CHAPTER-7

DISCUSSIONS

The movement refuses to uproot itself despite all the repressive measures taken by the government including the recent green hunt. Because it gains getting energy for its sustenance from the following factors:

- Growing discontent, and not just discontent,
- The unheard grievances
- Unaddressed problems,
- Insecurity about lives and livelihood, and
- Squeezing the political space, since all these remained unanswered.

There is trust deficit among tribal towards the government which could be motivating them as a whole to opt for arms. The motivational factors do differ from area to area. Where there is more trust there is less participation and vice versa. In Koraput district, except in two blocks (Narayanapatna and Bandhugoan) it is intense, in rest of the areas though the movement is present, but is unable to gain momentum due to better governance by the state.

This empirical study in Bandhugaon and Narayanpatna Blocks of Koraput District reveals many interesting dimensions of Left Wing Extremism activities in a tribal dominated region. A severe form of history of social and economic exclusion of the tribes, extremely inhuman exploitation by the Sahukars, abject poverty with low Human Development Index, iniquitous benefits of many Government-sponsored welfare programmes among the tribes, and a strong leadership influenced by the political ideology of CPI (M) triggered violent struggle by the tribes in this “backward” region. In this opportune moment, the leader of Chasi Mulia Adivasi Sangh (CMAS-N) (Association of Peasants, Bonded Labours and the Tribal), Nachika Linga tried to mobilise people in an extremist manner with the slogan Jami Mukti, Mada Mukti, and
Goti Mukti; which means capturing land from the landlords, freedom from liquor and freedom from bonded labour.

There is very good cycle which is adopted in the participation. First, to make their presence felt, they destroy the government establishments. When such violent activities take place, it is a common tendency by Government to deploy force in those areas. So, the pattern follows:

(a) Destruction of establishments by the armed group, to show their presence and grabbing the area by the Naxals,

(b) Deployment of the force, harassment by the force to the innocent tribals,

(c) The tribals get anger and this state of anger is very well en-cashed against the government by the Naxals, and

(d) Tribals opt for arms and participate in the movement.

Fig. 7.1: The Cycle of Participation

The Issues that promoted Extremism in Koraput
The extremism prevails in Koraput cannot be seen as an isolated phenomena. It can be safely argued that a number of unresolved issues have fueled to the persistence of unrest in this region.

The field data give a grim picture regarding participation; more than 50 per cent of the tribal are in a state of vacuum as no one believes them. If they don't attend the meetings of the armed group, they are blamed as police informers; they are beaten, and intimidated. If they come and seek help from the government they are labelled as Naxalites. They are in dire state of confusion, as no one is helping them. Some even cannot live their villages to work outside when the armed groups conduct meetings and camps. The tribals in a sandwiched state, and explain that either way they end up in jail. Four distinct patterns that emerge from the field, regarding the motivational aspect:

(i) Tribals those who believe that this is the only way,

(ii) Second group of tribals who believe that as there is no option this is last resort,

(iii) Third group who have strong faith in the system, and use all constitutional provisions to raise their voices, but labelled as Naxalites, and have finally opted, and

(iv) The last group who have believe in the system, located in the war between the state and Naxalite conflict.

There are three (Behera, 2013) important underlying issues: land alienation, poverty, and development induced conflict.

**Land Alienation**

Land alienation among the unprivileged groups (STs and SCs) has been a vital source of conflict. Basically in Koraput, it has seen the manipulation of land records, ‘*Benami*’ transfer of land and illegitimately large tracts of land have been acquired by outsiders in
the name of development in areas inhabited by the SCs, STs, and rural poor. 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 landowners. 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 Naxalites thus became the medium for people’s protest. Ban on KLS and CMS in 2006 and formation of *Chasi Mulia Adivasi Sangha* (CMAS) in 2009 and its association with the Naxalites movement was the defining movement for popular protests against land alienation. The CMAS, with active support from the Naxalites, has been able to grab thousands of acres of land not only in Koraput but also in Malkangiri and Rayagada districts; thereby imparting in the people is hope of their collective ownership on the land they were alienated from.

**Poverty**

Chronic poverty in Odisha, especially among the STs and SCs is one of the major issues which have been fully capitalised by the Maoists. According to the National Sample Survey 1990-2000, 50 percent of the people in the Southern and northern region of Odisha (which are most 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.

The Naxalites have ventilated these issues quite successfully and attracted affected communities into their fold. There exists a perception that the SCs and the STs inhabiting in these areas are easily drawn to the Naxalite movement as they find that the state is neither responsive to their needs nor 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 (Behera, 2013). The Naxalites have
presented themselves as saviors for these communities, who can ensure them justice and their right to life and livelihood.

Pointing out the land problem, as well as the social, economic, education and health problems of the area; the Maoists started gaining Adivasi support since the mid-1990s. By naming themselves the People’s Guerrilla Liberation Army, the Maoists incorporated the tribals and trained people for violent activities by sending them to various Maoists training centers in Andhra Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh. It has been observed that presently three committees are actively involved in violent activities in the undivided Koraput district, namely the Andhra-Odisha Border Special Zonal Committee, the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee, and the Odisha Rajya Committee, which was formed by the erstwhile People’s War Group (now CPI-Maoist) in 2001. All these three committees are working under the direction of the Odisha-Andhra Joint Committee. The Maoists function through their dalas (squads).

In the Narayanpatna region, the Jhanjhabati Dala and the Machhkund Dala are involved in violent operations. The violent activities of Maoists have become more visible since 1998, when the Andhra Pradesh police attacked the camp of Maoists in Kapadang village of Bandhugaon block in Koraput district and killed the Maoist leader Gantha Ramesh. Since 1998, they are engaged in a series of violent attacks in different parts of the undivided Koraput district. They attacked the National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO) at Damanjodi on 12 April 2009, and looted two tons of explosives, used in Narayanpatna, and killed nine policemen while clearing the Narayanpatna-Laxmipur roadblocks. Seven blocks of the Koraput districts have been completely captured by Maoists then, namely, Bandhugaon, Narayanpatna, Laxmipur, Nandpur, Lamtaput, Patangi, and Baipariguda.

Meanwhile, the Maoists, who were trying to get a foothold in Koraput and its neighbouring districts of Malkanagiri, and Rayagada, started mobilising the suppressed people in general, and CMAS-N cadres in particular, against the arrest of their sympathisers and the unnecessary presence of security forces in their area. The Maoists were successful in spreading rumors about the atrocities inflicted by the security forces against the innocent tribals. Agitated by this, Nachika Linga along with Kendruka
Singanna (leader of the Ghinua Bahini), Andru Nachika, Kumudini Behera (leader of the women's front of the organisation) and several villagers picketed in the Narayanpatna Police station on November 20, 2009. During this protest, violent clashes erupted between the Police and the members of the CMAS-N. Two important leaders of the CMAS-N, Kendruka Singanna, a close aide of Nachika Linga, and Andru Nachika the nephew of Nachika Linga, were killed in the police firing. Many persons were injured and police arrested 37 members of the organisation. Nachika Linga escaped from the scene to avoid arrest but had finally surrendered in 2014.

Apart from the alienation of tribal land by moneylenders and usurpers, liquor is another vital issue that affects the tribal life tremendously. It is well known that intoxication is a part of tribal cultural life. Besides consuming liquor during different festivals, it is a routine drink by many tribal adults. Country wines called Mahula or Mahua (prepared from the flower of Madhuca longifolia) and Salapa (prepared from the sap of Caryota urens) are profusely in use among them. With this perspective, Elwin once stated that “…there must be dance and feast with plenty of liquor for everyone to get some pleasure out of the marriage event” (Elwin, 1954). Drinking of wine is so much a part of tribal social and religious life that the Government of Odisha while introducing prohibition in the State excluded the districts with a large tribal population out of its scope (Dash, 1997). Taking the advantage of the tribal weakness towards liquor, selling liquor has become not only a profitable business for the non-tribal distillers but is a significant source of exploitation to the tribals. The tribal’s habit of regular drinking greatly contributes to indebtedness, landlessness, and eventually transfers of tribal land to non-tribal usurpers in the southern part of Odisha (Bagchi, 1999). Regarding the sale of liquor, Narayanpatna and Bandhugaon block come under the Scheduled Areas, where different provisions of the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996 can be operationalised. PESA has empowered the Gramsabha (village council) to prohibit or control the sale of liquor.

Even though CMAS was working in the region for a long time, it reached a climax in January 2009, when the rural masses of Narayanpatna and Bandhugaon not only drove away the liquor traders from their villages but mobilised themselves, in thousands to
pursue them to their stronghold, to the towns. Four thousand people went to Narayanpatna town and destroyed liquor factories and wine shops, including shops selling foreign liquor. By late 2010, only two liquor shops were running in the entire region and that too in the block headquarters of Narayanpatna, and Bandhugaon, where the armed forces were stationed. In January 2011 more than 3000 CMAS members destroyed the shop in Bandhugaon town as well. In villages like Baliaput, Mahua trees from which cheap liquor was produced were destroyed under a political programme of CMAS in collaboration with the Biplabi Adivasi Mahila Sangha (BAMS). The prohibition on the sale and consumption of liquor was almost total by 2009. The mass upsurge led to the fleeing of landlords and liquor traders from the region, leading to the collapse of this parasitic trade. The villagers narrated how Jairam Pangi, the incumbent BJD MP from Koraput, tried to dissuade the people from the anti-liquor agitation by claiming that it was a part of Adivasi culture, custom, and worship, to which the people responded that the very instrument which destroyed their lives cannot be a part of their devotion and sacrifice, that is conducted for their common wellbeing.

While analysing the reasons behind the emergence and consolidation of LWE activities in Koraput, it might be said that there is no single reason responsible for these violent activities. It is rather due to many intricately related reasons. As stated earlier, there was a dreadful combination of a undeniable history of social and economic exclusion of the tribes, extremely inhuman exploitation by the traders or Sahukars and moneylenders, abject poverty with low HDI, iniquitous benefits of many Government-sponsored welfare programmes among the tribes, and a strong leadership influenced by the political ideology of CPI (M), which triggered violent struggle by the tribes in Koraput.

All these extreme states of deprivation and resentment could have been countered successfully to pacify the tribes, had there been effective implementation of innumerable Government-sponsored welfare programmes and tribal development acts and policies. The 12th Five Year Plan (2012-2017) document of the Planning Commission, Government of India candidly admits that “Poor implementation of existing schemes in the tribal regions has meant that not only poverty continues at an exceptionally high levels in these regions, but the decline in poverty has been much slower here than in the
entire country…” When HDI of Odisha was 0.579 in 2004-05, the HDI of Koraput district was 0.431 (Human Development Report, 2005). Koraput district was placed at the 27 position from the above among 30 districts of Odisha, indicating that the district is one of the most backward districts in the State.

Education in every sense is one of the fundamental factors of development. The literacy rate of Koraput is 49.87 percent, which is much lower than the State average of 73.45 percent. When it comes down to the study area, only 21.89 percent of the population is literate. If the things are looked at gender-wise, the female literacy rate (41.42%) is alarmingly low the male literacy rate (58.57%), which is again below than the State average. Lack of education significantly affects their employability and income.

Of the three components of HDI of Odisha, the education index has the highest weight (0.723), whereas the health index has the lowest weight (0.468), while the income index (0.545) lies in between the two. The Koraput district has the health index of 0.218, compared to the State health index of 0.468 as stated above. If the study Blocks are considered, they have a total population of 50,960 (2004). The average population covered under one health subcenter is 3640, which is out of the norm adopted by the state (3000 population per Health Sub-Centre) for tribal areas. The average number of villages and habitations covered per health subcenter is 22.85, which in much difficult to cover in hilly terrains. These villages are situated at a mean radial distance of 21.67 KM. It is humanly impossible for a Female Health Worker to cover such a distance by foot in such hilly terrain.

Safe drinking water is another index of human wellbeing. It is noticed that water scarcity is one of the biggest problem in these two Blocks. The people have access to different sources of drinking water. These include natural resources as well as those that the State provides and private sources as well. In the study areas majority of people depends on tub well as a source of drinking water, which is quite often contaminating and causing health hazards.

25 out of 30 districts of Odisha are in the list of 200 districts, where NREGA, the flagship programme of the UPA Government and endorsed by the present NDA Government, came into force on February 2, 2006. Under this Act, the State Government is bound to
launch a rural employment guarantee scheme within six months of the Act coming into force. Under NREGA, all rural households are entitled to apply for a “Job Card”. Registering applications and issuing Job Cards is the responsibility of the Gram Panchayat. In the study Blocks, 52.93% of the population have Job Cards, what they call as “Kuli Card” (Card for Menial Labour). Unfortunately, 47.05% of the population in two study Blocks have been deprived of accessing any employment under MNREGA as they do not own a Job Card. Finally, they land up with neither Job Card nor job. This situation is compounded by the fact that 39.69% of the population in the study Blocks are landless and 19.84% of them possess only up to ½ Acre of land. Joblessness with landlessness adds to the fury of the affected tribal people against the Government and its sponsored welfare programmes. The champions of LWE and their guerillas, therefore, get the sympathy of the local tribals; who are poor, exploited and voiceless, and treated with contempt and condescension by the Indian state; in fighting with the local administration, several bloody wars, for running a parallel administration in the tribal regions of Koraput.

One of the objectives of this study is to empirically examine the views of the local tribals about LWE activities, their ideologies vis-à-vis the Government in place and its welfare programmes for tribal development. The researcher has tried to elicit an emic view of this by establishing a strong rapport in two study Blocks, i.e., Bandhugaon, and Narayanpatna.

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**Fig. 7.2: Application of Gultang model of Violence**

- No political space and no articulation of their rights, and structural violence squeezing their space
- The unmet need in the form of violation of their rights

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**Why Tribal Enter**
It is revealed from the analysis (fig. 7.2, 7.3, and 7.4) that the local tribals in the study Blocks are unfortunately sandwiched between the LWE activists, and the State police and the security forces. But the reality is that their state of deprivation and the fault lines mentioned above are often capitalised by the LWE activists to increase their strength and influence in such areas by taking into consideration of different development indicators. Most of the study villages in the two study Blocks, as per the Police version, are branded as villages with Maoists’ sympathisers, as all these villages have the history of encounters and murders. Many villagers were killed by the Maoists alleging them as
police informers. But according to the district officials; Narayanapatna, and Bandhugaon blocks in Koraput district of Odisha are known to have a significant presence of dreaded “Maoists”, who prevent taking off the development projects in this region. This version is strongly countered by the tribals, who exhort that there has been no interference in education or healthcare by the cadres of the LWE. They added that it is the administration that uses the Maoists’ presence as an excuse for not implementing any of the Government schemes for good of the tribals.

Local tribals are of the firm opinion that the Maoists only kill those who they suspect of having link with the police. Fear results in the community staying always on the guard and refusing to speak to anyone either about the police or the LWE. Security forces keep a hawk’s eye on everyone’s movement here.

The literacy rate presents a disheartening picture. Schools are empty and children huddle inside their homes, unwilling to meet any stranger. As fear grips all of them, no one ventures out alone either in the fields or in the forests. During the discussion with the villagers, it was revealed that the Maoists never cause any harm to them. No child has ever been recruited into their army from this region nor has the community faced any kind of threat to their lives. But after the security forces set up their base close to the villages, life has completely changed and become extremely restricted. The schools have stopped functioning; children and women have to return home before twilight sets in. It is no longer possible to enter the forest areas to get firewood and other items of subsistence; those who used to go to schools outside the village or worked elsewhere can no longer do so.

In the crossfire between the police and the Maoists, schools have inevitably become the battleground, and education of children has been disrupted. The dropout rates in these areas are reported to be extremely high, especially where schools are not close to the villages. If the school is away from home, students are afraid to travel the distance. Since most upper primary/secondary schools are located at a considerable distance from their homes, girls drop out after primary schools increased.
Under constant criticism for failing to address the developmental issues in Maoist-affected districts; the Central government has put in place the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) to provide additional funding for 60 Maoist-affected districts in November 2010. Between 2010-11 and 2011-12, a Block Grant of Rs.25 crore and a District Grant of Rs.30 crore was allocated to implement development projects. Even after all these efforts, the scenario of the study area is the same as before.

Fig.7.5: Direction of the LWE movement

Many case studies from the villages testify that the tribals here are the victims of police and LWE torture. The poor tribal people are being harassed, humiliated, and physically tortured by the police and paramilitary personnel on many occasions without reason. There have been hundreds of tribal and Dalits put in jail with false cases after being arrested under suspicion of their Maoist link. Their cases have been pending in courts without trial and there have been no legal aid or judicial pro-activeness to release such innocent poor people suffering due to their poverty, illiteracy and legal backwardness.

The Government without addressing the issues of the people has been more engaged in fighting against the LWE and spending huge financial resources from the treasury on security in the name of countering the Maoists. The real security is the wellbeing of the people. There has been no regular employment facility and most of the schemes and programmes meant for them have not fully reached to them due to bureaucratic apathy and lack of political will by ruling parties in the Government, with an insignificant
representation of tribals in governance and development administration. The best possible way to counter Maoist violence is the development of the tribals and a continuous dialogue with the community about their priorities of development.

The solution of LWE Movement is based here on empirical data basing on their fear, their expectations and on their future prospects. The empirical data from the field as depicted in the previous chapters clearly show certain trend as follows:

- Despite the blasts, ambush, killing by the Naxals/Maoists, the pace of the LWE movement is not same in all the places as variations witnessed in the study area.

- In many areas it is found that few of the activists are withdrawing from the underground fold due to many factors. One of the important factors remains the ideology dilution by the leaders.

- It is also witnessed in the recent past that the revolutionary party is undergoing a tremendous tussle for their own actions.

- Time and again the Secretary of Orissa State Committee has raised the issues over killings of innocents, killing of religious leaders, and killing of security forces. It is been questioning that their main ideology is been thinned down when the party is killing the force without any reason. There are several inner party debates going on in many issues starting from killing, use of finance, treatment of the females, on the issue of religion, use of alcohol. It was found that many of the ground level cadres do enjoy alcohol and try to intimidate villagers and outsiders for money.

- But it is also found that there is a strong amount of respect by the tribals for the LWE movement where they see a good leader who mobilizes them and work for them.

Apart from all these factors it is found that there is a strong sense of desperation from the party to hold constituencies for which they are ready to opt for any means and methods, in this process the party is going to kill their own members as it happened in the past,
with certain feud. But one pattern which clearly emerges out of this is the differences observed in the initial and the present ideology. The tribals have felt that there is erosion of ideology. The findings of this study also support the entire proposed hypothesis.

1. Like any other movements, LWE movement had risen from the people’s grievances and sufferings to the battle field of movement. It takes up all the basic steps in a long run limit of their tolerance, the long term awaiting for the justice and solutions, the extent of exploitation by the outsiders (mostly officials) and then motivation by the activist leaders and finally, leading to the enforcement for joining the LWE.

2. Even though the tribals are illiterate or pre-literate, in the face of suffering, exploitation and prolonged economic backwardness, they are compelled to accept the LWE ideology with immediate effect.

3. Tribals as per their cultural standards accept readily and comfortably the matters which are served at their door step. Whereas government officials hardly reach due tribal people face to face, LWE leaders reach people at their door step and able to convince them comfortably to join LWE movement.

4. The exploitation of money lenders, landlords and other opportunist migrant population (in addition to government officials) are most often taken as clue and supportive cause for motivating the tribals to join LWE movement.

5. Primary and subsequent observations in tribal area confirm that most of the tribals after joining the movement are so much so red-marked that they fear to come back to normal life even if they realise their breaching of law and order of the State. In case of extreme torture only, they take a drastic decision to come back and surrender.

6. Even though LWE movement proceeds on a singles track basing on a single ideology. It has not been able to maintain consistency and uniformity because of variable strategies operations of the government and variations in the local
cultures (economic as well as cultural backwardness). Like LWE ideology, the participation of people especially the tribals never accept the movement in a similar manner, variations emerge as a result of their economic backwardness and cultural variations.

7. As regards, the inclusion of the tribals in the movement process, it is verified that tribals everywhere in south Orissa are more or less from similar or uniform cultural bases. In some districts, tribals accept and support the movement in order to take revenge on the exploiting population and come forward to join in some districts the movement without any choice; in some districts they see it as an alternative way to ventilate their anger. It is also true that in some areas where government activities are satisfactory, people hesitate to join the movement.

8. Besides the cultural and other local variations, the participation in the movement always takes a bi-fold path; firstly, some people, because of the surrounding problems, remain as active part and others who are not very much affected, only ideologically remain as passive participant of the movement.

9. From ideological point of view, the LWE movement had attracted the attentions of the economically backward tribals, but as observed from different incidences (as published in the media), the ideology is noticed to be diluted due to the incorporation of personnel's vested interests of some leading LWE ideologies and their activists.

10. As known at the international, national and at the state level; the sovereign governments most often follow the incidences of movement, whereas the movement makers always strategically superior stand by following an offensive role in the whole process.

11. As observed anthropologically, the solutions to such an undesired movement process seem to be far reaching mainly because, there is no absolute solution-seeking dialogues, compromises and compromising attitudes between the two parties involved, so far.
12. The conflicting and confronting attitudes of both sides are ought to create bloody fights and loss of human lives. In fact, the two parties involved in the conflict (leading to movement) are at fault, which they never realise. Therefore, unless both the parties sincerely desire for a solution, no solution would be possible.