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Anshuman Behera

# NIAS

## MAOIST CONFLICT IN ODISHA



NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES

Bengaluru, India

# BACKGROUNDERS ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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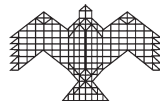
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**Backgrounders on Conflict**

# **MAOIST CONFLICT IN ODISHA**

Anshuman Behera



**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES**  
**Conflict Resolution Programme**  
Bengaluru

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# EXECUTIVE BRIEFING

Odisha is one of the poorest states of India. In terms of its socio-economic profile, it fits into the classic template of a region vulnerable to Maoist conflict. In reality too, Odisha has been prone to Maoist conflict for decades now and it is one of the major challenges confronting the state. One of the major Maoist/Naxalite groups, operating under the name of Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist), has its presence in 19 out of 30 districts of the state. The strategic topography of these districts—difficult terrain and dense forests made even further impenetrable by poor transport and communication networks—have provided safe haven for the Maoists. Persisting regional economic disparities, socio-economic deprivation, exploitative local economic structures and gradual penetration of corporate players into these hitherto inaccessible terrain have alienated the people inhabiting these neglected areas and provided the space for political mobilisation by the Maoists; who have used local grievances to consolidate their hold over these areas over the years.

## THE ISSUES

The Maoist conflict in Odisha cannot

be seen as an isolated conflict. It can be safely argued that a number of unresolved issues have contributed to persistence of the Maoist conflict in the state. There are three important underlying issues: land alienation, poverty, and development induced conflict.

## LAND ALIENATION

Land alienation among the poor, the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and the Scheduled Tribes (STs) has been an important source of conflict. There are three important factors responsible for land alienation among the SCs and STs. Firstly, manipulation of land records has contributed to large-scale land alienation. Secondly, ‘Benami transfer of land’ in which the original owners of the land are reduced to share-croppers, has also caused land alienation. Thirdly, large tracts of land have been acquired illegitimately by outsiders through encroachment in the name of development in areas inhabited by the SCs, STs and rural poor, which have alienated the people further.

Organised movement against land alienation in Odisha goes back to the

1960s. In the 1990s organisations such as the Kui Lewang Sangha (KLS) and the Chasi Mulia Samiti (CMS) took up the land alienation issue and fought for reclaiming land from the rich land owners. Though, the KLS and the CMS were successful in recapturing some land from the rich, the scale and intensity of the movement was confined to some pockets in southern Odisha.

The Maoists used the mass organisations like the KLS and the CMS as their front to reach out to the local people and through their support intensified the protest movements against land alienation. The Maoists thus became the medium for people's protest. Ban on KLS and CMS in 2006 and formation of *Chasi Mulia Adivasi Sangha* (CMAS) and its association with the Maoist movement was the defining moment for popular protests against land alienation. The CMAS, with active support from the Maoists, has been able to grab thousands of acres of land in Koraput, Malkangiri and Rayagada districts, thereby instilling in the people hope of their collective ownership of the land they were alienated from.

**UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY**  
Underdevelopment and chronic poverty in Odisha, especially among the STs and

SCs is one of the major issues which have been fully capitalized by the Maoists. The Maoist affected districts in Odisha are more underdeveloped and poorer in comparison to other districts. According to the National Sample Survey 50 per cent of the people in Southern and northern region of Odisha (which are mostly affected by the Maoist Conflict) live below the poverty line. The poverty level of the tribals and the SCs in the fourteen Maoist affected districts is much worse than in the coastal and midland districts.

There is a host of factors leading to chronic poverty in the tribal dominated districts in the northern and southern regions of Odisha. One of the major factors is the lack of governance in these areas. Government officials, local rich and the outside contractors form an unholy nexus and manipulate the rules and regulations to serve their interest in clear disregard of the interests of the SCs, STs and the rural poor in the region. Deprivation from natural resources and resource drain through license raj are major factors perpetuating poverty in these neglected areas of the state.

The Maoists have raised these issues quite successfully and attracted affected communities into their fold. There



exists a perception that the SCs and the STs inhabiting these areas are easily drawn to the Maoist movement as they find the state either non-responsive to their needs or complicit with the forces responsible for merciless exploitation of their resources and unleashing a vicious cycle of deprivation and grinding poverty which progressively dis-empowers them. The Maoists have presented themselves as liberators for these communities, who can ensure them justice and their right to life and livelihood.

## DEVELOPMENT INDUCED CONFLICT

Development-induced displacement of human settlement has been an important issue engendering Maoist conflict in Odisha. Most of the large-scale development projects are constructed in and around hilly and forest areas making the people belonging to the tribal and other backward communities vulnerable to displacement.

Some the major development projects responsible for the displacement of a significant number of households are: Hirakud Dam (32718 households), Machhakund Dam (2938 households), Upper Kolab Dam (3179 households), Rengali Multipurpose Dam (10872

households), Upper Indravati Hydro Electric (5301 households), Balimela Dam (1200 households). All other industries like the National Aluminium Company (NALCO), Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Ordnance factory have displaced 3,143 households.

Out of the total displaced people in dam projects in Orissa, the SC and the ST categories together account for more than 50 per cent and ST Population alone constitute about 35 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

## INSTITUTIONS

Conflicts and institutions are deeply related to each other. While conflicts get influenced by the socio, economic and political institutions, they also affect these institutions. Institutions are not merely the organisations; they could stand for a norm also. The Maoist conflict in Odisha has brought in a number of norms and practices in and around the Maoist affected areas. The important norms and practices that have been developed in the Maoist affected areas are: land grabbing and community farming, the mass organisations, presence of security forces and corporate players. The factors responsible for these norms can be attributed to both the Maoists

<sup>1</sup> See Nityananda Pradhan, Anuradha, K and Sarat Kumar Patnaik, 2007, Dimension of Issues in Education of Children at Elementary Level due to Repeated Displacement: Case Study of a Village-Chikarpar, Koraput, Society for Promoting Rural Education and Development, Koraput.

and the state. . These institutions play an important role in causing, sustaining and accentuating conflicts.

## OPTIONS

The state of Odisha has adopted a three-pronged strategy to deal with the Maoist conflict— (i) the military strategy to contain the violence by the Maoists thereby reducing their activities;(ii) the developmental approach to bring development initiatives in and around the conflict-ridden areas to win the support of the local people; and (iii) the surrender and rehabilitation policy to persuade the armed cadres of the Maoists to lay down their arms and join the mainstream. However, despite the three-pronged strategy, the state has not been able to deal with the Maoist conflict effectively.

There could be a number of options for the state to deal with the Maoist conflict effectively. The first and foremost would be

a change of perception towards the Maoist conflict. The state could stop seeing the conflict as merely a law and order problem and try to understand and manage public perception towards the Maoists effectively. There is an urgent need to have a political consensus in the state to deal with the problem. It has to be recognised that the state police force is ill-trained, ill-equipped and under-staffed to deal with this problem even from a law and order perspective and hence it has to be modernised at all costs. Effective conceptualisation and implementation of developmental plans to make them responsive to local needs through the involvement of civil society organisations to design such plans is the need of the hour to stop people from joining the Maoists ranks. And lastly, call for amnesty and negotiation should be backed by effective reassurance that there is a genuine desire for reconciliation by the state to bring sustainable peace to the state.

# FLASHPOINTS

## **Chitrakonda Police station Attack, 1968:**

The attack on Chitrakonda police station by the members of the Orissa State Coordination Committee (OSCC) led by Nagabhushan Patnaik was the beginning of Naxal violence in Odisha. The OSCC which expressed solidarity with the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCCR) of Charu Majumdar raided the Chitrakonda police station on May 1, 1968. The OSCC was able to mobilize more than 5000 workers for the raid and looted all the arms and ammunition. This was the beginning of organised violence with Naxalite ideology in Odisha.

## **Koraput Town stormed by the Maoists, 2004:**

In one of the deadliest attacks Maoist cadres belonging to the People War Group (PWG) stormed various security offices in Koraput district headquarters in the early hours of February 6, 2004. The Maoists attacked the office of the

Superintendent of Police, Koraput District Armoury, five police stations, Koraput Jail and a battalion of the Orissa State Armed Police (OSAP). The Maoists were able to loot a huge cache of sophisticated guns and other weapons. During the attack the Maoists killed a sentry of the Orissa Police and injured 11 which included seven civilians and four security forces.

## **14 police personnel killed in Maoist attack in Nayagarh, 2008**

Planned by the Central Military Commission (CMC) of the CPI-Maoist with active coordination of the Bansadhara division of the Odisha State Committee (OSC) the Maoists carried out series of attacks on Nayagarh district armoury, police training school armoury and police stations in Nayagarh district head quarter, Nuagaon, Dasapalla and Mahipur on February 15, 2008. 14 police personnel and a civilian were killed in this attack. During the attack the Maoists virtually took total control

of the town and its periphery. The Maoists were able to seize a sizeable number of arms and ammunition from the police stations and armouries. The Maoist attack in Nayagarh district was startling as it had not been included as one of the Maoist-affected districts in Odisha. With this attack the perception of the state towards the Maoist conflict, that it was a spill over effect from the neighbouring states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh, got changed.

### **38 security personnel killed inside Balimela reservoir ambush, 2008**

The cadres of the CPI-Maoist attacked a boat carrying four anti-Naxal police personnel and 60 Greyhound Commandos (elite anti-Naxal force from neighbouring Andhra Pradesh state) on the Balimela reservoir in Malkangiri district on June 29, 2008. In this attack 36 Greyhound commandos were killed along with two anti-Naxal police personnel of Odisha. Such an attack by the Maoists demonstrated the underestimation of the Maoists' strength in this area and the irrationality of force deployment in anti-Maoist operations.<sup>2</sup>

### **Landmine blast claimed 17 lives of Police personnel in Malkangiri, 2008**

Just after 18 days of Balimela reservoir attack, the Maoists killed 17 police personnel by triggering a powerful landmine blast in Malkangiri district on July 16, 2008. The blast took place at Malkangiri Village-126 which comes under the Kalimela police station.

### **Kandhamal Riot, 2008**

The Kandhamal riot which claimed more than 30 lives is alleged to have been triggered by the Maoists in Odisha. The former chief of OSC, Sabyasachi Panda, owned responsibility for the killing of Viswa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leader Lakshmana Nanda Saraswati on August 23, 2008. Panda claimed the Maoists killed the VHP leader as he was involved in converting the tribals to Hinduism. There is also another theory which claims that the Maoists were hired by the local Christian leaders to get rid of the VHP leader as he posed a religious threat to them.<sup>3</sup> The killing of Lakshmana Nanda Saraswati was followed by a communal clash between the right wing Hindus and the Christians. The right wing Hindu leaders held the Christians responsible

<sup>2</sup> See Ajai Sahni, "Fighting the Maoists with Mantras", South Asia Intelligence Review, Vol. 7, No. 2, July 21, 2008, available at [http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/sair/Archives/7\\_2.htm](http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/sair/Archives/7_2.htm), accessed on January 5, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Author's interview with Ghasiram Samutika, a surrendered Maoist in Rayagada district, on April 4, 2013.

for the killing and in the violence more than 30 lives were lost. Though the violence took a communal colour, the face of the Maoists was changed. For the first time the Maoists were seen to be working as hired criminals.

### **Foreign tourists abducted, 2012**

The Odisha State Organising Committee (OSOC) of the CPI-Maoist led by Sabyasachi Panda took two Italian tourists hostage from the Kandhamal-Ganjam forest area on March 14, 2012. Panda claimed responsibility for the abduction, on a private TV channel, and demanded negotiation with the Odisha government for the release of Italian tourists. The OSOC demanded release of a number of Maoist cadres who had been jailed in the Nayagarh and Koraput armoury loot case and Sabyasachi Panda's wife. Panda declared a unilateral ceasefire till the conclusion of negotiation for the hostages.

However, the abduction by the OSOC Maoists had more to do with the rift between the Maoist factions than with a contention with the state. Maoists in Odisha were vertically divided into two groups; one led by Sabyasachi Panda and the other led by Daya, Secretary of

Andhra-Odisha Border Special Zone Committee (AOBSZC). The differences between two groups were so sharp that within days of the OSOC declaring a ceasefire with the state government the AOBSZC broke the ceasefire and kidnapped Jina Hikaka a Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) belonging to the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD).

### **Odisha Maobadi Party formed, 2012**

The OSOC leader Sabyasachi Panda was expelled from the party for allegedly criticising the central leadership. The central leadership of the CPI-Maoist accused Sabyasachi Panda of “betraying the great cause of the toiling masses”. The split within the party was vertical as Sabyasachi Panda went ahead and formed Odisha Maobadi Party (OMP). Formation of the OMP demonstrated the division in the party on language and regional bases. The OMP cadres were reportedly seen requesting the local people not to cooperate with the Telugu and Chhattisgarh Maoists. As he was losing his cadres and weapons, Sabyasachi Panda had to rechristen his party as CPI-Marxist Leninist Maoist (MLM) in May 2014 before he was arrested in July 2014.

# HISTORY

Historically Odisha was variously known as Udra, Kosala, Tosali, Kalinga and Utkal representing different dynasties, cultures, territories and political contexts. The Afghan control over the state (1568-78) was the first ever foreign invasion on Odisha. The Mughals took the total control of the state succeeding from the Afghans from 1578 to 1751. The Marathas, during their heyday, had a brief control over Odisha (1751-1803) before it came under the British rule. The British formed Odisha in three phases: the southern part of Odisha in 1768 taken from the Madras Presidency, the western part of Odisha (the hilly tracts) was taken in 1849 from the Central Provinces and the Coastal part of Odisha from the Bengal Provinces in 1803. Odisha was a part of the Bengal Presidency and remained so till it became the first state to be carved out on the basis of language on April 1, 1936.

Post Independence Odisha comprised of 13 administrative districts

and was further restructured into 30 districts in 1992. 30 districts of Odisha were sub-divided into 59 sub-divisions which were further decentralised into 314 Community Development Blocks comprising of 56,887 villages. The administrative capital of the state is Bhubaneswar.

## **History of Maoist Conflict in Odisha**

The communist movement in Odisha in general and the left wing extremism in particular was greatly influenced by the armed peasant rebellion in the North Telangana region of the former Andhra Pradesh state. Initial communist movements in the form of people's resistance movement were seen in the districts of Ganjam and Koraput, both bordering Andhra Pradesh. Some of these resistance movements were: movement against the *Bethi* (Salvery) practice in undivided Koraput district, movement against moneylenders in Ganjam and Koraput district, protest against the *Gothii* (Bonded labour) practice and protest

against the forest officers, police and local landlords' nexus, food liberation protest in Koraput. These movements were the stepping stone of the radical communist movement in Odisha.

The radical communist movement in Odisha took organisational shape under the leadership of Nagabhushan Patnaik. Nagabhushan Patnaik along with the communist cadres of the Srikakulam unit of the Andhra Pradesh Maoists was able to win support from the locals as he formed a number of organisations to fight against the 'tribal exploitation'. The Motor Sharmik Sangha, J K Kagaja Kala Sharmaik Sangha and Balimela Power Project Sharmik Sangha were formed to launch protest against the government officers and state exploitation against the tribals.

The Maoist movement in Odisha got momentum with the formation of Odisha State Cordination Committee (OSCC) in 1967. The OSCC under the leadership of Nagabhushan Patnaik expressed solidarity with the Naxalbari movement led by Charu Majumdar and merged with the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCCR), then an umbrella organisation of the Maoists/Naxals. However, the OSCC under the

leadership of Nagabhushan Patnaik was not able to focus on the local issues. Ideological conflicts among the leaders on the issues such as the structures of the organisation, party leadership and factionalism within the OSCC dominated the party activities during the period of 1968-1980.

In the post 1980s period, two crucial factors contributed to the consolidation of the Maoist activities in Odisha; the PWG of Andhra Pradesh spread its tentacles into the bordering districts of Odisha and the association of Sabyasachi Panda, a Naxal leader from Nayagarh district, with the PWG in mid 1990s. Before joining the PWG, Sabyasachi Panda had formed Kui Lawang Sangaha (KLS) to reclaim land from the *Sabukars*, usually the money lenders, businessmen and landlords. Organisations such as the KLS and the Chasi Mulia Samiti (CMS) were transformed to be the front of the Maoists. Maoist activities, during this time, got momentum because for the first time local issues were reflected through a larger ideological framework.

Factional fighting between the PWG and the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI) of Bihar affected the movement in Odisha before the MCCI and the PWG merged in 2004

to form the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist). Under the new organisation of the Maoists the Odisha State Organisation Committee (OSOC) and the Andhra Odisha Border Special Zone Committee (AOBSZC) were given the responsibility of Maoist activities in Odisha. However, the CPI-Maoist suffered a split when Sabyasachi Panda

was expelled from the organisation and he went on to form Odisha Maobadi Party (OMP) in August 2012. Though the OMP was able to check the activities of the CPI-Maoist for some time, it was not successful as a formidable force as many of its cadres were killed by the Odisha Police and Sabyasachi Panda was arrested in July 2014.



# TERRAIN

Spread over a total area of 155,820 km<sup>2</sup>, Odisha lies within the latitudes 17.780 and 22.730 and longitudes 81.37 and 87.53E. Odisha shares its boundary with states of West Bengal on the north east, Jharkhand on the North, Chhattisgarh on the west and Andhra Pradesh on the south. The state has Bay of Bengal on its east which covers a coastline of about 450KMS. The state has 30 administrative districts.

Morphologically Odisha can be divided into five parts:

Gifted with six major rivers (Subarnarekha, Budhabalanga, the Baitarani, the Brahamani, the Mahanadi and the Rusikulya) the **coastal plains** of Odisha stretch from Subarnarekha in the north to Rusikulya in the south

The **mountainous regions** of Odisha can be divided into four units: The Simulia and Meghasana mountains, the mountainous region between the Baitarani and Brahamani rivers, the

watershed between the Brahamani and Mahanadi and the watershed of Rusikulya and Vansadhara. The mountainous regions cover about three-fourths of the total area of Odisha.

The **rolling uplands** of Odisha can be divided into the Rajgangpur uplands, the Jharsuguda uplands, the Bhawani pattna uplands, the Bargarh uplands, the Balangir–Titlagarh uplands, the Patnagarh uplands, the Malkanigir uplands and the Rairangapur uplands.

The major **river valleys** of Odisha are associated with the Brahamani, the Mahanadi and the Vansadhara rivers.

The **subdued plateaus** in Odisha could be seen in the upper Baitarani basin in Keonjhar district and Sabari basin in undivided Koraput district. These plateaus can be divided in to the Panposh–Keonjhar–Pallahara plateaus in Keonjhar district and the Nawrangpur- Jeypore plateaus in undivided Koraput district.

Odisha has a total population of 4, 19, 74, 218 (Census 2011) in which the Scheduled Tribes (ST) are 95, 90,756 in number constituting 22.85% of the total population. The total population

of the Scheduled Caste (SC) in Odisha is 71, 88,463 which constitutes 17.13% of the total population. There are 62 different tribal communities and 93 SC communities in Odisha.

**Table No: 1.1 (Population in Maoist affected Districts as per 2011 Census)**

SL	District	Total Population	ST Population	SC Population	ST %	SC %
1	Bargarh	1481255	281135	298780	18.98	20.17
2	Bolangir	1648997	347164	294777	21.05	17.88
3	Deogarh	312520	110400	52112	35.33	16.67
4	Dhenkanal	1192811	162056	234079	13.59	19.62
5	Gajapati	577817	313714	39175	54.29	6.78
6	Ganjam	3529031	118928	688235	3.37	19.50
7	Jajpur	1827192	151432	433387	8.29	23.72
8	Kalahandi	1576869	449456	286580	28.50	18.17
9	Kandhamal	733100	392820	115544	53.58	15.76
10	Keonjhar	1801733	818878	209357	45.45	11.62
11	Koraput	1379647	697583	196540	50.56	14.25
12	Malkangiri	613192	354614	138295	57.83	22.55
13	Mayurbhanja	2519738	1479576	184682	58.72	7.33
14	Nabarangpur	1220946	681173	177384	55.79	14.53
15	Nuapada	610382	206327	82159	33.80	13.46
16	Nayagarh	962789	58691	136399	6.10	14.17
17	Rayagada	967911	541905	139514	55.99	14.41
18	Sambalpur	1041099	355261	191827	34.12	18.43
19	Sudargarh	2093437	1062349	191660	50.75	9.16

Source: Census 2011

The Maoist conflict in Odisha is mostly concentrated in 19 districts.<sup>4</sup> The

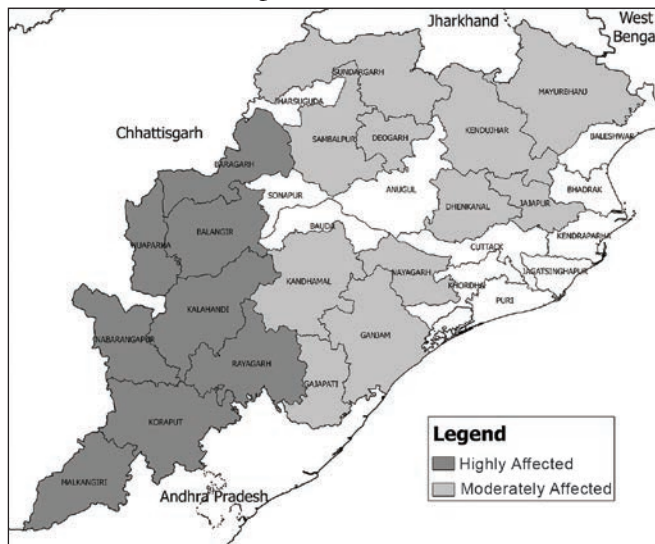
Maoists have less intense presence in eleven out of nineteen districts

<sup>4</sup> For details on Maoist activities in Odisha see <http://odishapolice.gov.in/?q=node/69>.

mentioned above. They are Gajapati, Ganjam, Kandhamal, Keonjhar, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Mayurbhanj, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Sudargarh and Nayagarh. The remaining eight districts, Malkangiri, Koraput, Bolangir, Nuapada, Rayagada, Bargarh, Kalahandi and Nabarangpur have active presence of the Maoists. Out of these 19 districts 11 districts have substantial percentage of ST and SC population. Both SCs and the STs in these districts constitute more than 50% of the total population. Out of these 11 districts eight districts have more than 50% of tribal population (Koraput, Malkangiri, rayagada, Kandhamal, Sundergarh, Nawarangpur, Mayurbhanja and Gajapati). The role of the caste and tribal identity in the Maoist conflict in Odisha cannot be undermined.

People of Odisha follow different religions. People believing in Hindu religion make up overwhelming majority with 94.35% of the total population. The Christians are the main minority group with 2.44% of the total population followed by the Muslims with 2.2%. The other religious group constitute 1.14% of the total population.

Out of thirty districts thirteen districts in Odisha that is about 44.70% of the total area come under the Fifth Schedule provision of Constitution of India. The Fifth Schedule in Odisha covers the complete districts of Mayurbhanj, Koraput, Malkangiri, Rayagada, Nawarangapur, Sundargarh, and Kandhamal districts, R.Udayagiri Tahasil, Gumma & Rayagada Blocks, of Gajapati Soroda Tahasil, excluding Gazalbadi and Gochha Panchayats of Ganjam district, Kuchinda Tahasil of Sambalpur district, Telkoi, Keonjhar, Champua and Barbil Tahasils of Keonjhar district, Th. Rampur and Lanjigarh blocks of Kalahandi district and Nilagiri block of Balasore district. Out of 13 districts under the fifth schedule, 12 districts have been highly or moderately affected by the Maoist presence.



# ISSUES AND CONTENDERS

The peasants, the STs, the SCs and other weaker sections in Odisha have been raising issues concerning their lives and rights for a long period of time through various organisations and institutions. The Maoists have successfully brought together these issues under their fold. These issues have provided a fertile ground for the Maoists to successfully sustain the movement. The Maoists have taken the issues further and put them within their ideological framework. Some of these issues that helped the Maoists consolidate their position in Odisha are discussed below.

**Land Alienation:** Issues relating to land -- land ownership, land acquisition, land transfer and land alienation -- are central to many conflicts. Tribal and other backward sections of society have been the worst sufferers of land alienation in Odisha. Successive governments in Odisha have failed to address the land alienation issue in effective manner.

There are three major factors responsible for the alienation of land in Odisha, mostly in the tribal dominated areas. First, the manipulation of land records has contributed to large scale alienation of land. In most of the cases the tribals were not legally recognised as the owners of the land they cultivated for a long time. Secondly, 'Benami Transfer' is another important form of land alienation. In this case the original owners of the land are reduced to share croppers though the land remains in their name. The third important factor leading to land alienation is encroachment.<sup>5</sup> Land encroachment is very common in the Maoist affected districts in Odisha.

Pre-colonial tribal areas were autonomous in terms of their own administration and ownership over land holdings. The inclusion of the tribal into the state and state administration by the British through the Zamindari system was the beginning of dispossessing the

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<sup>5</sup> See Bidyut Chakravarty, and Rajat Kumar Kujur. 2012. *Maoism in India*. Oxon, Routledge, p. 113

tribal from their customary land rights. This led to the foundation of the forced displacement and migration of the tribal to the plains. Subsequently the British and the Zamindars imposed their administrative control over tribal areas and settled lands with non-tribals who carried out settled cultivation.<sup>6</sup> In order to put a stop to the transfer of tribal land to the non-tribal; the Orissa Scheduled Area Transfer of Immovable Property Act 1956 was passed. According to this act the land of the STs cannot be transferred to the non-tribal unless it is permitted by the Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO). The whole purpose of the act was successfully defeated as the rich and influential non-tribal didn't find difficult getting permission of the SDO.<sup>7</sup>

The problem of land settlement

in Odisha has its historical roots. When Odisha was carved out as an independent state on language basis on April 1, 1936, Odisha inherited three sets of land and forest administration system: the Madras Estates Land Act was enforced in the Southern Odisha, The Central Provinces Land Revenue and Tenancy Acts were prevalent in the Sambalpur and Khariar areas; and the Orissa Tenancy Act was in force in the Northern Odisha districts. There was not much change in the land related regulations during the initial years of post independence till 1952 when the Orissa Estate Abolition Act was passed. Starting from 1952, the state has legislated a number of Acts relating to land (See Table no 1.2). Despite of these Acts land alienation among the weaker section of the society, especially the tribal, continues to be one of the major issues.

**Table 1.2, Land Legislation in Orissa, 1951-1972**

Name	Year	Provisions	Impact
Orissa Estate Abolition Act	1952	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abolition of intermediaries in the state</li> <li>• Vesting of all Land Rights in the state</li> <li>• Agricultural and less than 23 acres to remain with the intermediaries for personal cultivation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No provision of protection for tenants</li> <li>• Eviction of tenants as the Zamindars was allowed land less than 23 acres for personal cultivation.</li> <li>• Abolition of intermediaries could not be completed until 1974</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> See Shakti Padhi, and Nilakantha Panigrahy, 2011. *Tribal Movements and Livelihoods: Recent Developments in Orissa*, New Delhi, CPRC-HIPA Working Paper 5, p.8

<sup>7</sup> See Bibhuti Bhusan Mohanty, State and Tribal Relationship in Orissa, Indian Anthropological Association, June 1997, Vol.27, No.1, p 6

Name	Year	Provisions	Impact
Orissa Land Reforms Act (amended in 1965, 1973, 1974)	1960	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent, heritable and transferable rights in land for the tiller.</li> <li>• Ban on leasing of land except under special conditions (in 1972)</li> <li>• Under adverse possession, land in continuous cultivation for 12 years or more by a person other than its owner shall pass to the cultivator.</li> <li>• Rent not to exceed one fourth of the gross produce.</li> <li>• Ceiling on individual holdings at 33 standard acres-later reduced to 20 (in 1965) and to 10 standard acres (1972)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delay in enactment and actual implementation of the act provided sufficient opportunities for large land owners to escape ceiling restrictions.</li> <li>• By explicitly banning tenancy, the law is unable to address the problem of share cropping</li> <li>• No provision was made to record concealed tenancies.</li> </ul>
Orissa Survey and Settlement Act	1958	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different laws related to survey, record of rights and settlement amended and consolidation in to one uniform law.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of uniform (though defective) system of rights of tenants not recording during settlement operations.</li> </ul>
Orissa Consolidations of Holdings and Prevention of Fragmentation of land Act	1972	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fragmentation of land declared illegal.</li> <li>• First choice of transfer to adjunct farmer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little impact on land fragmentation</li> <li>• Occasional land sales but rarely to adjunct farmers.</li> <li>• Consolidation of land holdings ignored by the farmers in Western Orissa because of undulating terrain.</li> </ul>
Orissa Prevention of Land Encroachment Act (Amended in 1982)	1972	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unauthorised occupation of government land prohibited</li> <li>• Penalties on encroachers followed by eviction.</li> <li>• The 1982 amendment for settlement of two (later amended to one) standard acres of 'unobjectionable' land (i.e. government wasteland) with 'eligible' beneficiaries (e.g. landless)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Penalties too low to act as a disincentive to encroachers.</li> <li>• The 1982 amendment not a 'proactive' right-encroacher cannot 'apply' to be regularised as act of encroachment is regarded as illegal in the first place.</li> <li>• Only Revenue Inspector can initiate regularisation of rights.</li> <li>• Considerable scope for rent-seeking by revenue officials.</li> </ul>

Source: Chakravarty and Kujur: 2012.

Movements and protests against land alienation in Odisha are not new developments. Mass organizations such as the KLS and CMS had started land reclaiming movement in the early 1990s. These organizations under the leadership of Sabyasachi Panda were able to grab hundreds acres of land from rich farmers and businessmen. Emergence of the Chasi Mulia Adivasi Sangha (CMAS) with active support from the Maoists strengthened the land reclaiming movement in districts such as Koraput, Malkanagiri, parts of Rayagada, Ganjam and Gajapati. The protest for *jal, zameen and jungle* by the CMAS keeps the movement going in these districts.

Land has always been the central point of Maoist movement in India starting from the days of Charu Majumdar's Naxalbari Movement in 1960s. In Odisha, the Maoists have consolidated their position raising the age old issue of land alienation. The Maoists have actively supported the organizations like the CMAS to go for land grabbing drive. With the active support from the Maoists, the CMAS has been able to grab more than 600 hectares of land only in Narayanpatna and Bandhugaon blocks of Koraput districts.<sup>8</sup> The 'rich farmers' and businessmen have lost their

land to the CMAS/Maoist and have left their houses. The CMAS has got into community farming in the land grabbed from the rich.

The land grabbing activities by the CMAS with active support from the Maoists have opened up new conflicts in these societies. Families who support the CMAS/Maoists have surrendered their land and others have been chased out of their respective villages. Hundreds of families have lost their houses and land to the CMAS/Maoist. The Maoists use the land alienation issue among the tribals and other communities to legitimize their movement. They have been successful, to a great extent, in winning people's support through this. Initiatives like community farming make the tribal communities feel empowered though the communities who loose land in this process feel alienated, hence opening up further conflicts among the communities.

### **Underdevelopment and Poverty**

Underdevelopment and poverty in Odisha are the major issues which have been capitalized by the Maoists. Odisha continues to remain as one of the poorest states in India. Some of the regions of the state are even poorer than the other regions. The Maoist affected districts in

<sup>8</sup> Author's interview with the locals of Bandhugaon and Narayanpatna Blocks, April 6, 2013

Odisha are more underdeveloped and poorer in comparison to other districts. Prevalence of age old underdevelopment and chronic poverty have provided fertile ground for the Maoists to successfully spread their ideology and bring people under their fold to fight against the state. The state government, of late, has also acknowledged this fact. Acknowledging these factors, the Chief Minister of Odisha, Naveen Patnaik said that:

People in the backward regions lack economic opportunities. They are deprived of fruits of development efforts. People in the socio-economically depressed regions often carry a deep sense of frustration and discrimination against their better off neighbors. Poor and disaffected people are often easily manipulated by anti-social elements and powerful vested interests. These pockets of poverty breed serious socio-economic problems. There is corroborating evidence that the problems of terrorism, naxalism, increased incidents of crime, law and order and social strife in many pockets are attributed to social and economic depression of such regions.<sup>9</sup>

While the Chief Minister of Odisha recognizes the problem, he fails to recognize the factor leading to such underdevelopment and poverty beyond the obvious ones. A closer look at the poverty situation in Odisha reveals that the poverty ratio is worse among the socially backward communities and it varies from region to region.

**Table No; 1.3 regional Poverty in Odisha, NSS 1999-2000**

	Coastal	Southern	Northern
Rural	29.3	86.16	50.98
Urban	41.65	43.97	45.81
Combined	31.51	50.1	50.1

Source: Compiled from Haan and Dubey as cited in *State of the Adivasis in Odisha, 2014*

Note: **The Coastal Region:** Ganjam, Khordha, Puri, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Bhadrak, Baleshwar, Cuttack and Jajpur districts. **Northern Region;** Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanja, Smbalpur and Sudergarh districts. **Southern Region:** Bolangir, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Koraput, Malkangiri, Rayagada, Nawarangapur and Gajapati districts.

<sup>9</sup> See Speech of Shri Naveen Patnaik, Chief Minister, Orissa 50th National Development Council Meeting on 21st December 2002 at New Delhi, available at <http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/pl150ndc/orissa.pdf>, accessed on January 10, 2015.



Poverty level in the tribal dominated districts (Mostly in the Northern and Southern region) is worse compared to the Coastal region districts. Out of the 14 districts declared to be affected by the Maoists presence, 13 districts come under the Northern and Southern region of Odisha. In these 13 districts the SCs and STs combined constitute more than 50% of the total population. The Coastal region of Odisha with lower percentage of ST and SC population has not been under the Maoist influence.

**Table 1.4: Poverty ratio of regions in Odisha (%), 1999-2000**

Regions	ST	SC	Other	All
Coastal	66.63	42.18	24.32	31.74
Southern	92.42	88.90	77.65	87.05
Northern	61.69	57.22	34.67	49.81
Odisha	73.08	52.30	33.29	48.04

Source: Based on estimates by Haan and Dubey, 2003, as cited in *State of the Adivasis in Odisha 2014*

There is a host of factors leading to chronic poverty in the tribal dominated districts in the Northern and southern regions of Odisha. One of the major factors is the lack of governance in these areas. The state led development model has not benefitted these communities in particular and the area in general.

The state, until recently, never took genuine efforts to bring development for the SCs and STs. Development measures initiated for these communities are not implemented with true spirit. Nexus among the government officials, local rich and the outside contractors manipulated the rules and regulations that went against the interests of the SCs and STs.

One of the major factors leading to poverty and underdevelopment of the Maoist affected districts in Odisha is the Lisence Raj. Post independence Odisha leased out the forest products to the private players. For instance major forest produces were leased out to Messers. H. Dear and Co, B.T.T. Co. and Motu Industries till 1960. Similarly, the bamboo forest cover of the Rayagada subdivision of undivided Koraput district was licensed to M S Straw Product Ltd.<sup>10</sup> The Orissa Forest Corporation was formed in 1962 which went for annual auction of the forest produce to the highest bidders. In this process the forest products of districts like Koraput was drained out to other neighbouring states and districts without providing any benefit to the tribals. Such resource drain from Koraput has been rightly observed by Madhav Gadgil:

<sup>10</sup> See Bibhuti Bhusan Mohanty, p. 6

‘the exploitation of forest from railway sleepers to timber for furniture and pulp for paper can be seen in stark form in Koraput. One has only to see the logs and the bamboos floating down the Sileru and Sabari rivers, beyond the Chinna Godavari to the mighty Godavari and on to the paper mills at Bhadrachalam and Rajamundry, to realise how wealth is indiscriminately being drained out of the district. Although estimates are hard to come by, the sight makes a strong impression’.<sup>11</sup>

The Maoists, though at the propaganda level, have raised these issues and attracted some tribal communities to their fold. It can be safely argued that these tribal communities are easily drawn to the Maoist movement as they find the state seems to have become defunct. The Maoists, as perceived by some of the communities, are the only avenue to ensure their right and livelihood.

### **Development induced Displacement**

Development induced displacement of human settlement has been an important

issue of conflict in Odisha. Odisha has witnessed large scale displacements due to large scale development projects such as construction of dams, establishment of industries, extraction of mineral resources (mines), etc. Most of these large scale development projects are constructed in and around hilly and forest areas making the people belonging to the tribal and other backward communities vulnerable to displacement.

In Odisha the large scale development projects legitimised the systematic displacement of the resources which pushed the tribal and other vulnerable communities to an uncertain and insured economy.<sup>12</sup> In the undivided Koraput district, which has been worst affected by the Maoists, there are more than 20 large development projects. These large development projects have displaced substantial percentage of the tribal and other under privileged communities.

Some the major development projects responsible for the displacement of significant size of households are: Hirakud Dam (32718 households), Machhakund Dam (2938 households), Upper Kolab Dam (3179 households),

<sup>11</sup> See Madhav Gadgil cited in Bibhuti Bhushan Mohanty, pp. 9-10

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.10

**Table No: 1.4; Displacement in Undivided Koraput District**

Project	Inception	Villages affected	Total number of Families		
			SCs	STs	Others
Machhkund	1948	67	300	1500	1138
Upper Kolab	1976	49	442	1421	1316
HAL	1963	10	--	--	--
NALCO	1981	14	55	266	279
Upper Indravati	1976	99	697	2223	2282
Balimela	1962	91	--	--	--

Source: Pradhan (2007)

Rengali Multipurpose Dam (10872 households), Upper Indravati Hydro Electric (5301 households), Balimela Dam (1200 households). All other industries like the National Aluminium Company (NALCO), Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Ordnance factory have displaced 3,143 households. Out of the total displaced people in dam projects in Orissa, SC and ST categories together account for more than 50% and ST Population alone constitute about 35%.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the Rourkela Steel Plant in Sundergarh district caused displacement of 4,094 families which included 31 villages of Mandira dam (This dam was built to provide water to the steel plant and the town ship). Around 60% of the displaced families belonged to the tribal community.<sup>14</sup>

The displaced people have been demanding rehabilitation and compensation ever since the initial days of the development projects. The tribals and other vulnerable sections of the society were mostly neglected by the state government and the corporate actors when it came to rehabilitation and compensation. The Maoists have joined with the displaced people in protest for rehabilitation and compensation. In this process the Maoists' opposition for the large scale development projects has acquired some support from the local people.

The Maoists in Odisha have also caused displacement of households. The Maoist model of development has forced some sections of the society,

<sup>13</sup> For details see Nityananda Pradhan, Anuradha, K and Sarat Kumar Patnaik, 2007, *Dimension of Issues in Education of Children at Elementary Level due to Repeated Displacement: Case Study of a Village-Chikarpar, Koraput*, Society for Promoting Rural Education and Development, Koraput

<sup>14</sup> For details see Rajkishor Meher, 'Globalisation, Displacement and the livelihood issues of tribal and Agricultural Dependent Poor People: The Case of Mineral-based Industries in India', *Journal of Developing Societies*, Vol.25, No.4, 2009, pp.457-480

mostly the rich and communities who do not support the Maoists' ideology, to leave their land and household, hence causing displacement. As it has been mentioned before the Maoists supported the CMAS to go for reclaiming land from the 'rich'. The idea of community farming under the total ownership of the CMAS-Maoist also demanded surrender of land holding

from the small farmers. Those who did not subscribe the idea of community farming were viewed as 'class enemy' and were forcibly chased out of the locality. In districts such as Rayagada, Koraput, Malkanagiri, hundreds of families have been displaced by the Maoist atrocities. In this case, apart from the rich, the communities belonging to the SC have been targeted.

# INSTITUTIONS

Conflict and institutions are deeply related to each other. While conflicts get influenced by the socio, economic and political institutions, they also affect these institutions. Institutions are not merely the organisations; they could stand for a norm. Institutions, as perceived by John Rawls, could be thought of two ways. First it could be seen as an abstract object expressed by a system of rules. Secondly, it could be seen as the realisation in the thought and conduct of certain individuals at a certain time and place of the actions specified by these rules.<sup>15</sup> Going by the definition given by John Rawls and for the purpose of the backgrounder, institution could be viewed as a set of rules/norms (mostly within organisational framework) within a given society which necessarily defines the power relations, the rights and duties and the like. The Maoist conflict in Odisha could be seen from the institutional point of view. The conflict

could be viewed as the absence or/and inability of the government institutions to enforce rules (or it could be said that the state institutions have not effectively addressed the issues of society) which has allowed emergence of other institutional practices. Followings are the major institutions that have emerged out of the Maoist conflict.

## **The Land Systems: Entry of Land Grabbing and Community Farming**

Land alienation has been one of the major sources of conflict, especially in the districts affected by the presence of the Maoists. The Maoists have been successful to win the support of the deprived and weaker sections of the society by raising the important issues such as land rights, forest rights of the tribals and land alienation. With the consolidation of the Maoist movement in Odisha land grabbing and community farming on the grabbed land have been

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<sup>15</sup> See John Rawls, 1999, A Theory of Justice, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

the new practices around the Maoist strongholds especially in Koraput, Malkangiri and Rayagada Districts.

Land grabbing from the alleged *Sabukars*, *Zamindars* (Land lords) have been a revolutionary trait by the mass organisations. The mass organisations such as the Kui Lewang Sangha (KLS) and Chasi Mulia Samiti (CMS) forcibly reclaim the land from the landholders to be distributed among the landless who usually belong to the STs and the SCs. The Maoists' support to these mass organisations to grab land from the rich land holders has escalated the conflict level. Unofficial sources in Koraput claim that the Maoists have reclaimed (grabbed illegally) more than 600 acres of land only in Bandhugaon and Narayanpatna Blocks of Koraput District.

Community farming is a new practice in some areas of Koraput, Rayagada and Malkangiri districts where the members of a mass organisation cultivates on the land that has been grabbed from the rich land holders. The members of the Chasi Mulia Adivasi Sangha (CMAS), the most important mass organisations, are believed to be cultivating hundreds

acres of grabbed land in Koraput, Malkangiri and Rayagada districts. Under the community farming system the Sangha that is the CMAS claims its ownership over the grabbed land actively supported by the Maoists. The members of the Sangha cultivate the land and get their share of production. Though theoretically every member has equal share, the Sangha and the Maoists have monopoly over the products. It has been alleged by the locals that the products of the land get used to support the Sangha and the Maoists activities in these areas.

### **Legal and Non-legal Political Parties: The Nexus**

The Maoists have been able to consolidate and sustain their movement in Odisha because of their interaction and nexus with both the legal and non-legal political forces. The non-legal political forces (the mass organisations) that have shown solidarity with the Maoists and get active support from the later have been prominent actors for sustaining the conflict.

**The Chasi Mulia Adivasi Sangha (CMAS)**, Association for Peasants, labours and Tribal, is one of the important

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<sup>16</sup> Technically, the CMAS is not an outlawed organization in Odisha. The leadership and the mebers of the CMAS have been involved in many illegal activities with active support from the Maoists. Many of them have been arrested and surrendered. It is in this regard this organisation is viewed as a non-legal political force in this paper.

non-legal political parties<sup>16</sup> having adverse effect on the Maoist conflict in Odisha. The CMAS is the classic case in Odisha where a movement fully based on the local issues has been virtually integrated with the larger People's war propounded by the Maoists.<sup>17</sup> The CMAS was originally formed as Koraput chapter of the Rythu Coolie Sangham (RCS), an Andhra Pradesh based peasants' organisation. The RCS-Koraput continued to protest for the tribal rights in terms of right to *Jal, Jamin and Jungle* (water, land and forest) until it was banned as an organisation for supporting the Maoists in 2005. The RCS changed its name to CMAS in 2006 as Kondagiri Paidamma leading the movement with two important associates, Arjun Kendruka and Nachika Linga. The CMAS intensified the movement reclaiming land from the *Sabukar* with slogans like *Jami Mukti, Mada Mukti, Goti Mukti* (Freedom for land, freedom from liquor and freedom from bonded labour)

By 2008 the CMAS was vertically split into two groups; one believed in the democratic way in demanding the rights led by Arjun Kendruka and the other believing in a 'revolutionary' way supported the Maoists. Arjun Kendruka

contested the general election in 2009 before he was killed by the Maoist in August 2010. The Maoists with active support from the Nachika Linga faction of the CMAS killed a number of Arjun Kendruka's supporters. Now Arjun Kendruka faction has been hijacked by the security forces to form Nagarik Suraksha Committee (NSC). The NSC was used by the state and the security forces to pressurise the locals not to cooperate with the Maoists or the CMAS-Nachika Linga faction. The conflict between the two factions of CMAS has also created conflict among the people in Koraput, mainly in Narayanpatna and Bandhugaon Blocks.

The nexus between the political parties and the Maoists has been an important practice in the Maoist affected areas in Odisha. The nexus between the political parties and the Maoists is mutually beneficial for each other. Apart from periodically condemning the violent activities of the Maoists, no political party has ever taken any fruitful step to resolve the conflict. The ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has always been alleged being sympathetic towards the Maoists. In one instance, it is alleged that, the Maoist-backed panchayat representatives

<sup>17</sup> For details see Anshuman Behera, "Maoists Link in Odisha: Case of the Chasi Mulia Adivasi Sangh", IDSA Issue Brief, August 5, 2013, available at [www.idsa.in/system/files/IB\\_MaoistsLinkinOdisha\\_ABehera.pdf](http://www.idsa.in/system/files/IB_MaoistsLinkinOdisha_ABehera.pdf).

supported the BJD candidates for Zilla Parishad elections.<sup>18</sup> There is a strong perception among the people that the political parties take assistance from the Maoists to win elections.

### The State Intervention

The state's intervention into the Maoist affected districts has been prominent. The state has intervened into these areas in two major ways: deployment of heavy security forces and development initiatives that has brought the corporate players in. The security and development initiatives are the official policies of the state to deal with the Maoist conflict. In this process the security apparatus of the state and the corporate players have become important contributors to the conflict.

**Security Forces:** The state has deployed 17 battalion of Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) along with the Special Operation Group (SOG), the elite Police force of Odisha, and the District Voluntary Forces (DVF) to 'securitise' the local population against the Maoist violence and the development projects. The state believes that the violence level by the Maoists has deescalated because

of the high level securitisation initiatives by the state. Against the state claim, the high securitisation of the Maoist areas has have negative affects in terms of human rights violations which in many ways contributed to the interests of the Maoists.

**Corporate players:** The presence of the corporate players in the Maoist affected areas has contributed significantly to the Maoist movement. There have been instances of quid pro quo between the Maoists and big corporate houses. The big corporate such as the Essar Steel, NALCo, JK Paper Mills concede to the demands of the Maoists and pay huge amounts as protection money. Contractors of the development projects also get benefited from the Maoist conflict. They blame the Maoists' activities responsible for the delay of a development project and in return the Maoists demand certain percentage of the total project money. There are also instances where the Maoists demands some percentage of the daily wage from the Tendu leaves collectors and bamboo fellers (they are usually the STs and SCs) through the middlemen.

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<sup>18</sup> For details see 'BJD govt hand in glove with Maoists in Odisha: Opposition', The Telegraph, Bhubaneswar, March 24, 2012, available at [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1120324/jsp/frontpage/story\\_15290984.jsp#.VnqK9bZ97IU](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1120324/jsp/frontpage/story_15290984.jsp#.VnqK9bZ97IU), accessed on December 22, 2014.



# OPTIONS

The options to deal with the Maoist conflict cannot be offered without understanding the response of the state towards the conflict. While successive governments in Odisha have neglected grievances and demands of the people from the Maoist affected areas, they have perceived the Maoist conflict as a law and order problem and a spill over effect from the neighbouring states.

The Government of Odisha's response in dealing with the Maoist conflict has not been strikingly different from that of government of India's response. The state government has not been able to understand the Maoist conflict keeping in mind the specificities of the local issues. The state government, similar to the government of India, follows a three pronged policy in addressing the Maoist conflict. They are: military approach to counter the Maoist violence, development approach to bring about development in and around Maoist affected areas to win hearts and

mind of the people and the surrender and rehabilitation to policy to give the Maoists an window of opportunity to shun violence and join the 'main stream'.

So far the military approach of the state is concerned; there have been deployment of 17 battalion of Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) in the Maoist affected areas. Along with the CAPFs, the elite security force of the state, the Special Operation Group (SOG) and District Voluntary Forces (DVF) have also been deployed. Though the state claims to have brought down the violent activities of the Maoists drastically, yet the challenge very much remains there as the cadres of the Maoists surprise the security forces with attacks. The security approach of the government of Odisha has many flaws such as: lack of coordination among the CAPFs and the state security forces, lack of modernisation of Odisha police, inadequate deployment of local police in the conflict zones. Most importantly,

the security centric approach of the state apart from creating fear among the people, fails to understand the genuine issues that they have been fighting for.

Development approach of the state government, to a large extent, follows the development schemes of the central government. This approach aims at addressing age old development issues to win hearts and minds of people against the Maoists. Of many development schemes operational in the Maoist affected areas, Integrated Action Plan (IAP), now called as the Additional Central Assistance to the LWE Districts,<sup>19</sup> is one of the important schemes. In Odisha 15 Districts<sup>20</sup> have been covered under the IAP. Under the IAP funds (Rs. 30 crores per district every year) are placed at the disposal of a committee headed by the district collector with assistance from Superintendent of Police and the Divisional forest Officer. Most of the development schemes including the IAP do not really have local representation. Lack of local representation, in most of the time, fails to locate the real issues to target and addressed.

Surrender and Rehabilitation approach aims at giving a window of opportunity to the Maoists to come to the main stream. The scheme, as per the government guideline, aims at providing gainful employment and entrepreneurial opportunities to the surrendered Maoists so that they are encouraged to join the main stream and do not go back to the Maoist fold again.<sup>21</sup> The surrender and rehabilitation policy of Odisha government does not seem to have yielded much success. The new surrender and rehabilitation policy of Odisha, 2012 mostly talks covers the monetary benefits. Some of the important issues such as rehabilitation of the surrendered Maoists, speedy trial of the cases against them are some of the key issues to be taken care of.

### Way Forward

Negotiation with the Maoists holds the key for the successful resolution of the conflict. But unfortunately no government in Odisha has given serious attempts to bring the Maoists to the negotiation table. Government's initiative towards inviting the Maoists for negotiation has been confined to "first

<sup>19</sup> For details on IAP see [http://mha.nic.in/naxal\\_new](http://mha.nic.in/naxal_new).

<sup>20</sup> Total of 15 districts in Odisha have been covered under the IAP. They are Bolangir, Deogarh, Gajapati, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Keonjhar, Koraput, Malkangiri, Mayurbhanja, Nawarangpur, Nuapada, Rayagada, Sambalpur, Sonpur and Sundergarh.

<sup>21</sup> For details on the Surrender and Rehabilitation Scheme of Government of India see [http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload\\_files/mha/files/NM-GuidSurReh\\_0.PDF](http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/NM-GuidSurReh_0.PDF).

shun violence, and then the state will engage in a talk". Mere sloganeering does not help for initiation of peace talks and negotiation. The state must take positive steps such as releasing the suspected Maoists (who have been arrested and jailed on the basis of suspicion), engaging the civil society and declaring cease fires. It is the responsibility of the state to create an atmosphere for negotiation.

One of the most important steps towards the resolution of Maoist conflict has to be change of perception towards the conflict. As it has been mentioned before, the state has always looked the conflict from law and order point of view. It must be understood that there lies a number of genuine issues such as issues relating to land, forest rights, poverty, displacement, illiteracy and lack of genuine development in these areas. The state always sees the violent part of conflict which over shadows the genuine issues of the local people in these areas. The perception that all the people (mostly the tribal) in the Maoists affected areas support the violent activities needs to be corrected. The state must come to secure the lives and livelihood of the local people through effective implementation of planning.

There is an urgent need to modernise the local security forces in

these areas. Deployment of the CAPFs sends a wrong message to the local people. The CAPFs are often seen as the outsiders and their camps terrorise people. The state must recruit adequate number of security forces locally and modernise them not just to fight the Maoists but to provide security to the common individuals against the Maoists.

Keeping politics out of the Maoist conflict will resolve most of the problems. Political consensus and political will to deal effectively with the Maoists will help in resolving the conflict. More often it has been seen that political parties engage with the Maoists for their political interests.

Role of civil society organisation can be explored for dealing with the Maoist conflict. Well meaning civil society organisations could be engaged to bring the Maoists to the negotiation table. It is important to mention that no government in Odisha have tried to negotiate with the Maoists. There have been casual calls to shun violence and join the main stream. This is high time for the state government to reach the Maoists with the help of the civil society organisations to engage them in meaningful negotiations.

Public perception management is one important area which most of the states have failed to achieve. While the Maoists have succeeded in spreading propaganda against the state, the state has failed miserably to change that perception. The state machinery must be made available and reachable to the local population to win their hearts and minds. Years of absence of the state in these areas needs to be compensated

with adequate number of government officials positive approach towards addressing local issues.

There is a need for effective implementation of surrender and rehabilitation scheme. Successful rehabilitation of the surrendered Maoists should be highlighted to attract more Maoists to abjure violent path.

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