

Edited by

**Santosh Mehrotra**

# Countering **NAXALISM** with **DEVELOPMENT**

Challenges of Social Justice  
and State Security



# **Countering Naxalism with Development**

**Challenges of Social Justice and State  
Security**

**Edited by  
Santosh Mehrotra**



**[www.sagepublications.com](http://www.sagepublications.com)**

Los Angeles • London • New Delhi • Singapore • Washington DC

*Copyright © Council for Social Development, New Delhi, 2014*

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

*First published in 2014 by*



**SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd**

B1/I-1 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area  
Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 044, India  
[www.sagepub.in](http://www.sagepub.in)

**SAGE Publications Inc**

2455 Teller Road  
Thousand Oaks, California 91320, USA

**SAGE Publications Ltd**

1 Oliver's Yard, 55 City Road  
London EC1Y 1SP, United Kingdom

**SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific Pte Ltd**

3 Church Street  
#10-04 Samsung Hub  
Singapore 049483

Published by Vivek Mehra for SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd, typeset in 10.5/13 Adobe Garamond by RECTO Graphics, Delhi and printed at Saurabh Printers Pvt Ltd, New Delhi.

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Countering naxalism with development: challenges of social justice and state security / edited by Santosh Mehrotra.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Naxalite movement. 2. Radicalism—India. 3. Internal security—India.
4. Social justice—India. 5. India—Social policy. 6. India—Economic policy.
- I. Mehrotra, Santosh K.

HX393.5.C68

303.3'720954—dc23

2014

2014004833

**ISBN:** 978-81-321-1393-5 (HB)

---

**The SAGE Team:** Shambhu Sahu, Isha Sachdeva, Nand Kumar Jha and  
Rajinder Kaur

# Countering Naxalism with Development

*Thank you for choosing a SAGE product! If you have any comment, observation or feedback, I would like to personally hear from you. Please write to me at [contactceo@sagepub.in](mailto:contactceo@sagepub.in)*

—Vivek Mehra, Managing Director and CEO,  
SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd, New Delhi

### **Bulk Sales**

SAGE India offers special discounts for purchase of books in bulk. We also make available special imprints and excerpts from our books on demand.

For orders and enquiries, write to us at

*Marketing Department*

*SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd*

*B1/I-1, Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area*

*Mathura Road, Post Bag 7*

*New Delhi 110044, India*

E-mail us at [marketing@sagepub.in](mailto:marketing@sagepub.in)

*Get to know more about SAGE, be invited to SAGE events, get on our mailing list. Write today to [marketing@sagepub.in](mailto:marketing@sagepub.in)*

*This book is also available as an e-book.*



## List of Abbreviations

CPC	Communist Party of China
CPI (Maoist)	Communist Party of India (Maoist)
CPI(M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CPI-ML-PW	Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist) People’s War
CPR	Common Property Resource
GPS	Global Positioning System
IAP	Integrated Action Plan
ITDA	Integrated Tribal Development Agency
JFM	Joint Forest Management
LWE	Left-wing Extremism
MCCI	Maoist Communist Centre of India
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NSCN (IM)	National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak–Muivah)
NSSO	National Sample Survey Organization
PCR	Protection of Civil Rights
PESA	Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas)
PLA	People’s Liberation Army
POA	Powers-of-Attorney
R&R	Rehabilitation and Resettlement
RIAD	Remote and Interior Areas Development
SA	Scheduled Area
SCs	Scheduled Castes
STs	Scheduled Tribes
VAL	Vedanta Aluminium Limited

## Foreword

History has its own way of guiding the destiny of a nation. At its worst, it does so through savage wars only to prove the futility of all wars. At the other end, it creates a moral crisis in a nation to give hands-on training to its leaders to handle it at the level of principles, while they would try to contain its ugly physical appearance through the use of the least possible force. The present crisis of Maoism in India gives a mix of choices to settle the problem. At one end are the hawks who are calling it as the greatest threat to the internal security of India, to be tackled on the basis of the principle of 'an eye for an eye'. On the other end, many concerned citizens think that the Maoist violence is the manifestation of a deeper social malaise, that is to say, the collapse of good governance and the intrusion of commercial interests of corporate bodies into the tribal domain, treating the tribals who are the victims of 'development' as irrelevant flotsam and jetsam of the process.

The current ultra-left movement of the country originated in April–May 1967 in one state (West Bengal), in one district (Darjeeling), and in one police station (Naxalbari), from which the movement got its name. In November 2009, the home minister of India gave a press statement in which it was stated that Naxalism (Maoism) had spread to 23 states, 250 districts, and over 2,000 police station areas. In simple numerical terms, it had gone up by 2,000 times in the last 42 years.

One should go back in history to know how the first United Front government of West Bengal handled the problem. Late Hari Krishna Konar was a militant peasant leader of the newly formed Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI[M]) which came into being in 1964.

The assessment of the CPI(M) of the possible result of the general election to the West Bengal Legislative Assembly to be held in early

1967 was that the Congress would be returned to power with a slender majority. They thought that they would make the political life of the newly formed Congress government unbearable by continuous peasant movements and other civil unrest activities. To get some practical lessons on 'half-partisan' peasant movement, Konar went to Vietnam in late 1965 and from there he sneaked into China. In China, he could not meet the top leadership. He had some discussion with the second or third rung of leadership.

He was told that the Chinese leadership had no formula to offer to the CPI(M) as the objective conditions in India in the late 1960s were different from that in China in the third and fourth decades of the 20th century. In the first place, China had a very weak central government run by a thoroughly corrupt, fragmented, and inefficient political party under Chiang Kai Shek. Second, Chinese territory was controlled by a number of warlords who were always fighting among themselves. So it was possible for the Chinese communist party under Mao Zedong to take full advantage of this fractious group by playing one against the other. Third, from the early 1930s when Japan attacked Manchuria and later on the main Chinese territory, the newly formed People's Liberation Army (PLA) was the only efficient fighting force available in China. And when Mao Zedong called for national reconciliation to put up a united front against the invading Japanese army, people voluntarily rallied round the Communist Party of China (CPC) and its PLA. The advantages that the CPC had at that time were absent in India in the 1960s. Konar was told that the CPI(M) should try to assess the situation objectively before initiating any armed struggle by the peasantry. They warned that in spite of the debacle that happened in 1962 in the war between India and China, the Indian Army was a formidable fighting force under the command of a highly centralised government at Delhi. Ultra-left adventurism often weakens and debilitates genuine mass-based movements. Konar came back thoroughly disheartened. His visit to China was not authorised by the party and he almost faced disciplinary action. However, through the mediation of some senior leaders, the matter was settled with some verbal admonition.

There was, however, a strong minority group in the CPI(M) who favoured some preparatory action for semi-armed, peasant movement if the objective conditions so favoured. Such activities on a limited scale



would be to thoroughly embarrass and discomfit both the state government of West Bengal and the central government. The hard-core left in the party authorised Konar to select and develop three 'septic' spots in West Bengal from where such violent peasant movements could be initiated if the political situation so warranted in future. He selected three areas. The first one was in the south-east corner of the state, bordering the then East Pakistan and the Sundarbans. Peasants in the Sundarbans areas had had some experience in the militant 'tebhaga' movement in 1948–50. The second area was what is now called the Jungle Mahal, comprising the bordering blocks of West Midnapore, Bankura, and Purulia. Here Santhals, Mundas, Oraons, and other tribes often rose in insurrection against intrusion into their territories by 'Dikus' (outsiders, such as moneylenders, tax collectors, court bailiffs, minor forest officials, and traders). Each tribe had its own folklore regarding how valiantly their forefathers had fought all those outside tormentors and oppressors to preserve their autonomy. This area also borders with the wooded uplands of Chhotanagpur, where it is easy to evade any 'hot pursuit' by law enforcing agencies. The third area was Naxalbari, situated in the 'chicken neck' of West Bengal, bordering both Nepal and then East Pakistan. If one looked at the map, one would admire the choice of these areas for violent peasant movement because the hills, ravines, tidal rivers, and jungles would give natural cover to the militants for 'hit and run' activities.

In the general elections to the West Bengal Legislative Assembly in 1967, the Congress lost the majority, and the Congress leadership decided not to cobble up a working majority with the support of any splinter groups of members of the legislative assembly, but to sit in the opposition. Though the left parties and rightist Bangla Congress fought against one another in the election, the principled stand of the Congress gave them an opportunity to form a right-left coalition government. For the CPI(M), it was a godsend, because so soon after the split of the party in 1964, they had the chance to be in the government within three years of their political existence. Jyoti Basu became home minister, and Hare Krishna Konar became land and land revenue minister. (Incidentally, Konar chose this author as the director of land records and survey in 1967 to spearhead a massive quasi-judicial operation to unearth and vest concealed ceiling-surplus lands.)

Now the story takes a dramatic turn. The party advised Konar to defuse the situation in the three spots already selected for 'half-partisan' movement and where some preliminary political 'brainwashing' had started. The party felt that if they could do something spectacular on the agrarian front while in government they would get a permanent ally among the lower peasantry, which would be the CPI(M)'s solid vote bank to rely upon for future elections. So Konar was advised to neutralise the situation in those 'trouble' spots. Hare Krishna Konar could do so quickly in two places in South Bengal. But he met with failure in North Bengal. There the local CPI(M) leadership was with Charu Mazumdar. Charu always bore a personal grudge against Konar. Charu considered himself a well-read Marxist theoretician. He was gradually veering towards ultra-leftism. So when Hare Krishna Konar chose Naxalbari as one of the potential areas of peasant uprising, Charu practically grabbed the opportunity to develop it into a real insurgency area. Charu felt humiliated that in spite of his superiority in understanding Marxist ideology and seniority in membership, the party always favoured Konar as the topmost peasant leader. Charu considered him (Konar) as a good field operator and not a Marxist theoretician. Konar told me that he tried to patch up with Charu who was senior to him in the party, but Charu always rejected such 'peace advances' with disdain and contempt. So when Konar came to defuse the situation in Naxalbari, Charu got his life's opportunity to take revenge. Charu had a competent assistant in Kanu Sanyal and a field operator in Jungle Santhal. Charu refused to meet Konar when he tried to call on him after becoming the minister. Charu called him a 'revisionist' and 'renegade' and asked Konar not to interfere with the affairs of Naxalbari of which Charu himself assumed the leadership. On the party's advice, Konar contacted both Kanu Sanyal and Jungle Santhal, both of whom were inducted into the party's peasant wing as his (Konar's) loyal cadres. But Konar failed to persuade them to desist from any hasty, ultra-left activities in Naxalbari. They remained steadfastly attached to Charu's line of violent, peasant action. In April 1967, a group of armed tribal peasants killed Inspector Wangdi of the West Bengal Police. A couple of days later, the police fired on a group of peasants near the Naxalbari police station killing 11 persons including seven women. Thus began the Naxalbari movement, which is continuing even today.

Though Konar felt thoroughly dejected because he failed to persuade his erstwhile party colleagues not to start any violent movement in Naxalbari area, in a meeting with officers at Kolkata he told us that he would convert this political setback into an administrative opportunity to unleash a huge quasi-judicial operation for vesting of ceiling-surplus lands kept clandestinely by old zamindars and big landowners. In this connection, he narrated a parable of Mao Zedong. According to Mao Zedong, angry, disgruntled, and dispossessed peasants constituted water in which 'militant fish' roamed about freely without any fear of being caught or betrayed. The only therapy in such a situation was to wean away the peasantry by giving them land and securing fair tenancy for them. Parallel to the usual and ineffective police action against Naxalites, we spearheaded a massive, strictly legal programme of vesting of ceiling-surplus land, and within three-and-a-half years, an additional one million acres of good agricultural land vested in the state. Operation Barga (1978–81) conducted under the leadership of Benoy Chaudhury, the land reform minister of the first Left Front government, assured security of tenure, hereditary right of cultivation, and fair sharing of crop (75 per cent for the sharecropper and 25 per cent for the landowner) gave the tenants-at-will protection against illegal eviction and illegal extortion (*abwab*) by landowners. By this operation, 1.6 million sharecropper households benefited. The process of weaning away the angry peasantry from militancy by Hare Krishna Konar in 1967 and 1969–70 culminated in 1978–81 through Operation Barga. (The author, as the land reforms commissioner of West Bengal from 1978 to 1982, was deeply involved in the process from the stage of conceptualising the programme to its substantive implementation.) With that the lower peasantry veered away from violent Naxalites and the Naxal movement died a natural death in West Bengal. What was happening in Jungle Mahal in West Bengal is occasional intrusions of armed Naxal groups from their bases in the hills of Singhbhum for specific action. There is no real base of Maoists in the area. (During 1969–70, Konar and I travelled extensively into the interior areas of the state. I gleaned all these facts from Konar in after-dinner chats, mostly in remote dak bungalows of the state. This part of oral history would get lost. So I have narrated briefly Konar's version.)

I have told the story of the rise and fall of Naxalism in West Bengal at some length only to emphasise the fact that ameliorative measures for the displaced, dispossessed, and angry tribals, who now constitute the mass base of the Maoists in central India, should precede or at least move in tandem with controlled, police action. Simple police action would only exacerbate the situation as we are witnessing today. Torture of innocent Adivasis in the name of anti-Maoist activities would only enhance the support base of the movement.

In getting the recommend actions of our Expert Group published with all the backup papers in the form of a book would provide authentic source materials for future researchers on the subject. Authors of these papers are all well-known scholars, each one eminent in his discipline or sphere of activity, activists, and administrators. These documents contain excellent situational assessment of the then existing conditions. For future scholars and students, these would provide almost a live flashback of object realities prevailing at that time with fine analysis. Santosh Mehrotra, as the principal adviser of rural development in the Planning Commission, had helped the Expert Group in producing a coherent report, reconciling often irreconcilable viewpoints. He is now the Director-General, Institute of Applied Manpower Research, and his contribution in this venture is not only valuable, but it would also be highly appreciated by scholars in years to come.

SAGE Publications has really shown their sagacity in undertaking to publish the book, whose value would increase with the passage of time like vintage wine, as the authorities are likely to continue to fumble with this problem with their unilinear approach of only police action.

**D. Bandhopadyaya**

Member of Rajya Sabha, New Delhi  
Former Chairman of the Expert Group of  
the Planning Commission (2006–8), Kolkata

## Preface

This book is about human development in the tribal areas of India (outside of the north-eastern states) and the root causes of the challenge posed by left-wing extremism (LWE) to the Indian state in nine states of India. These are the work of a highly knowledgeable set of experts, who have spent several decades thinking, reading, researching and writing about the problem faced by marginalised social groups, especially the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and the Scheduled Tribes (STs) in the LWE-affected areas of the country. The first chapter of the book gives an overview of the development challenges in extremism-affected areas of India but more importantly summarises specific actions which, if taken, offer a real prospect of resolution of the conflict as well as the human development of the affected citizens. Chapter 2 presents the main recommendations of a report submitted to the Planning Commission in 2008 on the subject of the development challenges facing LWE-affected parts of India.

The rest of the book presents seven chapters written by independent experts and extremely knowledgeable academics, former bureaucrats, and senior intelligence and police officials on what could be done to address the development challenges in these tribal-dominated areas.

On the basis of several field visits, Prakash Singh and Ajit K. Doval (Chapter 3) examine the security scenario and, as seasoned police and intelligence officers of the highest rank who had dealt with left-wing extremists, give a reflective account of both the security and development challenges in LWE-affected districts.

K.B. Saxena, former Secretary, Rural Development, Government of India, shows (in Chapter 4) that the security-centric view of the state is flawed and systematically critiques the state's understanding of the

movement, mechanisms for containment, and the approach to deal with Naxal violence. In the following chapter, Saxena goes on to examine one particular dimension of deprivation that the SCs and the STs in LWE districts have faced, that is, the erosion of common property resources.

B.D. Sharma, a former senior bureaucrat who was also at one point the Commissioner of Scheduled Tribes for the Government of India, examines the colonial and postcolonial treatment of the STs in India (Chapter 6). In the following chapter, he goes on to examine the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act or PESA Act, which has tended to be ignored by most state governments at their own peril. He argues that realising the potential of the PESA Act would enable STs in LWE districts to realise their potential as citizens, and help the state to realise its objective of utilising the resources of the Scheduled Areas, where tribals live.

Tribals in the east and centre of India live mostly in forests. In Chapter 8, S.R. Sankaran examines forest policy, land issues, displacement and rehabilitation, and the tribal sub-plan strategy, and shows how the emergence of LWE is reflective essentially of the failure of good governance.

In the last chapter, the distinguished scholar on SCs, Sukhadeo Thorat, examines the reasons for persistently high poverty among SCs and STs, and the atrocities and violence committed against them, but then goes on to analyse what needs to be done to address these issues.

Whatever the ideological orientation of the reader, the book should be of value to policymakers and scholars alike.

This book would never have become a reality without the initiative and intellectual inputs of B.N. Yugandhar, the then Member of Planning Commission for Rural Development. The editor is grateful to Shri Vijay Saxena for research assistance, and to Deepak Kumar and Meenakshi Gupta for their secretarial assistance.

**Santosh Mehrotra**

# Contents

<i>List of Tables</i>	vii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	ix
<i>Foreword</i> by D. Bandhopadyaya	xi
<i>Preface</i>	xvii
1. Human Development in India's Tribal Areas: Peace to Secure Development—Or the Other Way Round? <i>Santosh Mehrotra</i>	1
2. Recommendations of the Expert Group on 'Development Challenges in Extremist-affected Areas'	25
3. Development to Deal with Causes of Discontent, Unrest, and Extremism <i>Prakash Singh and Ajit K. Doval</i>	54
4. The Naxalite Movement and State Policy <i>K.B. Saxena</i>	71
5. Access of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to Common Property Resources <i>K.B. Saxena</i>	84
6. The State and the Scheduled Tribes: Past, Present, and Future <i>B.D. Sharma</i>	107
7. Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act: Realising Its Potential <i>B.D. Sharma</i>	129
8. The Factors Underlying Tribal Unrest <i>S.R. Sankaran</i>	148

vi Countering Naxalism with Development

9. Indian Extremism: A Case of Chronic Poverty, Denial of Equal Opportunity, and Violence among the Socially Disadvantaged Groups <i>Sukhadeo Thorat and Sandeep Sharma</i>	165
<i>About the Editor and Contributors</i>	184
<i>Index</i>	186



## List of Tables

1.1	List of 83 LWE-affected Districts Included under Security-related Scheme	2
1.2	SCs and STs: Concentrated in a Few States	4
1.3	Year-wise Incidents and Deaths Due to Naxalism by State (2001–11)	6
1.4	Integrated Action Plan for Development of LWE-affected Districts	18
3.1	Number of Ashram Schools and Hostels in Andhra Pradesh, 2005	63
9.1	Regional Concentration of Rural Poor (Percentage of Rural Population and Rural Poor for High-poverty States), 2009–10	167
9.2	Annual Number of Cases of Crimes against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 1992–2012	171
9.3	Incidence of Violation of Civil Rights and Atrocities against Scheduled Castes in India, 1999–2012	173
9.4	Incidence and Rate of Crime Committed against the Scheduled Tribes in India, 1999–2012	174
9.5	Discriminatory Treatment in Public Services in India	181
9.6	Discriminatory Restrictions on Public Behaviour in India	182
9.7	Market Discrimination—Access to Work and Resources	183