabilitation should be implemented to counter the LWE ideology. Communism enormously appeals to the poor and illiterate tribal populace, especially regarding ground realities. So the idea is to prevent these people from joining the LWE cadres. The ultimate aim should be to prevent the movement from flourishing by cutting the supply of foot soldiers. Workforce and ideology are the two mainstays for any insurgency to thrive, and if these two aspects are adequately addressed, the movement will die its natural death.
- Breaching the organisational structure. Insurgents' leadership could be targeted fiercely, compelling the group to decentralise their structured organisation. Exploiting major agents creates fissures and stirs friction within the heterogeneous groups based on ethnicity, religious beliefs and other diversity. Must ignite war within groups if possible.
- The insurgents used information war, propaganda, and surveillance on the internet through chat rooms, radios, cellphones and social media forums. Offensive drives could be conducted by targeting the cyber and electronic abilities of the insurgents and spreading information to discredit them.
- Last but not least, a comprehensive National/Internal Security doctrine should be in place, highlighting the aims and objectives. There is a need to outline the broad principles and goals of National/Internal Security for India. Internal stability is the bedrock of Internal Security. This will help personnel operating in LWE-affected areas to operate in a direction to achieve the desired aims and objectives.

Conclusion:

Counter-insurgency denotes actions undertaken by the government to defeat or reduce insurgents. If there are insurgencies, then the government has to undertake counter-insurgency operations. As a matter of fact, political considerations must drive security forces and other counter-insurgency efforts, including the government's strategy, tactics, resources and various other considerations. Carl von Clausewitz's argument that "political object...will be the standard for determining the aim of the military force" is equally justified for counter-insurgency warfare as it applies to conventional warfare.^{xxi}

Left Wing Extremism is an ideology that the insurgents professed only interested in violent extremist activities to bring political change. This ideology is based on Maoism, communism developed by Mao Tse Tung. They believe in seizing power through armed insurgency, mass organisation and strategic alliances. Propaganda and misinformation against state institutions and establishments form the major

components of this struggle. Various groups are operating in remote and inaccessible tribal areas, which are isolated and poorly connected.

The CPI(Maoist) is the major component of the LWE and is responsible for killings and violent activities against civilians and security personnel. Due to these unlawful activities, it has been included in the schedule of Terrorist Organisation and banned under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967. These activities are unacceptable under the Constitution of India.

The poor and insignificant tribal populace bears the maximum brunt of extreme activities. Sometimes even well-meaning liberal personnel fall into the false propaganda spread by the LWE insurgents and advocate their ways and means of capturing power. According to LWE insurgents, the Indian Constitution has ratified colonial policy and made the state custodian of the tribal homelands turning the tribal populace alien to their land.

The LWE-affected areas are among the poorest in India, with significant economic inequalities. Agriculture, mining and forestry are the main sectors of the economy in these areas, which are otherwise rich in mineral and natural resources. The societies in these areas are stratified into caste and feudal divisions. Major components of the population are the Santhal and Gond tribes. The LWE ideology exploits the socio-economic depravity of the tribal populace.

Development, economic, socio and security activities undertaken holistically by the government would help solve these people's problems. There is a need to protect the forest rights of these tribal people and provide them with meaningful livelihood opportunities, especially for the youth. The root causes of the problem should be addressed sincerely. Skill development and education need more attention. The government machinery up to the panchayat level should be restored and strengthened. Any ideology based on violence and destruction of the very fabric of society is doomed to fail in a vibrant democracy like India, which offers legitimate platforms to all sections of society to address their issues. The only need is to supplement the efforts and resources of the LWE-affected states and centre in a unified manner.

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