

# **Socio-Political and Economic Causes of the Rise of Naxalite Movement: A Critical Study**

A Dissertation Submitted

To

**Sikkim University**



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the  
**Degree of Master of Philosophy**

By

**Gyanendra Chhetri**

Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management  
School of Social Sciences  
Sikkim University

**December 2022**

Date: 24/12/2022

**DECLARATION**

I, **Gyanendra Chhetri**, hereby declare that the research work embodied in the dissertation titled “**Socio-Political and Economic Causes of the Rise of Naxalite Movement: A Critical Study**” submitted to **Sikkim University** in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, is my original work. Any content or any part of this dissertation has not been submitted for any degree of this University or any other University.

*Gyanendra Chhetri*  
**Gyanendra Chhetri**

Registration No: 20/M.Phil/PCM/03

Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management

School of Social Sciences



**DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND CONFLICT  
STUDIES AND MANAGEMENT**

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

SIKKIM UNIVERSITY

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**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the dissertation titled “**Socio-Political and Economic Causes of the Rise of Naxalite Movement: A Critical Study**” submitted to the Sikkim University for partial fulfilment of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** in the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management embodies the result of bonafide research work carried out by **Gyanendra Chhetri** under my guidance and supervision. No Part of the dissertation has been submitted earlier to this or any other University for any degree.

All the assistance and help received during the course of investigation have been duly acknowledged by him.

We recommend this dissertation to be placed before the examiner for evaluation.

(Dr. Vimal Khawas)

Supervisor

Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management  
School of Social Sciences

(Prof. Nawal K. Dasgupta)

Head of the Department

Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management  
School of Social Sciences

7<sup>th</sup> Mile, Samdur, Gangtok-737102, Sikkim, India



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**“Socio-Political and Economic Causes of the Rise of Naxalite Movement: A  
Critical Study”**

Submitted by **Gyanendra Chhetri** under the supervision of **Dr. Vimal Khawas**,  
**Associate Professor, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and  
Management, School of Social Sciences, Sikkim University, Gangtok.**

*Gyanendra Chhetri*

Gyanendra Chhetri  
Signature of the Scholar

*Vimal Khawas*

Dr. Vimal Khawas  
Countersigned by Supervisor

*Vai*  
24/12/2022

Vetted by Librarian

7<sup>th</sup> Mile, Sandur, Gangtok-737102, Sikkim, India

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### **List of Abbreviations**

AITC	All India Trinamool Congress
BJP	Bharatiya Janta Party
BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
CPC	Communist Party of China
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPI (M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CPI (Maoist)	Communist Party of India (Maoist)
CPI (M-L)	Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)
GTA	Gorkhaland Territorial Administration
INC	Indian National Congress
KPP	Kamtapur People's Party
LKPH	Labor Kissan Party of Hindustan
MCC	Maoist Communist Centre
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
NSM	New Social Movement
NSMT	New Social Movement Theory
NSS	National Sample Survey
PWD	Public Works Department
SC	Schedule Caste
ST	Schedule Tribe
SUCI(C)	Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist)
UAPA	Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act



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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1. Introduction

Mao Zedong's legacy or Maoism, though always contentious and contradictory, has had a lasting global impact, as it not only laid the political foundation for the Chinese revolution but also provided a theory of global significance, at least during the 1960s and 1970s, which were known for global political and social upheaval. Mao's views resonated most strongly in Asian, Latin American, and African countries, the majority of which are classified as Third World (Liu, 2015). Accordingly, Indian discontented people are equally influenced by Maoism and it is constantly moving against the state with another name as Naxalism (Lovell, 2019).

The term 'Naxal' is derived from the name of the West Bengal locality of Naxalbari, where the movement began. The Naxals are far-left extremist communists who espouse Maoist political doctrine and ideology. The roots of the Naxals may be traced back to the Communist Party of India (Marxist) splitting in 1969, which resulted in the founding of the Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist) (Ali, 2015). Initially, West Bengal was the epicentre of the movement. Through the efforts of underground organizations like the Communist Party of India (Maoist), it moved into less developed areas of rural southern and eastern India, such as Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh, in later years. For the past ten years, it has primarily been made up of displaced tribals and locals battling against exploitation by huge Indian enterprises and unscrupulous local officials (Ghosh, 2011).

Naxal, Naxalite, and Naksalvadi are general designations for a variety of violent communist groups operating in various parts of India under various organizational

guises. They are commonly known as, or refer to themselves as, Maoists in the eastern states of mainland India (Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Odisha), although they are known by various names in southern areas like Andhra Pradesh (Kujur, 2008). The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act<sup>1</sup> of India has designated them as terrorist organisations (1967). The movement's leaders have been discovered with hideouts in China (Kujur, 2008). The Indian government established certain steps to stem immigration and rehabilitate the afflicted populace. And the issue is with the implementations at the ground level. The question now is how these laws and provisions can be effectively communicated to the separated masses (Ali, 2015).

Though Naxals claim to be fighting for the poor and oppressed people but the government of India sees it as a major internal security threat. It was claimed as the “biggest internal security threat” by the Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in 2009 (The Hindu, 2009).

The Maoist movement has spread to nine states in central and eastern India in recent years. In the states of Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Orissa, Jharkhand, and West Bengal, the Maoists have a considerable presence, while Madhya Pradesh, Assam, and Uttar Pradesh have a marginal presence (Kujur, 2013). The Maoists claim to be fighting for the rights of the marginalized, including the poor, Dalits, landless, and tribal indigenous people. They want a revolution, as well as a radical reorganization of the social, political, and economic systems (Kujur, 2013). The Maoists think that overthrowing the existing structure through violent attacks on the state is the only way for underprivileged communities to gain respect for their

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<sup>1</sup>The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) act, 1967 was enacted by Congress Government to tackle the issue of homeland security and to prosecute the ones involved in activities against the state or its subjects. The act gives the police power to detain anyone engaging in unlawful activities like aiding and abetting terrorists, funding terrorists, inciting anti-national feelings in the masses and others unlawful activities against the state.

rights (Ali, 2015). Various state governments have responded to this problem by launching security operations aimed at defeating the Maoist movement and aiming to restore law and order. The police in these states are backed up by paramilitary forces from the government. Joint operations between state and national forces are common, in part to resist its spreading in other parts of the county (Ali, 2015).

## **1.2. Literature Review**

The following part attempts to review and summarise key published works that are either directly or indirectly related to the current study. The Review of the related literature has been done with the following broad themes:-

### **1.2.1. Conceptual Framework**

Communism can be viewed as a type of social organization, a set of ideals, and a movement in the direction of those ideals and the type of social structure that would represent them. Communism aims to eliminate private property in the means of production, consumer goods, or both as a system of social organisation (Struhl, 2007). In doing so, it would strive to fulfil goals like a society that is rationally structured and just, one that prioritises social and communal welfare, one that is compassionate and cooperative and transcends individual competitiveness and egoism, and one that is egalitarian and classless in nature (ibid). In essence, communism proposes a society where everyone profits from labour equally and where the class system is eliminated through income redistribution (Rusu, 2019). Many various types of communist experiments have been tried throughout history, and numerous communist utopian concepts have been put forth. Religious and secular, austere and economically prosperous, celibate and sexually promiscuous communist movements and utopian plans have all existed (Struhl, 2007). They have also taken on authoritarian,

democratic, and libertarian guises. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the leading political groups were influenced by Marxist or anarchist intellectuals who, for the most part, felt that communism required a general social and political revolution (ibid).

The notion of communism may be traced back to the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, namely the 1948 book *Communist Manifesto* (Rusu, 2019). With the publication of this book, Marx and Engels established themselves as the foremost theorists of communist revolutionary movements (Struhl, 2007). They were instrumental in establishing the first communist international organisation in London in 1864, and their beliefs dominated communist activities throughout the latter half of the nineteenth and full twentieth centuries (ibid).

Communist movements were most successful in underdeveloped nations with widespread poverty, such as the Russian Empire and the Republic of China, despite Marxist theory's prediction that industrial societies were the most ripe for social revolution, either through peaceful transition or by force of arms (David, 2015). The Bolshevik Party took control of the Russian Revolution in 1917, and in 1922 it established the Soviet Union, the first self-declared socialist state in history (John, 2017). The Bolsheviks, who saw their battle as an international rather than a solely regional cause, fully embraced the ideas of proletarian internationalism and global revolution (David, 2015). The Soviet Union, during the Cold War, installed new Marxist-Leninist governments in Central and Eastern Europe after World War II and indirectly supported the rise of other communist regimes in the Americas, Asia, and Africa. This was to have a phenomenal effect on the spread of communism during the twentieth century (Thomas, 2007).

Karl Marx's influence may be found practically everywhere in the world. Similarly, Mao Zedong's legacy had a long-lasting effect on the world, at least during the 1960s and 1970s. The majority of the Third World nations in Asia, Latin America, and Africa were most affected by Mao's ideas (Liu, 2015). Similarly, Marxism in general and Maoism in particular, have had an equal impact on India's oppressed people, or what Marx called the "have-nots" (Banerjee, 2008).

The term "Naxals" or "Naxalism" comes from the name of the West Bengali village of Naxalbari, where the movement originally took birth. The Naxals are far-left, extremist communists who adhere to Maoist political theory (Ali, 2015). In India, Naxalism is an extended form of Maoism. Maoism is a communist philosophy that was developed by Mao Tse Tung. It is a tactic that combines armed rebellion, mass mobilisation, and tactical alliances to capture control of the government (D'Mello, 2009). Thus, the Communist or Marxist ideology that Mao used was derived from the writings of Karl Marx.

### **1.2.2. International influence of Maoism**

Liu (2015) argued that Maoism, has had a lasting global impact because it not only provided the theoretical framework for the Chinese revolution but also provided a theory of global significance, at least during the 1960s and 1970s, which were known for widespread political and social upheaval. The majority of the Third World nations in Asia, Latin America, and Africa were most receptive to Mao's ideas. Liu (2015) adds that Mao Zedong's legacy, which served as both the political foundation for the Chinese revolution and a revolutionary ideology, is being felt today around the world.

According to Lowe (1966), Maoist philosophy may be traced back to 1936 when Mao issued his pamphlet, Strategic Problems of the Revolutionary War of China. This



pamphlet attempted to give his concern about revolutionary behaviour a theoretical veneer. Lowe (1966) says Mao began to distance himself from the Soviet model since it was not universally applicable to China. China's unique historical conditions necessitated a similarly distinctive application of Marxist theory, one that would have to depart from the Soviet method.

Lowe (1966) says, during the civil war, Mao was more concerned with revolutionary actions than with Marxist theory. At the same time, he continued to emphasise theory as the knowledge that can be applied in the real world. He spent the most time delving into theory in relation to the Cheng Feng movement of 1942<sup>2</sup>. Mao summarised the relationship between Marxist theory and Chinese practice in this movement. Mao's main new focus was on two sorts of subjectivist deviation: (1) dogmatism, or an over-reliance on abstract theory, and (2) empiricism, or an over-reliance on experience. As a result, Mao developed his own philosophy during this time period which was later called Maoism (Lowe, 1966).

According to Meisner (1971), following the Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s, the Communist Party of China claimed to be the sole heir and successor of Joseph Stalin in terms of Marxism-Leninism and world communist intellectual leadership. Similarly, Scarlett (2012) says, beginning in 1962, the People's Republic of China articulated socialist modernity that positioned Chinese politics as a model for revolutionary struggle around the world. Further, he argues, the Communist Party of China used global symbols and global events to shape this new socialist modernity and to inform everyday politics. Global symbols were conveyed through rhetoric, propaganda, political speeches, mass meetings rallies, and Chinese and students

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<sup>2</sup>The Yan'an Rectification Movement, also known as the Cheng Feng movement, was the first ideological mass movement initiated by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), going from 1942 to 1945.

newspapers. The Chinese Communist Party furthermore assiduously recorded every anecdote, testimonial, or story that supposedly demonstrated China's importance around the world. Thus, through this period Mao's ideological framework full-fledgedly started to influence the world. Scarlett, (2012) says, after this period, African Liberation Movement (1960s), the French Student Movement (1968), and the War in Vietnam (1955-1975) was initiated.

According to Lovell (2019), the global influence of Maoism started from the time of the Cultural Revolution of 1966 itself and did not end with Mao's passing in 1976. Maoist-inspired movements have included, according to Lovell (2019) the Shining Path Insurgency, which paralyzed Peru in the 1980s, Nepal became a Maoist state, and in India, it is active even today. However, according to Liu (2015), Lovell (2019), and Scarlett, (2012), today Maoist ideology has spread almost throughout the world and more severely in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

### **1.2.3. Naxalism**

According to Lovell (2019), Maoism has had an impact on many different countries around the world, although in a different form and under a different name. It is known as Naxalism in India.

Guha (1982) says the Maoist radical movement began among West Bengal's landless farm labourers. The Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 required zamindars (landlords) to pay the tax directly to the government until the early 1950s. The zamindari system was eliminated during the 1950s land reforms, which re-distributed land from prior renters to the new class of Jotedars<sup>3</sup>. Sharecroppers and paid farm labourers cultivated the Jotedars' farms. Because most of the contracts were unregistered, the

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<sup>3</sup>Jotedars were wealthy peasants who comprised one layer of social strata in agrarian Bengal during the British rule in India.

sharecroppers' and labourers' lawful shares remained in jeopardy. By the mid-1960s, farm employment had become scarce, and many workers had moved to the forests. Gupta, (2004) further argues that they turned their methods towards radicalism as the predicament of sharecroppers and landless labourers intensified. Some rebelled against the Jotedars, attempting to forcefully take over the land in order to claim their portion of the produce. The Naxalite insurrection occurred in this environment.

He says Naxalism takes its name from a peasant rebellion in the village of Naxalbari in the Darjeeling District of West Bengal in May 1967, where Maoists were active. Gupta (2004) further says, three sharecroppers and 150 Communist Party of India (Marxist) workers looted 300 mounds of paddy from the granary of a jotedar on May 24, 1967, armed with sticks, bows, and arrows. The mob also tried to rob the Jotedar of his land paperwork. As a result, state enforcement officials raided the homes of these sharecroppers, resulting in the death of an officer. The police killed eleven sharecroppers' family members who were demonstrating against the Jotedar at Naxalbari bazaar the next day in response. Roy (2011) argues that the massacre of the state agency was the catalyst for hundreds of tribals and peasants to join the Naxalite revolt. The uprising lasted 52 days before the state retaliated with extraordinary repression, including torture, disappearances, and extrajudicial assassinations, killing 20 more radicals in all. The rebellion in Naxalbari against the security forces and Jotedars reverberated across India, generating enormous support among peasants.

While talking about the ideology of Naxalism Ahuya (2007) says, Charu Mazumdar, the Naxalite main ideologue, and his companions Kanu Sanyal and Jangal Santhal yelled slogans like “power flows via the barrel of the gun” and “China’s Chairman Mao is our chairman” in the late 1960s. According to Harris (2010), many people

become Maoists as a result of their radical speech. The campaign expanded to additional places in other states when the Chinese communist newspaper People's Daily praised it as "spring thunder" over India.

Gupta (2004) argues, Naxalism grew in popularity, and state CPI (M) offices in Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, as well as some CPI (M) offices in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, joined the movement. Following the crackdown, Naxalite leaders discussed whether to promote their ideas by violent means rather than legal political avenues. Some Naxalite leaders opted to pursue the revolution through military conflict after much disagreement, splintering the movement. Kanu Sanyal, who recruited certain members to pursue an armed fight against the state while CPI (M) pursued a political road, proclaimed the establishment of CPI (Marxist-Leninist) on May Day in 1969. The government responded with enemy-centric tactics as the insurgency grew fast in West Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. According to Gupta, (2004), to put down the increasing insurrection, the authorities launched Operation Steeplechase in 1971. From July 1 to August 15, 1971, a corps of the Indian Army with roughly 45,000 troops was stationed in Bengal's Midnapore, Purulia, Burdwan, and Birbhum districts; Bihar's Singhbhum, Dhanbad, and Santhal Parganas districts; and Orissa's Mayurbhanj district. While national and state police forces searched and swept through the communities in the woodlands, the army created the outer ring of a cordon that stretched across the districts on the three states' borders. The operation went well, and numerous Naxalite commanders have apprehended. Gupta (2004), argues, the state's victory over the armed rebellion, combined with Charu Mazumdar's death in police custody in July 1972, effectively put an end to Naxalism in West Bengal for the time being. Meanwhile, Kanu Sanyal, the armed architect of

insurgency has moved to Andhra Pradesh in order to broaden the movement's support base.

As far as the development of Naxalism is concerned, Palmer (1976) argues, large-scale unrest erupted in India in the mid-1970s as a result of the ruling Congress party's alleged involvement in large-scale corruption, electoral fraud, and the abuse of state power for personal gain. He further informs, as a result, from 1975 to 1977, Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi imposed a state-wide emergency. By 1980, over 30 Naxalite groups had emerged as a result of official repression, including pro-Lin Piao and anti-Lin Piao factions, as well as the People's War Group (PWG), which operated in rural areas of eastern India. The Naxalite PWG spread from Andhra Pradesh to the tribal areas of adjacent states including Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra. According to Gupta (2004), although the destitute and dispossessed Adivasis (tribals) did not share the Naxalites' general political goals, they backed the movement because they were victims of caste and class-based feudalism, particularly in the portions of Madhya Pradesh that are now part of the state of Chhattisgarh. Chauhan (2021), says the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) of Bihar, in addition to the PWG, was another prominent Naxalite faction that arose in 1980. State governments did not spend sufficient resources to counter the armed threat in the 1990s, and the MCC flourished as a result.

Palmer (1976) argues that, when the central government created Chhattisgarh, a largely tribal territory within Madhya Pradesh, in 2000, tribal agitation prompted a population-centric response. Similarly, the central government carved Jharkhand out of Bihar to allow indigenous communities to express themselves politically as well. Ahuya (2007), argues that the formation of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, on the other

hand, did not enhance the Adivasis social situation. Instead, these new states which were dominated by destitute tribal populations and had weak administrations proved excellent grounds for Maoist recruitment. The Naxalites had strengthened their bases in a number of states by the early 2000s. As a result, state government administration in several places came to a halt through the Panchayat (village court, a village-level judicial system), Public Works Department (PWD), and Agriculture and Irrigation Department. To fund themselves, the Naxalites placed levies on the movement of raw materials such as iron ore and bauxite as their rule grew. Subramanian (2010) says, in 2004, the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC), which was active in Bihar, and the People's War Group, which was active in Andhra Pradesh, merged to become the CPI (Maoist). After 2004, Naxalism developed quickly, and violence in Maoist-controlled areas increased, resulting in frequent clashes between Maoists and their sympathizers on the one side, and security forces on the other.

According to Guha (1982), because of the movement's geographical extension, rising support base in tribal and poor areas, and enhanced fighting capabilities of its members, the Naxalite insurgency has emerged as a severe menace. The Indian government sees the insurgency as primarily a matter of law enforcement and economic development and has responded with more population-centric measures such as increased development funding and police personnel in the affected areas. Guha (1982) further says, after years of fighting the insurgency, there is growing consensus among Indian strategic think tanks that a 'law and order approach, i.e., one that primarily relies on policing efforts, is unlikely to produce a long-term solution because it does not effectively counter Maoist armed capability or address the long-standing grievances of India's rural poor. In a democratic setting, the answer is still a mystery.

### **1.3. Rationale and Significance of the Study**

The Naxalite Movement is a long pending problem and it has been called a major internal security threat to India by the Indian Government. Though it is a major problem for India it is still unresolved. The Government has responded to the conflict in different ways, particularly to the Naxalbari conflict, and consequently, the intensity of the conflict has come down in the region. But, conflict is not fully neutralized, instead, it has caused new problems in the region and beyond. It depicts that the precise study of the causes of the conflict, drivers of the movement, and demand of people has not been done so far. It would be wrong to assume that there is no such work on the rise of the Naxalite movement but it would not be a mistake to claim that there is no comprehensive work on socioeconomic and political factors behind the rise of the movement. This research seeks to find out the root cause of the movement by analyzing the socio-economic and political factors behind it. In order to find out the solution for such kind of social movement this kind of research is necessary for the academic sphere. This study seeks to fill such an academic gap.

### **1.4. Research Objectives**

This study aims at understanding the factors responsible for the rise of the Naxalite Movement in India. The following objectives have been set in light of the above-mentioned problems:

- To analyze various concepts and approaches to Social Movement.
- To examine the history and development of the conflict in India.
- To understand the socio-political and economic drivers in the rise of the Naxalbari Movement.

### **1.5. Research Questions**

On the basis of the above-mentioned objectives, the following questions have been framed:-

- What are the various concepts and approaches to study social movements?
- How did the Naxalite Movement emerge and spread across India?
- What are the socio-political and economic causes of the rise of the Naxalbari Movement?

### **1.6. Methodology and Database**

This study has mostly used the qualitative approach in order to achieve the aforementioned objectives. Due to the fact that the qualitative approach is better capable of evaluating attitudes, subjectivities, views, and behaviour (Goddard and Melville, 2004). According to Creswell (1994), qualitative research is “...an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting” (Creswell, 1994, pp.1-2). Accordingly, Yılmaz (2013), defines qualitative research as “an emergent, inductive, interpretive and naturalistic approach to the study of people, cases, phenomena, social situations, and processes in their natural settings in order to reveal in descriptive terms the meanings that people attach to their experiences of the world” (Yılmaz, 2013, p.312).

According to Creswell (2013), there are five Qualitative approaches to inquiry, namely, Narrative Research, Phenomenological Research, Grounded Theory Research, Ethnographic Research, and Case Study Research. In this study narrative research has been incorporated. Czarniawska (2004) defines narrative research as a specific type of qualitative design in which “narrative is understood as a spoken or



written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected”.

### 1.6.1. Study Area

As the Naxalite Movement first emerged in Naxalbari the proposed study will particularly focus on the Naxalbari Community Development Block of Darjeeling. Naxalbari is located in the Terai region, near the base of the Himalayan Mountain Range. Nepal is located to the west of Naxalbari, across the Mechi River. Farmland, tea farms, woodlands, and tiny communities cover the entire stretch of areas surrounding Naxalbari. In addition, Naxalbari is strategically located at India's northernmost tip, bordering Nepal on the west, Sikkim, and Bhutan on the north, and East Pakistan on the south. China, on the other hand, isn't far behind (Banerjee, 1980).

**Map No. 1.1. Naxalbari in India**



Source: Rai, 2013;2

### 1.6.2: Data Collection Methods

A research design is a plan for gathering and analyzing data in a way that is relevant to the research project. The research design is the overarching method used to integrate the many components of the study in a coherent and logical manner,

ensuring that the research problem of understanding people in a social situation is properly addressed. It serves as a plan for data gathering, measurement, and analysis. Thus, in order to show the research design and data collection method for the proposed study the following section is presented.

**Table No. 1.1: Data Collection Methods**

	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Sources of Data</b>	<b>Methods of Data Collection</b>
1	To analyze various concepts and approaches to Social Movement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Published Books</li> <li>● Journal articles</li> <li>● Newspaper Articles</li> </ul>	Literature based on the various kind of Social movements around the world and the concepts, typologies, elements, and approaches of social movement, etc. have been reviewed to understand the Naxalite Movement in India.
2	To examine the history and development of the conflict in India.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Published books</li> <li>● Published articles</li> <li>● Newspaper articles</li> <li>● Reports</li> <li>● Biographies</li> <li>● Autobiographies</li> <li>● Primary Data</li> </ul>	<p>Literature based on the origin of the Naxalite Movement and the causes of the Movement, etc. have been reviewed to understand the history, causes, ideology, demand, drivers, and development of the Movement.</p> <p>For the primary data, interviews has be taken with old aged people, social activists, writers, scholars, and common people of the region.</p>
3	To understand the socio-political and economic drivers in the rise of the Naxalbari Movement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Published books</li> <li>● Journal Articles</li> <li>● Primary Data</li> </ul>	<p>Literature based on the socio-political and economic background of India and West Bengal and Naxalbari in particular, before the movement, has been reviewed to understand the root causes of the Movement.</p> <p>For the primary data, interviews have been taken with the old aged people of the region, social activists, writers, scholars, and common people.</p>

This study has used data from both primary and secondary sources. Similar to how there are numerous primary data collection techniques used, but for the purpose of this study in order to understand the crucial component of the issue, unstructured interviews in the form of formal dialogues have been used. In order to collect primary data interviews have been conducted to acquire critical information from key persons including movement participants, old aged local people, politicians, movement participants, common people, scholars, writers, etc.

For the purpose of choosing a sample, building knowledge, and participating in the study, snowball sampling has been used. Due to the necessity, complexity, and availability of respondents and appropriate samples, a total of 25 samples were interviewed for the purpose of this study. The conviction that a sample must be representative guided the choice of samples. The real names of some of the respondents have been changed while the names of some respondents have been written as same as the original.

### **1.7. Limitations of the Study**

With the use of the data gathered during the fieldwork, the current study aims to provide insight into the factors that contributed to the growth of the Naxalite Movement. While doing so, a number of limitations were faced by the research that needed to be taken into account. The Movement, which began in the small village of Naxalbari, quickly spread to other parts of West Bengal, but due to time and cost limitations, data from the entire state could not be collected. In addition, some of the interview subjects showed little interest in sharing their personal experiences or stories, possibly because they felt uncomfortable talking about such a sensitive subject. Additionally, Bengali is the language of communication in Naxalbari, and a

large portion of the population is unable to grasp Hindi, English, or Nepali. The researcher's inability to speak and understand the Bengali language caused another constraint.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Social Movements: Concepts, Typologies, and Approaches**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

The Naxalite Movement, which began in 1967 in Naxalbari was a social movement that aimed to reform the socio-political and economic structure of the larger society as a whole and Naxalbari in particular. Therefore, it is essential to understand the concepts, theories, typologies, and characteristics of social movements previously framed by earlier scholars in order to understand the movement. This chapter aims to conceptualize social movements and also discusses some important approaches that have been proposed and debated over the years, both internationally and in India. The primary objective of this chapter is, however, to provide a theoretical framework for the current study.

#### **2.2. Conceptualizing Social Movement**

Social movements are usually viewed as “collective” or “organized” activities that aim to reform societal institutions, relationships, and significant institutions such as views, attitudes, and values (Ghosh, 2020). They might, on the other hand, try to prevent any changes to the above-said societal structures (Ghosh, 2020). Any collaborative effort or action, though, might not result in a social revolution. Only under specific circumstances such as a change-oriented mindset, a practical program, formal organization, feasible strategy, effective leadership, a shared ideology, etc. can motivate people to move (Doug & Snow, 1997). Crowds, masses, and mobs are examples of collective behaviours or actions that are not considered social movements because they are less integrated and rarely continue over time compared to the latter.

However, compared to any associational or political club activity, a social movement may frequently be less organized (Thomson, 2008).

Lorenz von Stein, a German sociologist, coined the term “Social Movement” in 1850 in his book *History of the French Social Movement from 1789 to the Present* (1850) (Karki, 2012). However, academics have no agreement on how to trace the history of Social Movements. With the increasing dynamics of social change and modernization, the discourse of social movement is becoming more popular and may become an unavoidable discipline of social sciences (Karki, 2012). This is why the modern period has been described as a world of the social movement world (Menon and Subberwal, 2019). Although social movements have long served to articulate grievances and claim rights, the prominent space that they now occupy on the global canvas is truly intriguing. Passionately contested issues surrounding people’s concerns for their rights and welfare, including those of women, Dalits, queer, people with disabilities, farmers, ethnic and religious groups, and tribes, provide the glue around which they are mobilized for collective action, in large, locally, nationally, or internationally (Menon and Subberwal, 2019).

Despite a large body of literature on the subject, a clear and cohesive definition of social movements that are widely accepted remains unclear (Diani, 1992). Social movements encompass a wide range of social and political phenomena, making it difficult to define them (Shah, 2004). The term social movement became common in the early nineteenth century, particularly in European countries. This was a time of social upheaval. The term was coined by political leaders and authors who were concerned with emancipating the exploited classes and establishing a new society by altering property relationships (Shah, 2004).

Movements have no clear beginning or end, and their basic nature can change over time, making definitions even more difficult. The terms associated with social movements, such as protest, collective action, or even the social movement itself are frequently used terms and their application often varies depending on the context (Menon, 2019). These factors make defining a social movement a difficult task (Crossley, 2002).

Most social movements, however, can be defined by three or more of the following axes: collective or joint action; change-oriented goals or claims; some extra or non-institutional action; some degree of organization; and some degree of temporal continuity (Snow et al., 2004). Therefore, social movements are a form of collective action. Collective action is defined as any action taken by two or more people in order to achieve a common goal. It encompasses a wide range of human behaviour (Menon and Subberwal, 2019). Furthermore, a non-institutional nature of a social movement, such as sloganeering outside a government office or unlawfully occupying public spaces to guarantee that their demands are met is often used to characterize it (ibid).

A social movement is a sort of collective behaviour as well as a collective action. Collective conduct refers to extra-institutional, group problem-solving behaviour that includes a wide range of behaviours, from protests to disaster response, from broad or diffused phenomena like fads and crazes to social movements and even revolution (Snow, 2014).

Another feature of social movements on which there is general consensus is that social movements aim at either bringing about change or resisting change (Menon and Subberwal, 2019). Further, almost any definition of social movement reflects the idea that social movements are inseparably linked to social change. They do not include

people's activities as members of stable social groups with well-established, unquestionable structures, norms, and values. Members of social movements' behaviour do not reflect the assumption that the social order will remain essentially unchanged. Instead, it reflects the belief that if people work together to achieve a goal, they can bring about or prevent social change. They are aware that the movement's goal influences their behaviour: to bring about a change in the way things have always been done or to prevent such a change from occurring (Turner, 2020).

Another important feature of social movements on which there is broad consensus is that they are not spontaneous uprisings, but rather are primarily organized. An organization would have a leader and a working structure based on clearly defined goals and ideologies. However, it is necessary to mention that this claim has been debated (Piven and Richard, 1977).

As far as the components of social movements are concerned, objectives, ideology, programs, leadership, and organization are important (Shah, 2004). They are interdependent and influence one another. The movement's goals shift from specific local issues to broad goals for social transformation. Movements that begin with broad goals may become slowed down in the process by one or two specific issues (Shah, 2020). Ideologies, like everything else, evolve. It gives direction to evolving strategies and programs while also keeping participants together by cultivating feelings of 'we-ness'. To mobilize the people, various strategies and programs are developed. They keep the movement going for a long time (Shah, 2004). Leadership that emerges or is initiated during the growth of the movement is critical in articulating ideology and objectives, evolving strategies and programs, and maintaining the spirit of the participants (Shah, 2004).



### **2.3. Typologies of Social Movements**

Depending on the kind and scope of the change they seek, sociologists classify social movements into a number of different categories. This typology helps in our knowledge of the variations among the various categories of social movements that have existed in the past and still do so today (Snow & Soule, 2009).

#### **2.3.1. Herbert Blumer's Typology**

Herbert Blumer was the first scholar to make a notable attempt to categorize social movements (Chatterjee, 2020). He classifies social movements as (a) General Social Movements, (b) Specific Social Movements and (c) Expressive Social Movements (Blumer, 1946).

- a. General Social Movements:** General social movements have their roots in 'gradual and pervasive changes in the values of people-changes which can be called cultural drifts' (Blumer, 1946). The beliefs of the people are altered by such cultural drifts, particularly how they view themselves and what rights and privileges they have. People's resulting dissatisfaction may be considered a possible driver of broad social movements (Chatterjee, 2020). These movements are characterized by their disorganization, lack of recognized membership and established leadership, and lack of direction and control (Chatterjee, 2020). The examples of these types of movements given by Blumer are: Women's movements, movements for the rights of children, etc.
  
- b. Specific Social Movements:** These types of social movements arise out of general social movements (Blumer, 1946). When the vague and hazy self-conceptions coming from the cultural drift crystallise into particular goals, a movement is created. It has a clear target or endpoint. It creates structure and

organization. Specific social movements take on the characteristics of society instead of general social movements, which only influence mass behaviour. Such movements are characterized by recognized and approved leadership with distinct membership (Blumer, 1946). Blumer gives reform and revolutionary movements as examples of this type of social movement.

- c. **Expressive Social Movements:** According to Blumer (1946), expressive social movements ‘do not seek to change the institutions of the social order or its objective character. Further, these types of movements occur when people are unhappy and disturbed yet unable to act, which is another way to say that they arise when people are frustrated. The only available option is purely expressive behaviour since they are unable to let go of their tension in the direction of some genuine change in the social order (Blumer, 1946). Blumer cites religious movements and fashion movements as examples of these types of movements.

### **2.3.2. Rudolf Herberle’s Typology**

Rudolf Herberle’s typology is a critique of the collective behaviour approach to social movements of the Chicago School, particularly Park and Burgess, and Blumer (Chaterjee, 2020). According to him, only mass imitations of attitudes and behaviours do not constitute a social movement. A social movement must start with clear notions of group identification and unity in order to progress (Herberle, 1949). Genuine social movements, according to him, are attempts to make “*fundamental changes in the social order, especially in the core institutions of property and labour relationship*”, (Herberle, 1949: 348-349). Despite mentioning the institutions of property and labour relations, he believes that a true social movement must also go beyond the simple

“economic” or “political” program and include crucial socially relevant concerns (Chatterjee, 2020). Heberle (1968) categorized social movements into the following categories to reflect distinct sociological realities:

- a. Movements of Limited Goals:** These movements have a modest aim, and a small number of individuals participate in them. Examples of these are protest movements, which are typically local, regional, or national in scope. Although these movements are small in scale, they can still take on the characteristics of mass movements that aim to address the complaints of certain communities. Such movements frequently have a mass quality due to the experience and perception of discrimination as a group category (Heberle, 1968). Negro movement and the Tribal movements are examples of such movements.
- b. Movements Aiming at Comprehensive and Fundamental Change:** This kind of movement seeks to radically change the social structure. As a result, they consistently draw a sizable crowd of people from all facets of society. The broader scope of such movements may drive them to transcend the borders of any state or nation. These movements qualify as actual mass movements with significant historical significance because of their wider coverage (Heberle, 1968).
- c. Socio-Psychological Types:** Social movements can be categorized socio-psychologically according to the many driving forces behind the participants. Heberle (1968:440) categorized social movements according to this foundation as follows:

- a. The value-rational “spiritual community” or “fellowship” of supporters of a movement's practical goals and the validity of its founding principles.
- b. The emotionally impactful “fellowship” of a charismatic leader.
- c. The association for pursuing personal interests that are rationally motivated by purpose.

Heberle (1968) says, during the course of any given social movement, there may be a transition and change from one kind to the other or this type of social movement frequently represents a combination or mix and match of all these qualities.

### **2.3.3. Neil J. Smelser’s Typology**

According to Neil J. Smelser (1962), social movements are a specific type of collective action motivated by certain types of generalized beliefs. He divides social movements into two types: norm-oriented and value-oriented movements (Ghosh, 2020).

- a. **Value-oriented movements:** A value-oriented movement, according to Smelser, is a “collective attempt to restore, protect, modify, or create values in the name of a generalized belief” (Smelser, 1962). These words imply that it is a movement aimed at restoring old and dormant values, protecting and sustaining current values, and constructing new values for the future. All of these goals, however, can be combined into a single value-oriented movement (Chatterjee, 2020). The ethnic movement, political revolutions, nationalistic movements, etc. are examples of such types of movements.

**b. Norm-oriented movement:** In contrast, this movement seeks to “restore, protect, modify, or create norms in the name of a generalized belief” (Smelser, 1962). The participants of this movement may either try to influence norms in a direct fashion or persuade and pressurize the government or other public agencies to do so. Examples of norm-norm-oriented movements, according to Smelser (1992), are the feminist movement, reform movement, and farmer’s movement in the Indian context.

#### **2.3.4. Joseph R. Gusfield’s Typology**

Gusfield (1968) classified social movements as directed or undirected based on their organizational structure and the nature of their associational networks. Directed movements are distinguished by organized and structured groups. Directed movements have distinct programs, a formal leadership structure, a clear ideology, and intended objectives (Gusfield, 1968). The undirected phase of a movement is distinguished by its changing nature, in which perspectives, norms, and values are reshaped. It lacks a clear and distinct associational context. Both types of participants are partisans of a belief. They must be members of an organization in the former case, but not in the latter (Ghosh, 2020).

According to Gusfield (1968), the classification of directed and undirected social movements is more than a typology; it is a depiction of the life course of any single social movement. They can be thought of as two parts of a social movement. Every movement begins in the undirected or unstructured and unorganized phase and progresses to the directed phase, where it gains organizational strength and formal structure (Gusfield, 1968).

Additionally, Gusfield (1968) has also attempted to categorize social movements based on how they intend to achieve their goals. He has classified movements into two types based on this: public policy-oriented movements and private persuasion-oriented movements (Chaterjee, 2020). A public policy movement seeks to effect change in the rules of the government or other public institutions (Gusfield, 1968). On the other hand, a private persuasion-oriented movement attempts to bring about reform and change in the behaviour of people by persuading them to take action while ignoring the use of public institutions as agents of control (Gusfield, 1968).

### 2.3.5. David Aberle's Typology

Anthropologist David Aberle (1966) established a four-part categorization of social movements based on two dimensions: the levels and the degree of change sought by social movements. The scope or extent of the change any movement is aiming to achieve is indicated by the level of the change sought. Either at the individual or group level is possible. A social movement could aim for partial or complete transformation. He divided movements into the four categories of transformative, reformative, redemptive, and alternative on the basis of these approaches (Aberle, 1996). A table has been set down to further clarify the point.

**Table No 2.1: Aberle's Classification of Social Movements**

Degree of Change Sought	Level of change sought	
	Individual	Group
Total	Redemptive movements	Transformative Movements
Partial	Alternative Movements	Reformative movements

Source: Chatterjee 2020; 32

While transformative movements, such as radical political parties and revolutionaries, seek entire change at the group level, reformative movements, such as those of many

women’s organisations, seek partial change at the same level. Redemptive movements, such as most religious cult movements, seek whole individual change, whereas alternative movements, such as ecological sustainability movements, seek partial individual change (Chatterjee, 2020).

**Table No. 2.2: Summary of the various types of Social Movement**

Scholar/Author	Types/Classification	Postulations
Herbert Blumer	a. General Social Movements	Social Movements have their root in gradual and pervasive changes in the values of the people.
	b. Specific Social Movements	When the vague and hazy self-conceptions coming from the cultural drift crystallise into a particular goal, a movement is created.
	c. Expressive Social Movements	These types of movements occur when people are unhappy and disturbed yet unable to act.
Rudolf Heberle	a. Movements of Limited Goals	Movement with a limited goal and participated by a small group of people.
	b. Movements Aiming at Comprehensive and Fundamental Change	This type of movement seeks to radically change the social structure.
	c. Socio-Psychological	This kind of movement is supported by the value rational spiritual community, the emotionally impactful ‘fellowship’ of a charismatic leader and the association for pursuing personal interests that are rationally motivated by purpose.
Neil J. Smelser	a. Value-Oriented	This type of movement is a collective attempt to restore, protect, modify, or create values in the name of a generalised belief.
	b. Norm-Oriented	This type of movement seeks to restore, protest, modify or create norms in the name of generalised belief.
Joseph R. Gusfield	a. Public Policy-Oriented Movements	This movement seeks to effect change in the rules of the government or other public institutions.
	b. Private Persuasion-Oriented Movements	This type of movement attempts to bring about reform and change in people's behaviour by persuading them to take action while ignoring the use of public institutions as agents of control.
David Aberle	a. Transformative	Transformative movements, such as radical political parties and revolutionaries, seek entire change at the group level
	b. Reformative	These movements like those of many women's organizations seek partial change at the group level.
	c. Redemptive	Redemptive movements, such as most religious cult movements, seek whole individual change.
	d. Alternative	This type of movement, such as ecological sustainability movements, seeks partial individual change

Society is a complex phenomenon. Sociologists engaged in the study of social movements encounter many challenges as those concerned in the study of an abstract phenomenon such as society. When attempting to categorize social movements, the challenge may get multiplied. There is considerable confusion in the academic community about the conceptual and empirical foundations of social movement classification. As a result, there is no distinct typology of social movements. Different scholars have assigned different typologies based on their understanding. Herbert Blumer has divided social movements into General Social Movements, Specific Social Movements, and Expressive Social Movements. Similarly, Rudolf Herberle has divided it into Movements of Limited Goals, Movements Aiming at Comprehensive and Fundamental Change, and Socio-Psychological. On the other hand, Neil J. Smelser has divided it into A Value-Oriented Movement and a Norm-Oriented Movement. Another scholar Joseph R. Gusfield has divided it into Public Policy-Oriented Movements and Private Persuasion-Oriented Movements. David Aberle has divided it into Transformative, Reformatory, Redemptive and Alternative.

#### **2.4. Theoretical Approaches to Social Movement**

Over the last few decades researchers have questioned the causes and consequences of various types of social movements. They have developed various theories to explain the emergence, growth, and maturation of social movements in various parts of the world. This section examines some of the major theories of social movements that have been proposed over the years, as well as how these theories can explain the birth and growth of specific social movements.

Beginning in the 1950s, the United States and Europe witnessed a surge in protests and demonstrations against governments, government policies, and existing social



practices (Sen, 2016). There was the civil rights movement, the anti-Vietnam war movement, the feminist and gender equality movement, the environmental movement, and so on in the United States alone. Europe also saw its own versions of the feminist, environmental, and anti-colonial movements. With the emergence of these social movements, the question of why social movements emerge and grow arose. Social scientists, particularly American and Western European academics, attempted to develop theories to explain the origins of these movements and predict their future trajectory (Sen, 2016).

The European practice has been more firmly framed by the Marxist tradition of philosophy of history, whereas the American tradition, while equally indebted to Marx in some ways, has adopted a more empirical, scientific, and, to some extent, empiricist frame (Crossley, 2002). On the one hand, the main focus of European thinkers has been on studying social movements in the context of the fundamental conflicts and history of society. American theorists, on the other hand, use empirical data to study a variety of social movements, such as civil rights or feminism, with less emphasis on their historical background (Crossley, 2002).

Crossley (2002) divides social movement theories between the pre-1970s and post-1970s. More details of the division are mentioned in the following table (Crossley, 2002):

**Table No. 2.3. Four Traditions of Movement Analysis**

	<b>USA</b>	<b>Europe</b>
<b>Pre-1970s</b>	Collective behaviour	Marxism
<b>1970s onwards</b>	Resource mobilization/political process	New Social Movements

Source - Crossley 2002

However since there is no particular definition of social movement there is no certain approach to analyze it. In another word, the perspective on social movement varies from scholar to scholar. A large body of literature addressing various conceptual views and theoretical traditions has arisen in the social sciences today. However, some popular approaches previously framed and discussed by scholars have been discussed in the following sub-sections.

#### **2.4.1. Marxist Approach**

One of the first viewpoints on social movements is, probably, this one. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' analyses of the crisis of capitalism and the broader state of political economy in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries served as the impetus for the emergence of communist movements throughout the world (Ghosh, 2020). In addition, Marxists attempt to further class conflict in capitalistic nations in addition to just providing a critical analysis of how capital is reproduced, its profit is maintained, and its crises occur in the capitalist economy (Gamble 1999). Marxism continues to inspire working-class movements around the world despite the huge democratic transition of the communist world over the past few decades (Hough, 1997).

Marxist analysis of social movements focuses on a variety of materialistic orientations and repression (Ghosh, 2020). According to this viewpoint, social movements are more than just outward manifestations of minor issues; rather, they involve larger structural problems affecting the entire political and economic system. Thus, it links social movements to the fact that social injustice and exploitation exist in human society, which leads to a class struggle and creates the possibility for a revolution (ibid). Additionally, according to the Marxist class, a dispute emerges from the

production and distribution system and is located in the so-called “base” economic structure of any society (ibid).

Marxists have a tendency to think that a class conflict has existed historically ever since he wrote about it in *The Communist Manifesto*. The actual class struggles were those between a freeman and a slave, a patrician and a plebe, a lord and a serf, a guild master and a journeyman, and the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Marxists attempt to exploit class conflicts to enact revolutionary social change after picturing the underlying processes of class inequality. Marxists firmly believe that class revolution is feasible if the Communist Party and its organs employ the proper strategies under favourable material conditions (Aarons, 1970). The Marxist method of studying social movements in this context places emphasis on certain dialectical processes that can motivate movement participants to start a resistance movement (Barker et al., 2013). Dialectical totality instead of functional totality, dialectical contradiction instead of a straightforward binary contrast, dialectical coherence instead of logical coherence, and praxis (an activity that changes the world) instead of just another practical activity are some of the features of these processes (Ghosh, 2020)

#### **2.4.2. Resource Mobilization Theory**

With the arrival of resource mobilization theorists starting in the 1970s, perspectives on social movements has taken on a new trajectory (Ghosh, 2020). According to the resource mobilization theory, having access to the right resources is crucial for the emergence of a social movement. According to this theory, some members of a community may be able to gather the resources needed to take action in order to address their complaints (Sen, 2016). This theory argues that the success of a social movement depends on the strength of resources that its participants or leaders can

draw in a particular context. In this sense, “resources” refer to things like cash, labour, social position, education, knowledge, the backing of the media and political elites, etc. (Dobson, 2001). Particularly in the modern world, Charles Tilly (1978) saw growing “political opportunities” for citizen resistance. This is due to the fact that the “state welfare” policy and the rising popularity of parliamentary politics have legitimized petitions, protests, strikes, mass gatherings, and other similar democratic activities.

Earlier conceptions of social movements are sharply criticized by the resource mobilization theory, which contends that factors like class rivalry, structural deprivation, structural tensions, and relative deprivation cannot always be the cause of social movements. This is because no social movement will likely survive or take off without significant resources, such as willing participants, competent leadership, necessary funding, organizational stability, management skills, and media techniques (Macionis, 2012). Additionally, digital platforms and tools like YouTube, social media, the internet, Facebook, and Twitter have been essential in this situation (Preston, 2011). Participants' responses regarding their level of motivation for joining a movement have an impact on how long it lasts. In order to effectively inspire, mobilize, and manage movement participants so that they maintain their alliance with the organizations, planning, manoeuvring, and resource management are required (Ghosh, 2020).

#### **2.4.3. Deprivation Theory**

The deprivation theory argued that some social movements emerge when individuals or groups of individuals in society believe they are being denied access to a particular good, service, or resource (McAdam & Zald, 1987). There are two subcategories of

deprivation theory: absolute deprivation and relative deprivation. The proponents of absolute deprivation looked at these complaints of the impacted group separately from that group's standing in society. Relative deprivation advocates, on the other hand, believed that a group was in a worse situation than another group in that society ((McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1987). Further, these theories are based on the socio-psychological stress that individuals may feel as a result of negatively comparing their current circumstances to their reference groups, their former situations, or their future prospects (Menon & Subberwal, 2019). Relative deprivation is a state in which a person uses certain reference points as a standard by which to measure how well off they are. The collective behaviour of people is encouraged by this analogy. Relative deprivation theories are a variation of the collective behaviour tradition (Menon & Subberwal, 2019). According to Aberle (1966), relative deprivation is the disparity between realistic expectations and reality. According to him, social movements are built on this. Ted Gurr (1980) expanded on the idea by defining relative deprivation in terms of expectations and perceived ability. He asserts that “relative deprivation is a difference between expectations and perceived capabilities involving three sets of values: economic conditions, political power, and social status”. According to these viewpoints, relative deprivation causes stress, which promotes collective behaviour.

#### **2.4.4. Structural-Functional Approach**

The structural-functional approach, a significant sociological theory that gained popularity about 1960, gave the study of social movements a new perspective. This method of explaining a social movement prompts three questions (Ghosh, 2020):

1. What causes social movements to grow?
2. What functions do they serve?
3. Why do they continue to exist?

According to structural functionalists, the primary causes of a social movement are structural exploitation and stresses, in response to the first query. According to scholars like William Kornhauser, Robert Nisbet, and Edward Shils, social movements happen as a result of the unequal distribution of material resources at both the micro (class, race, and gender) and macro levels (nation-state level) (Ghosh, 2020). Contrary to Marxists, some theorists of this school also identify non-economic aspects to explain social movements, such as psychological characteristics, elite power struggles, and manipulation. They also emphasize issues such as social barriers to material achievement, unfair governmental laws, and bureaucratic procedures that favour one group (corporations) over another (workers), as well as systemic injustices and inequalities (Smith and Fetner, 2007). Social movements against oppressive law, exploitative programs, and anti-democratic policies emerge as a result of such a state of affairs in a mass society. Social movements also occur when a state is unable to meet the escalating expectations of its citizens or when the performance gap between those aspirations and reality increases (Huntington, 1968).

Second, structural-functionalists believe that social movements are useful to society because they help to stabilize and reestablish social chaos because they examine structures in terms of their roles within the system (Ghosh, 2020). Contrary to Marxist theory, this perspective emphasizes the consensus-based nature of social movements. Deprivation and strains may therefore only lead to social movements when everyone involved develops a shared sense of their fear, excitement, and frustration. This creates a feeling of mass discontent. Following, the Durkheimian notion of ‘collective conscience or feeling of unity and ‘moral density’ or frequent interaction, structural-functionalists argue that social movements significantly intensify the unity and solidarity of participants (Serge, 2016). While these reasons may be valid in some

circumstances, it is undeniable that social movements may also result in bloodshed and conflict (Agnew, 1987).

Lastly, structural-functionalists contend that the resolution of a dispute or the acceptance of demand does not indicate the end of a social movement. This is because a new social order encourages new structural injustices and new social tensions (Ghosh, 2020). This approach emphasizes the continuity of social structures above their change by making this argument. Functionalists, in contrast to Marxists, acknowledge an adaptive change in the deprivation and strain structures when society shifts from a traditional to a modern sort of mass society (Ghosh, 2020).

#### **2.4.5. New Social Movements**

New Social movement is not a specific theory but rather a collection of relatively different theories that emerged in the 1960s, particularly in various West European nations (Sen, 2016). These theories emerged in response to the limitations of traditional Marxist theories for understanding collective action (Buechler, 1995). The traditional Marxist paradigm of examining collective action largely from an economic standpoint is abandoned in New Social Movement Theories (NSMT). These theories instead focus on other sources of collective action that have their roots in politics, ideology, and culture. Additionally, in order to comprehend the causes of collective action, NSMT focuses on new drivers of collective identities, such as race, gender, and sexuality (Buechler, 1995). The philosophical writings of philosophers like Jurgen Habermas and Alain Touraine frequently serve as the foundation for NSMT. Since a large portion of the workforce in postmodern nations is educated, skilled, white-collar, and employed in the service sector, these theorists attempt to develop theories that may explain how these societies behave (Sen, 2016). Contrary to

employees in the “modern” society of the past, who had to deal with concerns related to exploitation by the ruling classes, postmodern workers of society’s primary challenge is to maintain a balance between life and work issues (Sen, 2016). Additionally, the New Social Movement theory operates within an ideological framework that is characterized by questions of individual rights in contrast to the rights of the state over its citizens. According to NSMT, this conflict between the rights of a person and those of the state takes place against a backdrop of postmodern societal values that are based on a need for belonging, self-actualization, and personal fulfilment (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1987). In a nutshell, traditional social movement theories, many of which were based in Marxist ideology, were primarily concerned with issues relating to the exploitation of one social class by another; in contrast, NSMT is more concerned with issues relating to life-work balance that affect specific citizens (Sen, 2016).

#### **2.4.6. The Indian Approach to Social Movement**

Gandhi’s method of studying social movements, both old and new, has been discovered to be possibly distinct from other methods. Social movements largely have end-directed issues that they address. However, Gandhians hold that any social movement can advance holistic and progressive (moral value/ethical) forces by combining both aims and tactics (Garada, 2016). Gandhians believe that social conflict should be understood in terms of the competing parties’ different interests, particular values, and degrees of Himsa (violence/hatred) toward one another (Garada, 2016). Gandhians aim to overcome the dilemma culturally rather than through the structural critique of modernity and western civilization. They are opposed to western hedonism. It is important to note that Gandhi was not anti-science; rather, he was opposed to scientific advancements that are against humanity (Garada, 2016).



Gandhian formation of collective actions-struggle against peasant exploitation, class repression, British rule, untouchability, gender discrimination, etc. in India and South Africa-thus formed as a distinct one (Garada, 2016). Western theoretical approaches like political economic theory, relative deprivation theory, and structural strain theory are testified to by the social movements Gandhi led while he was alive, both in India and abroad, as well as by Gandhians after Gandhi but without using violence. On the social movement, Gandhi led in India and Africa, there is just a handful, but they are among the most significant works of literature (Ghosh, 2020).

The recommended strategies and methods of Mahatma Gandhi for social movements were largely based on his own experiences, first in South Africa and then in India. The Gandhian approach recommends pursuing a goal by deliberate engagement, reciprocal cooperation, public involvement, organization, seeking truth through newspaper writings, and ultimately achieving Satyagraha (Ghosh, 2020)

Indian scholars, in the 1970s and early 1980, engaged with older theories such as Marxist and collective behaviour theories. According to Oommen (2010), Indian scholarship on social movements since the 1980s has largely agreed with existing conceptualizations/theorizations of social movements, depending on the theoretical orientations they adopt- structural-functional or Marxist. Despite the fact that they do not claim or make any conceptual/theoretical advancements. They contribute significantly to a better understanding of the empirical situation in India (Oommen, 2010).

Early theorists in India, like those in the West, saw Marxist theory as the foundation for understanding social movements. However, as in the West, as time passed, more and more thinkers identified Marxist theory's limitations in explaining the highly

varied and complex fault lines of contemporary Indian society (Fuchs and Linkenbach, 2003). M.S.A Rao, who edited two volumes on social movements (1978-1979) and included essays on significant movements such as peasant, tribal, and backward classes, was an early study that employed the Marxist approach to analyze social movements (Menon and Subberwal, 2019).

Reform, transformation, and revolution are the three sorts of movements that M.S.A. Roa identified based on the various degrees of structural change they bring about. He claims that reform movements can have similar effects, including small shifts in the value system and ensuing changes to the nature of the bonds between people. The movements that bring about structural changes on a middle level between revolutionary movements that bring about major societal changes are called transformation movements. The level of conflict within each type of movement is yet another factor used to categorize groups. He claimed that conflict is moderate in reform movements and is more intense in transformation movements while being an integral characteristic of revolutionary movements because it is frequently founded on class struggle (Menon and Subberwal, 2019).

Similar to this, Ghanshyam Shah examined the participants' class backgrounds in his study of the student movement and showed how it affected their objectives and approaches. Shah further divided social movements into revolt, rebellion, reform, and revolution based on their goals or the kind of change they needed to bring about (Menon and Subberwa, 2019). Rao and Shah, however, later departed from this structural-functionalist perspective, which saw equilibrium as the fundamental state of society and social movements as a disruption of it, and later they were influenced by the deprivation approach (Baviskar, 2010).

During the 1970s and 1980s India witnessed a variety of social movements which gave birth to different perspectives to understand it (Menon and Subberwal, 2019). In India, it became more clear that Marxist theory could not account for the complex, diverse struggles of the 1970s and 1980s. According to Omvedt (1993), there are numerous social movements and offsprings in modern-day India that are not typical class struggles but instead centre on caste, ethnicity, community, or gender-related issues. These are commonly referred to as “New Social Movements” (Omvedt, 1993).

Ramchandra Guha’s 1989 book *The Unquiet Woods*, which examined the Chipko movement, contributed to yet another change in movement studies in India during the 1990s (Menon and Subberwal, 2019). He emphasized the shortcomings of the earlier static systemic approaches and demonstrated how ethnographic techniques like participant observation might be used to gain a thorough grasp of the internal dynamics of a movement (Menon and Subberwal, 2019). Guha’s research found that the Chipko movement had a “public face” as an environmental movement and a “private face” as a peasant uprising against the government. Guha’s work clearly shows the influence of subaltern studies as he attempts to emphasize “history from below” (Baviskar, 2010).

**Table No. 2.4. Summary of Various Theoretical Approaches to Social Movements**

<b>Theoretical Approaches</b>	<b>Postulations</b>
Marxist Approach	Its root is either in society's economic structure or in the conflicting interests of opposite classes.
Resource Mobilization Theory	Having access to the right resources is crucial for the emergence of a social movement. According to this theory, when some members of a society have particular complaints, they might be able to gather the resources needed to take action to address those complaints.
Deprivation Theory	Social movement emerges when individuals or groups of individuals in society believe they are denied access to a particular good, service, or resource.
Structural-Functional Approach	Social movement happens as a result of unequal distribution of resources at both micro (class, race and gender) and macro levels (nation-state level).
New Social Movements	This is not a theory but a collection of different theories that emerged in the 1960s. Unlike Marxists this approach focus on other social forces that drive group behaviour and have their roots in politics, ideology, and culture.
Indian Approach	Gandhians testified to the validity of western theoretical frameworks like political economic theory, relative deprivation theory, and structural strain theory, but without using violent means. Indian scholars on social moments since the 1980s have largely agreed with existing theorizations of social movements, depending on the theoretical orientations they adopt- structural-functional or Marxist.

Scholars have examined the causes and consequences of numerous sorts of social movements throughout the past few decades. They have produced a variety of ideas to explain the emergence, growth, and development of social movements around the world. However, no specific theories exist to discuss the social movement; rather, it varies from scholar to scholar. Which hypothesis suits which case depends on the circumstances. Some major approaches discussed in this section are; the Marxist Approach to Social Movements, Resource Mobilization Theory, Deprivation Theory, Structural-Functional Approach, New Social Movements, and Indian approaches.

## **2.5. Conclusion**

In order to understand social movements and to build a theoretical framework for the current study concepts, typologies, and various theoretical perspectives of social movements have been examined in this chapter.

Social movements, which are primarily “collective” or “organised” activities to bring about or resist changes, are rather widespread these days. This is due to the fact that through such group efforts, it can be challenged many of the long-standing institutional arrangements and practises in society. This chapter has covered some of the key components of social movements, including ideology, mass mobilisation, organisation, leadership, interest articulation, and identity construction. Social movements usually aim to reform societal institutions, relationships, and significant institutions such as views, values, and attitudes. They might, on the other hand, try to prevent any changes to the above-said societal structures (Ghosh, 2020).

Depending on the kind and scope of the change they seek, sociologists classify social movements into a number of different categories. This typology helps in our knowledge of the variations among the various categories of social movements that have existed in the past and still do so today. However, there is no specific typology of social movement, it varies from scholar to scholar. Some significant typologies proposed by scholars have been discussed in this chapter, some important typologies are; Herbert Blumer’s Typology, Rudolf Herberle’s Typology, Neil J. Smelser’s Typology, Joseph R. Gusfield Typology, and David Aberle’s Typology. Over the last few decades, academic researchers have questioned the causes and consequences of various types of social movements. They have developed various theories to explain the emergence, growth, and maturation of social movements in various parts of the

world. Again, there are no specific theories to discuss the social movement, it varies from scholar to scholar. It depends upon the case which theory fits in which case. Marxist Approach to Social Movements, Resource Mobilization Theory, Deprivation Theory, Structural-Functional Approach, New Social Movements, and Indian approaches have been discussed in this chapter.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Naxalbari and the Naxalite Movement: A Critical Review**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

The primary objective of this study is to understand the causes of the rise of the Naxalite Movement. The chapter is based on the secondary data collected from published books, journal articles, reports, etc. The Naxalite movement is a name given to a movement that started in the 1960s in a small village of West Bengal called Naxalbari. So, it is necessary to give an introduction to the region so as to understand the strategic location as well as to understand the socio-economic and political background of the region. Therefore, this chapter begins with an introduction to Naxalbari. In addition, the Naxalite movement, as a social movement, started in a small village but it is not confined to the region today. In fact, within a very short period of time, it spread to other parts of India. Today it is a pan-India movement. Therefore, this chapter also deals with the past and present situation of the movement keeping a view to understand its impact and dynamics. However, the sole purpose of this chapter is to contextualize Naxalbari, and the Naxalite Movement in the study.

#### **3.2. Naxalbari: A Geographical Review**

India, as of 2022, is the seventh-largest country in the world, has been divided into twenty-nine states. Among these twenty-nine states, West Bengal, the fourth-most populous and the fourteen largest state, lies in the eastern region of India. Again West Bengal has been divided into twenty-three districts. Accordingly, Darjeeling district is the northernmost district of West Bengal. The district is divided into two sections geographically: the hills and the plains. The entire hilly region of the district is

administered by the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration<sup>4</sup>, a semi-autonomous administrative body. Terai refers to the plain region that falls under the jurisdiction of the Siliguri subdivision.

The coordinates of Naxalbari are 26.68 degrees north and 88.22 degrees east. It is 152 meters above sea level on average (501 feet)<sup>5</sup>. Naxalbari is located in the Terai region, near the base of the Himalayan Mountain Range. Nepal is located to the west of Naxalbari, across the Mechi River. Farmland, tea farms, woodlands, and tiny communities cover the entire stretch of areas surrounding Naxalbar. In addition, Naxalbari is strategically located at India's northernmost tip, bordering Nepal on the west, Sikkim, and Bhutan on the north, and Bangladesh on the south. China, on the other hand, is not far behind (Banerjee, 1980).

Naxalbari railway station is located on the line. Trains run daily from New Jalpaiguri to Siliguri via Siliguri Town, Siliguri Junction, Matigara, and Bagdogra. New Jalpaiguri is served by four trains: the New Jalpaiguri-Katihar Passenger, the New Jalpaiguri-Aluabari-New Jalpaiguri DEMU Ring Rail, the New Jalpaiguri-Balurghat DEMU, and the New Jalpaiguri-Radhikapur DEMU. A bus service runs from Siliguri Court More to Naxalbari<sup>6</sup>

The Panitanki neighbourhood of Naxalbari is located on the eastern border of Nepal with India in Jhapa District, Province No. 1. There is a border crossing to the Kakarbhitta neighbourhood of Mechinagar municipality with a checkpoint for

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<sup>4</sup> The Gorkhaland Territorial Administration is a semi-autonomous body governing the districts of Darjeeling and Kalimpong in West Bengal, India.

<sup>5</sup> See- <https://www.indianetzone.com/75/naxalbari.htm>. (Accessed on 21/04/2022)

<sup>6</sup> See- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naxalbari> (Accessed on 21/04/2022)



customs and crossing by third-country nationals, while Nepalese and Indian citizens can cross freely<sup>7</sup>.

### **3:3. Demographic, Socio-Political and Economic Profile<sup>8</sup>**

Naxalbari is a village and a community development block in the northern region of West Bengal. The Siliguri subdivision of the Darjeeling district has jurisdiction over the Naxalbari block. From north to south, the Naxalbari block has six Gram Panchayats or village councils, namely Gossainpur, Lower Bagdogra, Upper Bagdogra, Hatighisha, Naxalbari, and Moniram<sup>9</sup>.

#### **3.3.1. Population**

According to the 2011 census report, the Naxalbari block had a population of 165,523 people, with males accounting for 85,054 i.e. 51% and females accounting for 80,054 i.e. 48.38%, and total population in the age group 0-6 18,897 i.e. 0.12%<sup>10</sup>. Rural population of Naxalbari was 97,717 i.e. 59% and the Urban population was 67,806 i.e. 41% in 2011. Similarly, the total SC population was 44,328 i.e. 27% and the total ST population was 32,388 i.e. 19.57%. According to the same census, the total number of households in the region was 35,752 of which rural households were 20,461 and urban households were 15,291<sup>11</sup>.

#### **3.3.2. Education and Health**

In 2011, the average literacy rate in Naxalbari Block was 75.47%, with male and female literacy rates of 82.7% and 67.84%, respectively. The total number of literates

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Data of Naxalbari Community Development Block (2011 census)

<sup>9</sup> See- <http://www.siliguri.gov.in/naxalbari.html> (Accessed on 21/04/2022)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

in Naxalbari Block was 110,663, with 62,270 males and 48,393 females. The total urban literate population was 51,391 and the total rural literate was 59,272.

There are 5 higher secondary schools, 6 secondary schools, 2 central schools 1 army school, 69 primary schools, 59 Shishu Shiksha Kendra, 2 Madhyamik Kendra, and 1 University in the Block.

There is Naxalbari Hospital, Bagdogra Primary Health Centre, and 15 subcenters, 16 health centres at tea gardens in the region.

### 3.3.3. Workforce Participation

Workforce Participation of Naxalbari has been illustrated in the following table:

**Table No. 3:1. Workforce Participation of Naxalbari (2011)**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Main Workers</b>	49,858	40,040	9,818
<b>Cultivators</b>	3,362	2,966	396
<b>Agricultural Labors</b>	2,963	2,214	749
<b>Households Industries</b>	881	678	203
<b>Other workers</b>	42,652	34,182	8,470
<b>Marginal workers</b>	11,004	5,679	5,325
<b>Non-Working</b>	104,661	39,335	65,326

Source: <https://www.censusindia.co.in/subdistrict/naxalbari-block-darjiling-west-bengal-2163> Accessed on 21/04/2022

Among the total population currently main workers are 30.12 % in which 2% cultivators, 1.79% agricultural labours, 0.53% households industries, 25.76% other workers, marginal workers are 6.64% and non-working population are 63.23%.

### 3.3.4. Political Status and Electoral Parties

As far as the political status of Naxalbari is concerned, it falls under Matigara-Naxalbari Legislative Assembly Constituency<sup>12</sup>. Matigara-Naxalbari was established as a legislative assembly constituency in West Bengal in 2008, following the implementation of the Delimitation Commission of India's recommendations. It is part of the Darjeeling Lok Sabha (parliamentary) constituency and is located in the Darjeeling district. The Delimitation Commission also recommended that the constituency include the Naxalbari community development block, as well as the gram panchayats of Patharghata, Atharakhai, Matigara-I, Matigara-II, and Champasari (excluding Sevoke Forest, Sevoke Hill Forest, and Sitong Forest) of Matigara community development block<sup>13</sup>. The Matigara-Naxalbari assembly constituency is only reserved for candidates from Scheduled Castes (SCs).

The Matigara-Naxalbari is currently ruled by the Bharatiya Janata Party. Further details are shown in the following table (*Statistical Reports*, n.d.).

**Table No. 3:2. Political Status of Matigar-Naxalbari Constituency**

<b>Election Year</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Name of M.L.A</b>	<b>Party Affiliation</b>
2011	Matigara-Naxalbari	Sankar Malakar	Indian National Congress
2016	Matigara-Naxalbari	Sankar Malakar	Indian National Congress
2021	Matigara-Naxalbari	Anandamoy Barman	Bharatiya Janata Party

Source: <https://eci.gov.in/statistical-report/statistical-reports/> Accessed on 21/04/2022

<sup>12</sup> See- <https://www.elections.in/west-bengal/assembly-constituencies/matigara-naxalbari.html> (Accessed on 21/04/2022)

<sup>13</sup> See- <https://www.elections.in/west-bengal/assembly-constituencies/matigara-naxalbari.html> (Accessed on 21/04/2022)

These are the list of significant political parties of the Matigara-Naxalbari constituency-Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), All India Trinamool Congress (AITC), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist) (SUCI{C}), Kamtapur People's Party (KPP), Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI{M}), Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (CPI{ML}) etc.

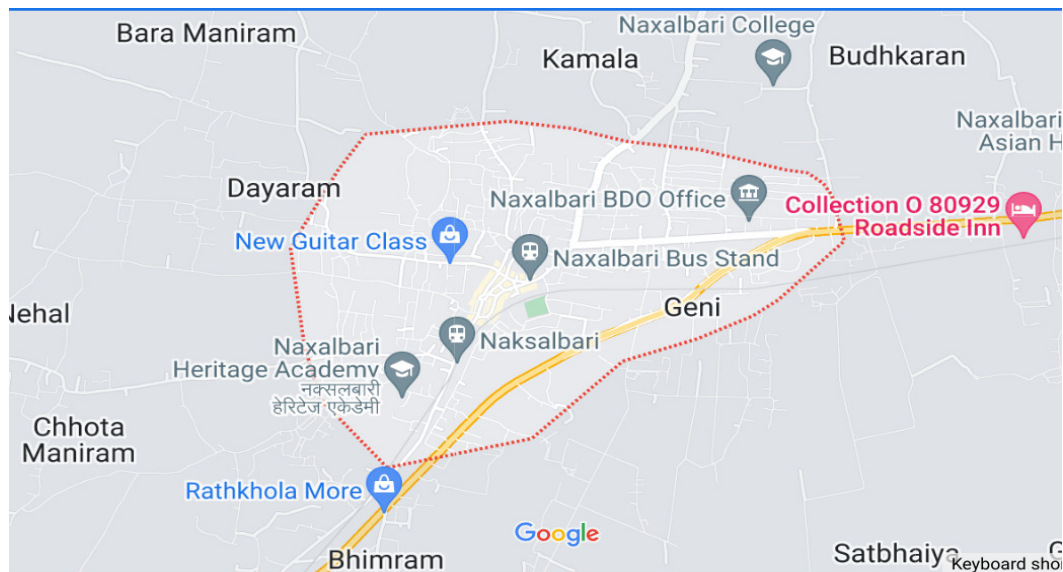
### **3.4. Origin and development of the Naxalite Movement**

The Maoist radical movement began among West Bengal's landless farm labourers. The Permanent Settlement Act of 1793<sup>14</sup> required zamindars (landlords) to pay the tax directly to the government until the early 1950s (Guha, 1982,). The zamindari system was eliminated during the 1950s land reforms, which re-distributed land from prior renters to the new class of Jotedars. Sharecroppers and paid farm labourers cultivated the Jotedars' farms. Because most of the contracts were unregistered, the sharecroppers' and labourers' lawful shares remained in jeopardy. By the mid-1960s, farm employment had become scarce, and many workers had moved to the forests (Gupta, 2004). They turned their methods towards radicalism as the predicament of sharecroppers and landless labourers intensified. Some rebelled against the Jotedars, attempting to forcefully take over the land in order to claim their portion of the produce. The Naxalite insurrection took occurred in this environment.

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<sup>14</sup> The Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 was a contract between the East India Company and Bengali landowners that set the amount of revenues that would be collected from the land.

### Map No. 3.1. Naxalbari



Source: <http://www.siliguri.gov.in/naxalbari.html> (Accessed on 17/11/2022)

### Plate No.1. Bengaijote, Naxalbari



Source: Fieldwork, August 2022

Naxalism takes its name from a peasant rebellion in the village of Naxalbari in West Bengal's Darjeeling district in May 1967, where Maoists were active. Three sharecroppers and 150 Communist Party of India (Marxist) workers looted 300

mounds of paddy from a Jotedar's granary on May 24, 1967, armed with sticks, bows, and arrows. The mob also tried to rob the Jotedar of his land paperwork. As a result, state enforcement officials raided the homes of these sharecroppers, resulting in the death of an officer. Assam frontier firearms killed eleven sharecroppers' family members who were demonstrating against the Jotedar at Naxalbari bazaar the next day in response. The state agency's massacre was the catalyst for hundreds of tribals and peasants to join the Naxalite revolt. The uprising lasted 52 days before the state retaliated with extraordinary repression, including torture, disappearances, and extrajudicial assassinations, killing 20 more radicals in all (Roy, 2011). The rebellion in Naxalbari against the security forces and Jotedars reverberated across India, generating enormous support among peasants. Charu Mazumdar, the Naxalite main ideologue, and his companions Kanu Sanyal and Jangal Santhal yelled slogans like "power flows via the barrel of the gun" and "China's Chairman Mao is our chairman" in the late 1960s (Ahuya, 2007). Many people become Maoists as a result of their radical speech. The campaign expanded to additional places in other states when the Chinese communist newspaper People's Daily praised it as "spring thunder" over India (Harris, 2010).

However, the movement could not achieve its goal completely. It was ruthlessly suppressed by the state. Although the administration may have suppressed the movement, it served as an inspiration for later protests against injustice and wrongs and compelled the government to address the plight of low-income peasants and agricultural labourers. The Maoist groups united to start an armed battle to topple landowners and the government as a result of the Naxalbari movement, which split the Communist Party. Although the movement's goal of a democratic revolution was

not achieved, a process to democratize society was started. Caste exploitation and economic pressure decreased as a result (The Hindu, 2017).

There could be several reasons for the failure of the movement but one of the primary reasons could be the ideologue, Charu Mazumdar, himself. He was adamant that the peasants could only succeed through a military line, and he refused to adopt the politics of mass lines. But Charu Majumdar, who eventually founded the CPI-ML in 1969, gave the movement that was started by peasants, landless agricultural labourers, Dalits, tribals, and Nepalis, and attracted the Bengali upper class, a theoretical foundation (Banerjee, 2008). The movement came to an end shortly after Charu Majumdar passed away in police custody in 1972. However, in the 1980s and 1990s, the Naxalbari movement united ideologically with the peasant uprisings in Bihar and Telangana, and subsequently, it spread to other regions of India (The Hindu, 2017).

Naxalism grew in popularity, and state CPI (M) offices in Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, as well as some CPI (M) offices in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, joined the movement. Following the crackdown, Naxalite leaders discussed whether to promote their ideas by violent means rather than legal political avenues. Some Naxalite leaders opted to pursue the revolution through military conflict after much disagreement, splintering the movement. Kanu Sanyal, who recruited certain members to pursue an armed fight against the state while CPI (M) pursued a political road, proclaimed the establishment of CPI (Marxist-Leninist) on May Day in 1969. The government responded with enemy-centric tactics as the insurgency grew fast in West Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. To put down the increasing insurrection, the authorities launched Operation Steeplechase in 1971 (Banerjee, 1980). From July 1 to August 15, 1971, a corps of the Indian Army with roughly 45,000 troops was stationed in

Bengal's Midnapore, Purulia, Burdwan, and Birbhum districts; Bihar's Singhbhum, Dhanbad, and Santhal Parganas districts; and Orissa's Mayurbhanj district. While national and state police forces searched and swept through the communities in the woodlands, the army created the outer ring of a cordon that stretched across the districts on the three states' borders. The operation went well, and numerous Naxalite commanders were apprehended (Gupta, 2004). The state's victory over the armed rebellion, combined with the death of Charu Mazumdar in police custody in July 1972, effectively put an end to Naxalism in West Bengal for the time being. Meanwhile, Kanu Sanyal, the architect of the armed insurgency, has moved to Andhra Pradesh in order to broaden the support base of the movement.

Large-scale unrest erupted in India in the mid-1970s as a result of the alleged involvement of the ruling Congress party in large-scale corruption, electoral fraud, and the abuse of state power for personal gain. As a result, from 1975 to 1977, Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi imposed a statewide emergency (Palmer, 1976). By 1980, over 30 Naxalite groups had emerged as a result of official repression, including pro-Lin Piao and anti-Lin Piao factions, as well as the People's War Group (PWG), which operated in rural areas of eastern India. The Naxalite PWG spread from Andhra Pradesh to the tribal areas of adjacent states including MP, Orissa, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra. Although the destitute and dispossessed Adivasis (tribals) did not share the Naxalites' general political goals, they backed the movement because they were victims of caste and class-based feudalism, particularly in the portions of Madhya Pradesh that are now part of the state of Chhattisgarh. The Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) of Bihar, in addition to the PWG, was another prominent Naxalite faction that arose in 1980. State governments did not spend



sufficient resources to counter the armed threat in the 1990s, and the MCC flourished as a result (Chauhan, 2021).

When the central government created Chhattisgarh, a largely tribal territory within Madhya Pradesh, in 2000, tribal agitation prompted a population-centric response. Similarly, the central government carved Jharkhand out of Bihar to allow indigenous communities to express themselves politically as well. The formation of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, on the other hand, did not enhance the social situation of Adivasis. Instead, these new states, which were dominated by destitute tribal populations and had weak administrations, proved excellent grounds for Maoist recruiting (Palmer, 1976). The Naxalites have strengthened their bases in a number of states by the early 2000s. As a result, state government administration in several places came to a halt through the Panchayat (village court, a village-level judicial system), Public Works Department (PWD), and Agriculture and Irrigation Department. To fund themselves, the Naxalites placed levies on the movement of raw materials such as iron ore and bauxite as their rule grew. In 2004, the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC), which was active in Bihar, and the People's War Group, which was active in Andhra Pradesh, merged to become the CPI (Maoist) (Ahuya, 2007). After 2004, Naxalism developed quickly, and violence in Maoist-controlled areas increased, resulting in frequent clashes between Maoists and their sympathizers on the one side, and security forces on the other (Subramanian, 2010).

Because of the geographical extension of the movement, rising support base in tribal and poor areas, and enhanced fighting capabilities of its members, the Naxalite insurgency has emerged as a severe menace. The Indian government sees the insurgency as primarily a matter of law enforcement and economic development and

has responded with more population-centric measures such as increased development funding and police personnel in the affected areas. After years of fighting the insurgency, there is growing consensus among Indian strategic think tanks that a ‘law and order’ approach, i.e., one that primarily relies on policing efforts, is unlikely to produce a long-term solution because it does not effectively counter Maoist armed capability or address the long-standing grievances of India’s rural poor (Guha, 1982). In a democratic setting, the answer is still a mystery.

### **3.5. Current Status of the Naxalite Movement**

The Maoists claim to be fighting for the poor and downtrodden, and they demand the devotion of the villagers and shelter in exchange for protection from the Maoists. The efforts of the civil society activists on behalf of the impoverished and vulnerable local community, however, put them in danger from both Maoists and government security forces. The struggle against Maoist militants has been dubbed India’s “biggest internal security challenge” by the Indian prime minister. Since 2008, nearly 3,000 individuals have been killed in the Maoist conflict, according to the Home Ministry (Ali, 2015).

The Maoist movement has spread to nine states in central and eastern India in recent years. In the states of Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Bihar, and West Bengal, the Maoists have a considerable presence, while Assam, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh have a marginal presence. The Maoists claim to be fighting for the rights of the marginalized, including the poor, landless, Dalits, and tribal indigenous peoples. They want a revolution, as well as a radical reorganization of the social, political, and economic systems (Kujur, 2013). The Maoists think that overthrowing the existing structure through violent attacks on the state is the only way

for underprivileged communities to gain respect for their rights. Various state governments have responded to this problem by launching security operations aimed at defeating the Maoist movement, ensuring the safety of local inhabitants, and restoring law and order. The police in these states are backed up by paramilitary forces from the federal government. Joint operations between state and national forces are common, in part to deny the Maoists sanctuary in neighbouring states. Because states' responses were ineffective, the federal government began to coordinate security activities in 2009 (Ali, 2015).

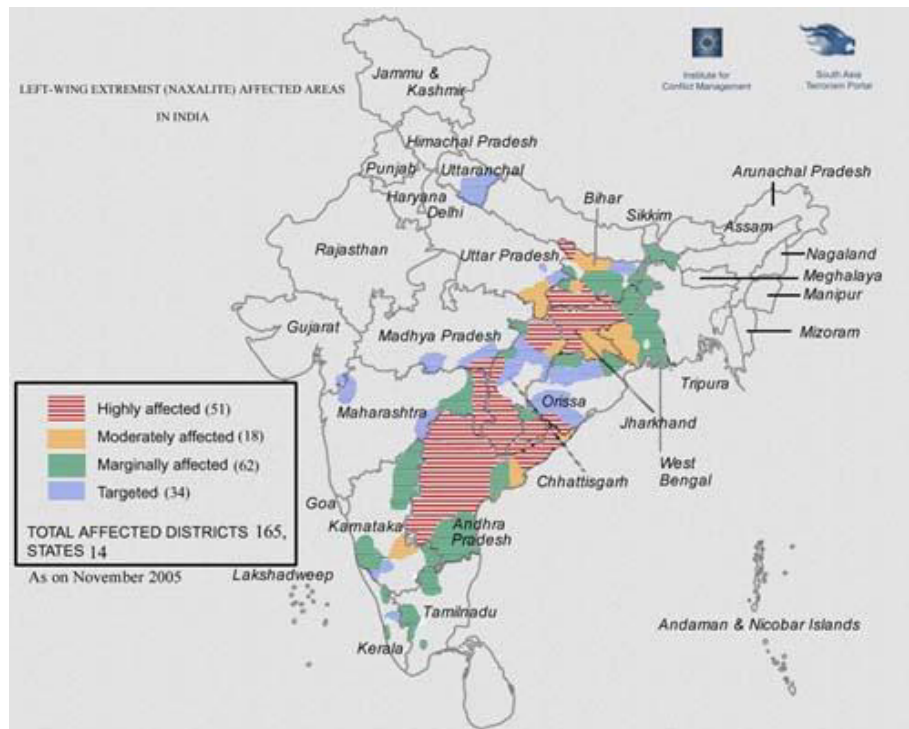
The persistent insistence that the only alternative for the State was to rule with an iron fist, and construct a social order in which anyone standing up for citizens' human rights was to be regarded as suspect and a Maoist was equally disconcerting to us (Khosla, 2011). The Maoist movement draws attention to India's internal flaws, making it vulnerable to external attacks. As a result of globalization, challenges such as the Naxalite movement can no longer be considered solely domestic, as they now influence both internal and external security.

The effect of Naxalism is constantly being decreased as the total number of districts affected in 2009 was 180 but as of 2021, just 70 districts are affected<sup>15</sup>. Further details of which have been shown in the following maps:

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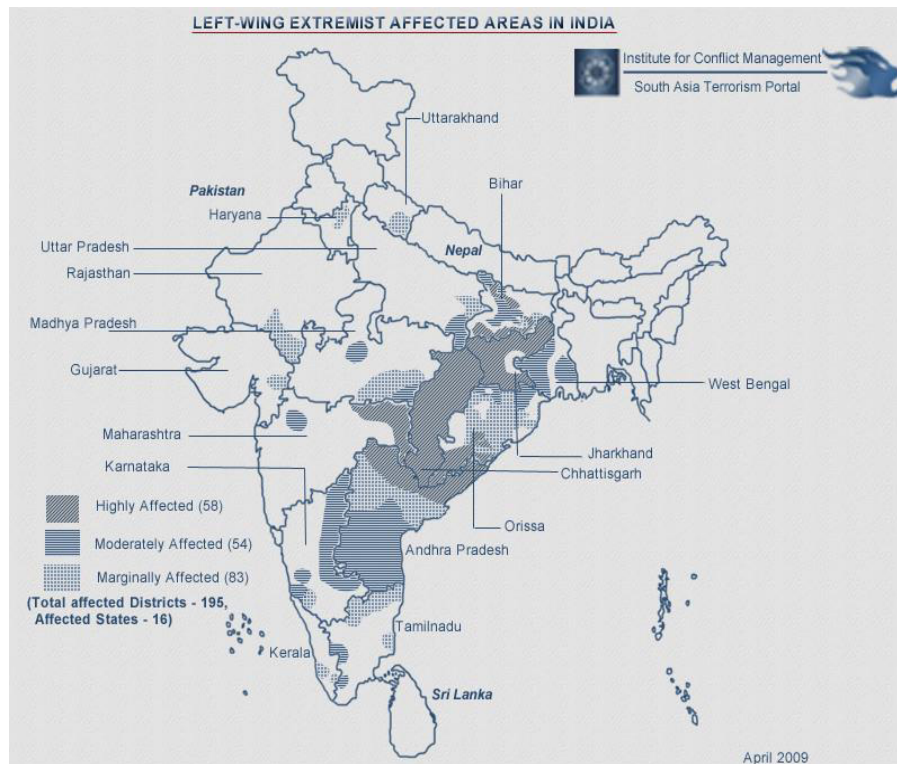
<sup>15</sup> See- <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=50833> (Accessed on 01/05/2022)

### Map No. 3:2. Naxal Affected Districts in 2005



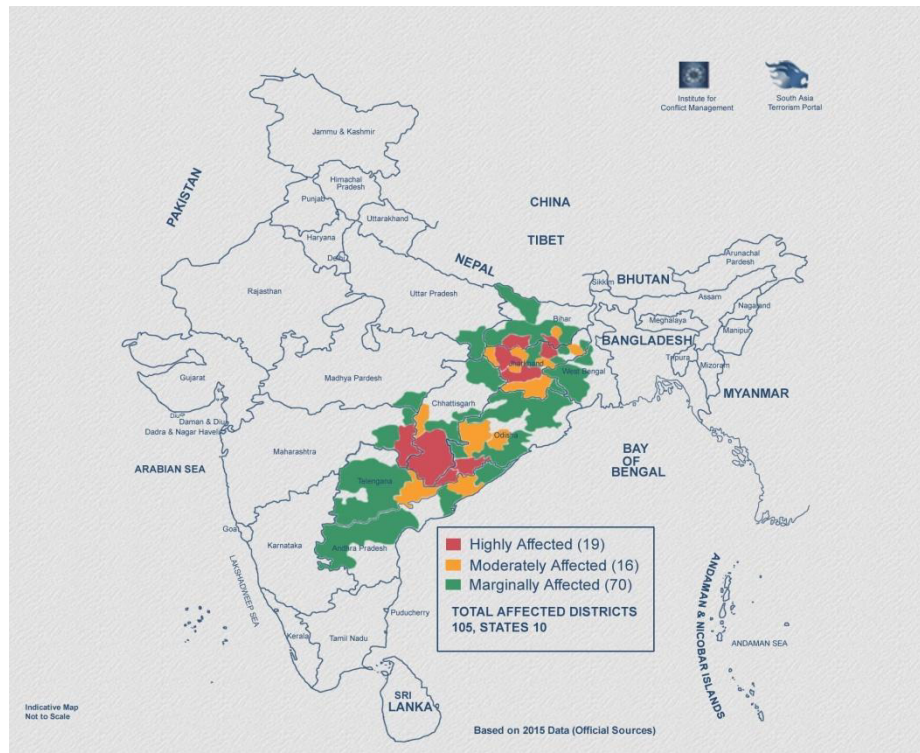
Source: <https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/database/conflictmap.htm> (Accessed on 01/05/2022)

### Map No. 3:3. Naxal Affected Districts in 2009



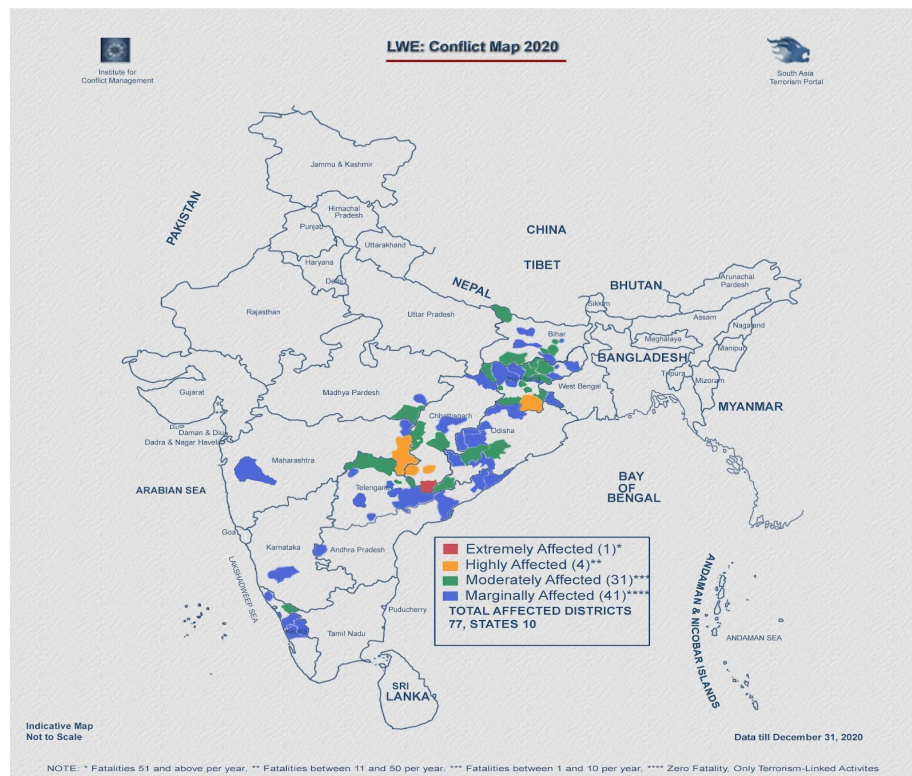
Source: <https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/database/conflictmap.htm> (Accessed on 01/05/2022)

### Map No. 3:4. Naxal Affected Districts in 2015



Source: <https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/database/conflictmap.htm>  
 (Accessed on 01/05/2022)

### Map No. 3.5. Naxal Affected Districts in 2020

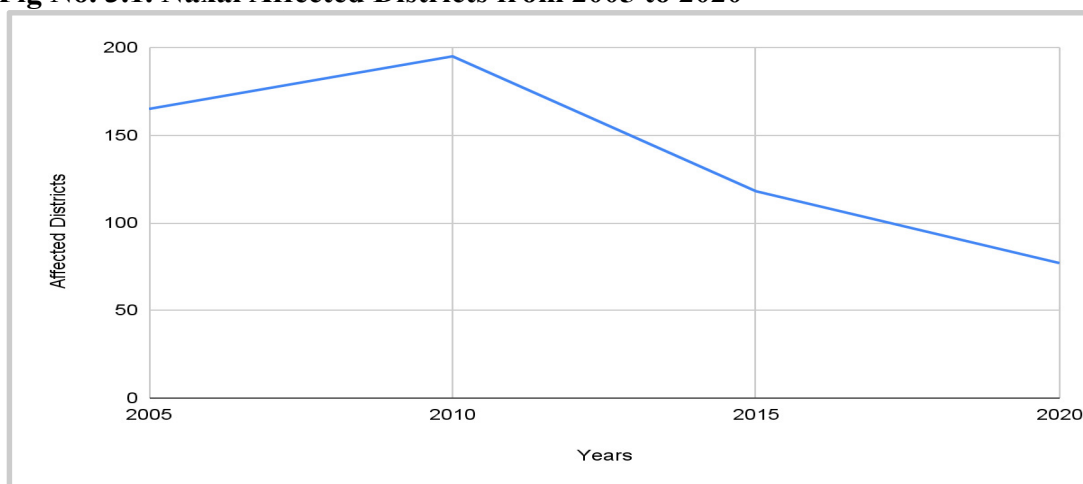


Source- <https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/database/conflictmap.htm>  
 (Accessed on 01/05/2022)

**Table No. 3.3. Naxal Affected Districts**

State	Name of Districts	Number
Andra Pradesh	East Godawari, Srikakulam, Vizianagram, Visakhapatnam, West Godavari	5
Bihar	Aurangabad, Banka, Gaya, Kaimur, Lakhisarai, Munger, Jamui, Nawada, Rotas, West Champaran	10
Chhattisgarh	Balrampur, Bastar, Bijapur, Dantewada, Dhamtari, Gariyaband, Kanker, Kondagaon, Mahasamund, Narayanpur, Rajnandgaon, Sukma, Kabirdham, Mungali	14
Jharkhand	Bokaro, Chatra, Dhanbad, Dumka, East Singhbhum, Garhwa, Giridih, Gumla, Hazaribagh, Khunti, Latehar, Lohardaga, Palamu, Ranchi, Saraikela-Kharaswan, West Singhbhum	16
Kerala	Malappuram, Palakkad, Wayanand	3
Madhya Pradesh	Balaghat, Mandla, Dindori	3
Maharashtra	Gadchiroli, Gondia	2
Odisha	Bolangir, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabrangpur, Bargarh, Naupada, Rayagada, Sundergarh	10
Telangana	Adilabad, Bhadradi-Kothagudem, Jayashankar-Bhupalpal, Komaram-Bheem, Mancherial, Mulugu	6
West Bengal	Jhargram	1
<b>Total - 11</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>

Source: Self Compilation

**Fig No. 3.1. Naxal Affected Districts from 2005 to 2020**

Source: Based on above-mentioned map

### **3.6. Conclusion**

Naxalbari is a small village in the Darjeeling District of West Bengal. It is located in the Terai region, near the base of the Himalayan Mountain Range. Nepal is located to the west of Naxalbari, across the Mechi River. Though it is a small village it has played a major role in shaping Indian history. Naxalbari is most known for being the scene of a 1967 uprising that sparked the Naxalite-Maoist conflict which is a pan-India movement today. The events in Naxalbari took the form of a massive rebellion, gaining visibility and support in states such as West Bengal, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, and parts of Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. In today's context, the movement which originated in Naxalbari is known by the name Naxalite movement.

On the other hand, there will be no mistake to claim that it is a social movement. According to Snow (2014), social movement can be defined by three or more of the following axes: collective or joint action; change-oriented goals or claims; some extra or non-institutional action; some degree of organization; and some degree of temporal continuity. Further, one of the important features of social movement on which there is general consensus is that social movements aim at either bringing about change or resisting change. Thus, the Naxalite movement is a social movement that is intended to change their living standard by the way of revolution.

By now it is clear that Naxalism has been Influenced by Maoist ideology as during the time of the movement the activists of the movement themselves uttered the slogan, "China's Chairman is our Chairman". Furthermore, Naxalism is not only confined to India today but it has also influenced neighbouring countries like Nepal. And within a very short period of time Naxalite movement spread to other parts of the country. Naxalism keeps on spreading even after several decades of its eruption. According to

the data of 2009 Naxal affected districts were 180. According to the data, Naxalism spread so rapidly and so smoothly because of its strategic location. Strategically, Naxalbari is located at India's northernmost tip, bordering Nepal on the west, Sikkim, and Bhutan on the north, and Bangladesh) on the south. China, on the other hand, is not far behind.

Naxalbari was the village to be influenced by Maoism but today there is no sign of such ideology. It is ruled by BJP and there is no conflict in the region as such. However, Naxalism is not completely eradicated today but is still influential in some other regions of India.



## Chapter 4

### **Socio-Political and Economic Background Responsible for Naxalite Movement**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

The Naxalite movement was not a movement that sparked in one day. As highlighted in the previous chapter the Naxalite movement first emerged in 1967 in a small village in the Darjeeling district called Naxalbari but the formation of the movement was taking place before the movement itself. In this context, Abhijit Mazumdar, son of Charu Majumdar, said, *“many people think that the movement just occurred one fine morning. That is not true. It was the result of several things coming together. It was the result of many long years of hardworking of communist revolutionaries”*. Thus, in order to understand the root cause of the movement it is necessary to understand the background of the movement. The following section deals with the socio-political and economic background of the Naxalbari and attempts to analyze these factors as the causes/drivers of the movement. There were several elements driving this movement, some of which were issues with India that were not taken into consideration at the time. The part that follows attempts to discuss about some of these factors.

In this chapter secondary data has been supported by primary data collected from the field from the different people who are associated with the movement in different ways. The structure of the respondents is mentioned down:

**Table No. 4.1. Structure of the Respondents**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Total No.</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Academicians	3	3	0
Activists	6	4	2
Movement Participants	2	2	0
Politicians	2	2	0
Common People	12	6	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>08</b>

Source: Field Work, August 2022

#### **4.2. The Socio-Political and Economic Situation of India Prior to the Movement**

The Naxalite movement first appeared in Naxalbari, but it is no longer confined to that area; in fact, it has since spread to many other regions across the country. The movement today is supported by the urban intelligentsia. However, the movement initially began in the rural or village areas of West Bengal where ordinary people were dealing with extreme poverty and other social issues (Awasthi & Mishra, 2018). The Naxal-affected areas suffer greatly from economic and social disparities. The wealthy Thakurs and Zamindars, who exploited the poor and tribal people socially, saw them as people without dignity. They experienced a number of societal discrimination practices (Awasthi & Mishra, 2018).

The Communist Party of India's (Marxist-Leninist) doctrines and performances were nourished by the sap of growing discontent among the rural poor. The countryside was the focal point, and the peasants were the driving force behind the CPI (ML) led movement (Banerjee, 2009). Therefore, it is necessary to review the key features of India's agrarian status before to the conflict.

As reported by the news reports the economic condition of India particularly during 1966-67 was not less than worst (Banerjee, 2009). According to Banerjee (2009), “*all through 1966 and 1967, rumbling of discontent reverberated throughout the Indian countryside*”. He further argues, reports of chronic malnutrition, starvation deaths, self-immolations by peasants who were starving and desperate, and intermittent food godown looting by men in rags and tatters were all over the newspaper (Banerjee, 2009). Accordingly, Abhijit Mazumdar described, “*before the upspring not only Naxalbari was facing serious economic crisis but entire people of India were facing a similar type of problem. Particularly during 1966-67 in Bengal people were dying of starvation or famine*”. He further argued that particularly the poor people whose life was based upon agriculture were facing major problems.

Another issue the poor peasants faced was the uneven distribution of land. A very tiny percentage of rural households, typically in the form of a big holding, possessed a sizable amount of the total cultivated land. On the other hand, a substantial number of rural households farmed small, dispersed plots (Banerjee, 2009). India had a net cultivated area of roughly 343 million acres in 1966-1967. Out of this, according to patterns in land ownership indicated by an earlier National Sample Survey (NSS), 40% was owned by only 5% of rural households representing large farmers or landlords who did not till their plots personally. They had their land cultivated either by leasing part of the plots to tenant farmers or by hired wage-earners (Banerjee, 2009).

In India, various forms of obstacles have existed, including class, caste, gender, and religious conflicts. Throughout the British Empire, there was a significant difference between indigenous Indians' living standards and British power in India. At the same

time, there was a considerable divide within India's communities (Sodhar, 2020). Conflicts between Hindus and Muslims, and Sikhs and Muslims, on the one hand, offered reasons for the British to capitalise on this phenomenon more because of religious differences, which the British used to further their "divide and rule" strategy. Besides religious divisions, there was also the problem of casteism in Hinduism (Sodhar, 2020). Previously, castes associated with Brahman enjoyed tremendous authority and significance in Hinduism. Dalits, lower-caste people, on the other hand, were not permitted to sit and eat with Brahmans since dalits were deemed untouchables, born primarily to serve Brahmans by cleaning their homes, streets, and roads. They were even forbidden from drinking and eating from the same pots as Brahmans (Sodhar, 2020).

Since there were no universal laws managing agrarian relations in India in the past, they ranged from state to state. There were no regular rules or traditions, and the poor peasants' economic status was dictated by the landlords' goodwill (Jawaid, 1979). India is an agrarian country where 70% to 80% of the population relies on antiquated tools and obsolete production methods to keep their bodies and spirits together. Powerful landlords plunder a considerable percentage of this small product with the active or passive collaboration of administrative apparatus controlled by rich peasants or politically influential landlords, the rural elite (Jawaid, 1979). Because of these conditions, it was a common occurrence in these areas that downtrodden peasants and sharecroppers did not attract the attention of the larger society. Their interests were not protected from any quarter, and they suffered in two ways: (1) the landlords' exploitation of their labour, and (2) the judiciary's poor legal protection of the peasants against this exploitation (Jawaid, 1979).

#### **4.2.1. Development of Communist Political Parties in India**

The roots of communist political parties in India can be traced back to the October Revolution of Russia, in 1917. As soon as the revolution occurred, among the major Indian political figures who expressed support for Lenin and new rulers of Russia were Bipin Chandra Pal and Bal Gangadhar Tilak (Rao, 2003). Emigrant Indian revolutionaries including the Ghadar Party in North America, as well as the Muslim community such as the Khalifat movement, were all influenced by the Russian Revolution or communism of Russia (Rao, 2003).

Subsequently, the First World War coincided with a fast expansion of India's industries, culminating in the rise of an industrial proletariat. At the same time, the cost of vital goods has risen. These were some of the causes that aided the growth of the Indian labour movement. In the urban centres of India, unions were formed, and strikes were organized. The All India Trade Union Congress was founded in 1920 (Rao, 2003). In 1921, S. A. Dange of Bombay produced *Gandhi vs. Lenin*, a pamphlet that was a comparative examination of both leaders' approaches, with Lenin emerging as the better of the two. A library of Marxist literature was established, and the publishing of translations of Marxist classics began, in collaboration with Ranchoddas Bhavan Lotvala, a local mill owner. Later, Dange then founded the English weekly *Socialist*, the first Indian Marxist publication, with Lotvala's assistance in 1922 (Dale, 1977). The second congress of Communist International in 1924 demanded that in colonized countries, a united front be built between the proletariat, peasants, and the national bourgeoisie. In accordance with the 11th thesis, all the communist parties must support bourgeois-democratic liberation movements in the colonies, which was one of the twenty-one requirements set by Lenin before the congress. Some delegates were averse to forming an alliance with the capitalists, preferring instead to support

the communist movements in these nations. M.N. Roy, an Indian revolutionary who went as a delegate of the Communist Party of Mexico, agreed with their assessment. In what became the 8th criterion, congress deleted the term ‘bourgeois-democratic’ (Rao, 2003).

The Communist Party existed in the 1920s and early 1930s, but it was poorly organised, and in actuality, there were various communist parties working with limited national coordination. On the 17th of October 1920, shortly after M.N. Roy’s Second Congress of the Communist International, a Communist Group was created in Tashkent. In Bombay, led by S.A. Dange, Madras, led by Singaravelu Chettiar, United Provinces, led by Shaukat Usmani, Punjab, Sindh, led by Ghulam Hussain, and Bengal, led by Muzaffar Ahmed, small communist organizations were created (Rao, 2003). Finally, Singaravelu Chettiar created the Labour Kisan Party of Hindustan in Madras on May 1, 1923. The inaugural May Day celebration in India was organized by the LKPH, and it was also the first time the red flag was flown in India (Rao, 2003). The Communist Party of India was founded on December 26, 1925, during the inaugural Party Conference in Kanpur<sup>16</sup>.

However, CPI got split in 1964 into two fractions i.e. CPI and CPI (M). The CPI (M) was formed at the Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of India held in Calcutta from October 31 to November 7, 1964<sup>17</sup>. The basis of the difference in opinion between the two factions in CPI was ideological about the assessment of the Indian scenario and the development of a party program. This difference in opinion was also a reflection of a similar difference in international-level on ideology between the Soviet and Chinese Communist parties. The alleged ‘right-wing’ inside the party

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<sup>16</sup>See- <http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/article9916.html> (Assessed on 8/10/2022)

<sup>17</sup>See- <https://www.cpim.org/page/about-us> (Assessed on 8/10/2022)

followed the Soviet path whereas the ‘left-wing’ wanted to follow the Chinese principle of a mass party with a class line with national characteristics (Basu, 2000).

Moreover, the faction of CPI which later became CPI (M) referred to the “right” strategy as a national approach of class collaboration, a damning charge within the communist movement, in which the prioritization of working-class interests and independence is considered paramount<sup>18</sup>. This ideological difference later intensified, coupled with the Soviet-Chinese split at the international level, and ultimately gave rise to the establishment of CPI (M)<sup>19</sup>.

According to Banerjee (2009), the CPI (M) program adopted at the Calcutta Congress described the Indian state as *“the organ of the class rule of the bourgeoisie and landlord, led by the big bourgeoisie, who are increasingly collaborating with foreign finance capital in pursuit of the capitalist path of development”*. On the other hand, CPI held that the state was an organ of the class rule of the *“national bourgeoisie as a whole, which upholds and develops capitalism and capitalist relations of production, distribution, and exchange in the national economy of India”* (Banerjee, 2008). CPI (M) planned to establish a People’s democracy based on the coalition of all genuine anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces headed by the working class. Initially, two leftist political parties ventured to establish a people’s democracy by collaborating with each other but later their paths remained different. CPI (M) alleged CPI is a party with a revisionist ideology (Banerjee, 2009). Thus, the CPI (M) started its journey with suppressed radicals in its ranks. Promises by the leaders to make it a revolutionary party, different from the ‘revisionist’ CPI.

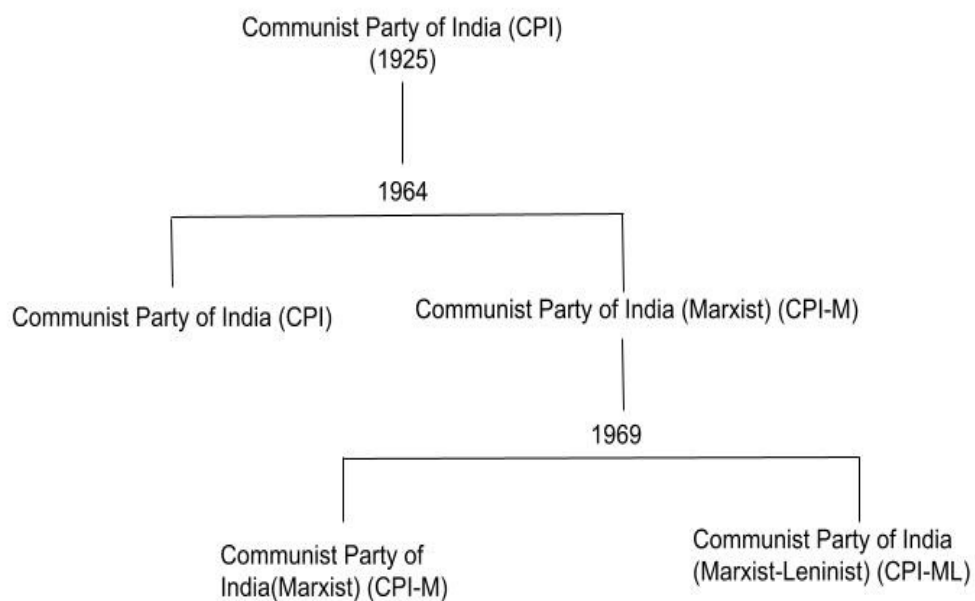
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<sup>18</sup>See-<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/cia-papers-trace-split-of-indian-communists/article-show/2162923.cms> (Assessed on 9/10/2022)

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

On the other hand, by the time contradiction between CPI and CPI (M) was going on Charu Mazumdar was trying to give a coherent theoretical expression to these dissident views. By 1965, a concrete alternative plan of action had almost taken shape, and his followers were already in the villages of North Bengal, propagating his views and organizing struggles among the poor and landless peasantry (Banerjee, 2009). His views during this period are documented in eight important articles, CPI (ML) later published them in the form of a booklet entitled *The Historic Anti-Revisionist Eight Documents Written by Our Respected Leader Immortal Martyr Comrade Charu Mazumdar*. These eight articles played a role to be the theoretical framework of the movement.

**Fig No. 4.1. Communist Parties in India**



Source: Self Compilation



### 4.3. Socio-Economic Background of Naxalbari Prior to the Movement

During the conflict, the total population of the Naxalbari area was 1,26,719<sup>20</sup>, with the tribals constituting the largest part. Santhals, Madesias, Oraons, Mundas, Rajbansis, and others were among the tribals. The majority of these people had migrated from the Santhal Parganas of Bihar (Singh, 2006). As per the census report of 1961, the total population of the Naxalbari area was 1,26,719, with the tribals constituting the largest part (Singh, 2006). In the same year in West Bengal Santhal tribe was 12,00,000, Oarans were 2,97,000, Mandas were 1,60,000, Bhufflijas were 91,000; and other communities, like, Tarai Gorkhas, Gondas, and Kajongs were about 37,904. In the Naxalite region, the same proportion prevailed (Jawaid, 1979). According to the 1961 Census Report, Scheduled Castes and Tribes made up 57.7% of the total population of Naxalbari. The Santhal tribes comprised 87% of the total population of the tribes, and among this 87% 32% were directly engaged as agriculture labourers (Jawaid, 1979) Tea planting was the tribes' chief occupation, notably in the Terai region, on the land of the landlords. They couldn't farm on the tribe-owned property unless they took those plots of land by force and violence (Jawaid, 1979). They couldn't afford enough food for themselves and their families since, despite their hard work, they only received a part of the profits, which was barely enough to keep them alive. Thus, primarily, they worked as cultivators, agricultural labourers, tea garden workers, forests, mines, etc. (Singh, 2006). Respondent Arnab Chakravarti told *“Naxalbari was comprised of various types of people but almost all the people used to work in the field. I myself used to work in the agricultural land with my father”*.

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<sup>20</sup>Reconstruction of the development block has been done now. This data includes Naxalbari and other parts of Siliguri.

The absence of employment opportunities for young people in the country's most impoverished areas, particularly in Naxalbari, permits Naxal groups to recruit an increasing number of members. In this context respondent, Avinav Roy highlighted that *"there were no schools or colleges in the region. Almost all the youths were free. On top of that there were very few employment opportunities in the region"*. Another respondent mentioned that *"when there was no opportunity to get educated the people who were highly influenced by the communist ideology used to educate the energetic youths"*.

Furthermore, Naxalbari has a higher literacy rate compared to West Bengal today. In 2011, the literacy rate of Naxalbari was 87.09% compared to 76.26% of West Bengal. In Naxalbari Male literacy stands at 91.18% while the female literacy rate was 83.04%<sup>21</sup>. But, there was no educational institution in Naxalbari and literacy was severely less in the region. Abhijit Mazumdar, son of Charu Majumdar said *"there was no significant educational institution in Naxalbari before the movement. After completing class 12 my father himself went to East Bengal or now Bangladesh to study as there was no availability of college in the Siliguri area"*. Another respondent informed that only after the end of the conflict one missionary school was set up in the region before that there was no educational institution in the village. Thus it was known that people used to go outside to get an education. As long as there was no educational institution in the village most of the people were uneducated. However, communist ideology was circulating in Bengal at that time so rapidly. There were some people who were well-experienced communists in Naxalbari also. Arnav Roy says *"Though there were no educational institutions in the region the local people used to learn communist ideology from the active leaders. They used to teach local*

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<sup>21</sup>See-Naksalbari Village Population - Naxalbari - Darjeeling, West Bengal. (Assessed on 9/10/2022)

*people about the peasant's struggle throughout the world and their victory. They used to teach about peasant leaders like Lenin and Mao".*

Through the local people's narrative, it was known that even prior to the movement revolutionary songs and slogans were taught by the educated communist leaders in Naxalbari.

A respondent said "*singing revolutionary songs and slogans were common among the local people. Leaders used to teach all these*". However, though people of local people were getting education regarding the ideology and revolution but formal education was not common in the region. In fact, as mentioned above the leaders of the movement themselves were educated in other parts of India.

However, education is without a doubt one of the defining characteristics of Bengali middle-class identity, as is the significance placed on participation in educational institutions' existence. As a result, the majority of youth build their interest in politics or in communist ideology through formal education (Donner, 2004). Although many top party members were full-time CPI (M) many were working in educational institutions as well and they used their positions to recruit students and pupils. On top of that, the majority of the people were forced to give up their studies because of the severe financial crisis and they joined the ongoing local politics (Donner, 2004).

According to official figures, 1,75,000 graduates were unemployed in West Bengal's countryside till 1968, while another survey found that India's young unemployment rate ranged from 50 to 83 million. In West Bengal, 52 out of every hundred employable people were unemployed, while the number of educated job aspirants was 3,70,547 in 1971 (Jawaid, 1979). Not only was there a lack of jobs, but the students

were becoming frustrated and engaging in illegal activities, since they had so much free time, with the view to pave the way for a better future (Jawaid, 1979). Their main goal was to find a solution to their economic difficulties, which they believed could only be achieved by revolution. They believed that by revolutionizing, they would be able to topple the current exploitative economic system and construct a more equal political and social order modelled after that of China. Thus, students adopted the Maoist ideology (Jawaid, 1979). Meanwhile, Charu Mazumdarnot was not satisfied with the existing courses and teaching techniques. He believed that the current educational system and teaching methods would be detrimental to pupils' ability to construct a prosperous future. Universities, in his perspective, were providing irrelevant, impractical, incorrect, and flawed instruction. He believed that instead of wasting energy in union elections and acquiring an education aimed at cultivating a feudal-bourgeois attitude against the poor masses, they should go to the villages to spread the teaching of Mao Zedong. Accordingly, a huge number of students moved their activities to the villages and motivated the locals to bring them into Maoism's fold (Jawaid, 1979). Out of the 300 cases of Naxalites investigated by the police, 20% were college students and roughly 16% were dropouts; only 7% were over the age of 30, and half were under the age of 20. Police investigations also revealed that 27% of them had prior criminal convictions. There was no mature guidance, and the youth involved in these revolutionary actions did not put in a strong effort. As a result, energies that could have been used for constructive purposes were diverted into destructive channels. Because there was no proper supervision, excitement influenced toward the destruction of life and property (Jawaid, 1979).

Different types of difficulties, such as class, caste, gender, and religious conflicts, have been prevalent in India. Conflicts between Hindus and Muslims, and between

Sikhs and Muslims. Apart from religious differences, there was caste-based inequality in India (Sodhar, 2020). Dalits were highly discriminated. They were not even allowed to drink and eat from the same pots as Brahmans (Sodhar, 2020). Similarly, a minority group of people in West Bengal was confronted with the same issue. Tribal people were the name given to these outcasts. They had been living in tribal areas in the jungles, which had been isolated from the rest of the country (Sodhar, 2020). Despite all of the reports of various committees on the status of tribal areas and people, and despite promises made by Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders of the Indian National Congress, the problems of tribal people's deprivation did not go away (Sodhar, 2020).

#### **4.4. The Political Background of Naxalbari Prior to the Movement**

The Naxalite Movement was a communist movement founded around Maoist philosophy, which was also influenced by communist ideology. In Naxalbari, the communist movement emerged in 1967. However, its political roots can be traced back to the freedom struggle movement of the 1920s and 1930s.

During in 1920s Communist party was formed in India. The party introduced common people about the revolution happening around the world in the communist line. It also promised people that communist ideology can emancipate them from poverty and all type of discrimination. Thus, initially, CPI created an environment of revolution in India.

However, CPI got split into CPI and CPI (M) in 1964. CPI (M) emerged as a more radical party. The ideologue of the Naxalite Movement Charu Mazumdar was also an active member of the party. CPI(M) formed a government in India with the alliance Unite Front in West Bengal. These influenced people of West Bengal in a more

intense manner. Further, a new political party, CPI(M-L) was formed in Naxalbari based on the ideology taught by Charu Mazumdar. The further revolution was continued under the leadership of this party.

*“The history of the CPI (Maoist), which represents one of India’s two major Maoist groups, is deeply rooted in the turbulent 1960s. It was during this period that two prominent and front-ranking leaders of two streams, Charu Majumdar and Kanhai Chatterjee, emerged on the scene by applying Marxist-Leninist-Maoist principles to the concrete conditions of India and by fighting, exposing, and breaking away from the CPI and CPI (M) brand’s age-old revisionism. The great Naxalbari revolution led by comrade Charu Mazumdar in May 1967 proved to be the trumpet sound of Spring Thunder over India”, says Abhay in an interview<sup>22</sup>.*

He continued, *“when the United Front arrived, there was a lot of excitement among the people, they believed that it was their government that had come in power, and then they started making more and more demands, and those who were holding the leadership positions started to block those, because their will, their power, and their programme were not oriented towards the aspirations of the common population. They believed they needed to stabilise and strengthen the administration. Naxalbari took place in this environment”.*

Respondents stated that there was a struggle during the CPI (M) and Left Front era, and that it took time for individuals to become aware. People took time to appraise a new government that had come to power and done a few good deeds. In the sector of education, during the Congress era, the schoolmaster had to be submissive to the village jotedar; he was paid once every six months, and he used to obtain some fruits

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<sup>22</sup>see-<https://www.tkpml.com/interview-with-the-communist-party-of-india-maoist-a-k-a-the-naxalites/> (Accessed on 11/11/2022)

and vegetables, which were maybe taken from his wage. Now, in all of these areas and places, there has been a massive government expansion, the government has taken over responsibility for schools and colleges, and banks have been nationalised.

A former CPI (ML) cadre said, CPI (ML), *“Mao was to us like the Bible. For the most part, we propagated politics after Mao. I used a lot of Mao’s sayings as general guidelines in my own life. They were incredibly helpful to me in fortifying myself for communism”*.

#### **4.5. Stories from the field**

When a respondent was asked that “what comes to your mind when you think of that day, 24th of May 1967?” He answered with a deep sigh *“the landless peasants had had enough”*.

For a year, rage had been building over food scarcity, concerns of landlessness, and bonded labour. *“There was talk of revolution, but they just wanted to assert their rights”*, he recalls.

He further says, *“they had taken over the land. Then the police came, called by the jotedar. As soon as we heard about it, we set off with whatever we had-swords, bows and arrows, spears, and farming implements. The people with us, as soon as they saw the group of police and landlords, they let the arrows fly. One hit the landlord, another hit someone on the leg. The police ran away. That was the beginning”*.

The police came back in large numbers the next day, though, he recalls, and destroyed houses, broke what they could, mixed rice and lentils with dirt, and destroyed all other food. By then the spark had spread to Bengaijote, just beyond Naxalbari, and eleven protestors died by police firing that day.

*“Naxalbari had its first martyrs, and the Naxalbari movement was born. That's it”* Revolutionaries spoke of it in glowing terms: *“Spring thunder struck all over India”*. It spread to Ekwari and Mushahary in Bihar, Lakhimpur Kheri in Uttar Pradesh, parts of Punjab, and Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh, areas of pressure-cooker rural poverty and caste discrimination. In two years, in April 1969, the CPI (ML), newly formed and energized, would be powerful enough to hold a massive public rally at Shahid Minar, Martyr's Column, renamed from the earlier, colonial Ochterlony Monument in Calcutta. In a matter of weeks, most leaders were underground, several were jailed, and some were killed.

Another respondent narrated the precise story that happened in Naxalbari. He said, in April 1967, an important incident happened in Naxalbari. There was a farmer named Bhikul Kissan who had no piece of land but he used to work for a landlord Ishwar Tirkey. Bhigul used to get a very little amount of money for his work. One day, Tirkey threw him out from his land without any particular reason. Bhigul urged the local active communist leader to see the case. Kanu Sanyal was approached for the case. Kanu strategically surrounded Tirkey but he covertly escaped as he was supported by the congress government. The respondent recalled, *“it was said that when the Naxalite Movement was begun at the same time CRPF was also begun in India. Newly-made CRPF saved him. So Kanu failed in that mission”*.

Furthermore, there was another Jamindar named Nagen Roy Chaudary who was also complained about by the peasants. Unlike Tireky he was not so powerful and did not have many political contacts. So in accordance with the order of Kanu Sanyal, he was killed. To complete this mission another daring leader Jangal Santhal was chosen. The incident succeeds to bring fare to the mind of the Zamindars.



Subsequently, another incident happened in Naxalbari. Kanu Sanyal and Charu Mazumdar have given leadership to a woman named Shanti. Under the guidance of Kanu and Charu Shanti and her followers decided to snatch the land from local Jamindars and redistribute it to the local peasants. When the peasants attacked the Jamindars the police personnel resisted the movement. The movement got its impetus when a police personal, Sonam Wangdi, kicked at the stomach of a pregnant woman. It spread to other parts of West Bengal thereafter.

**Plate No. 2. Memorial at Naxalbari village, showing eleven people killed in the movement**



Source: Fieldwork, August 2022

#### **4.6. Government Responses to the Naxalbari Uprising**

The Indian government saw the Naxal rebellion as a law and order issue when it first started in 1967. It did not examine the reasons for the movement or the degree of population mobilisation. As a result, it thought that employing force, it could and would put an end to it quickly. On June 13, 1967, when the armed conflict in Naxalbari first started, the then Home Minister, Y.B Chavan, addressed the Lok Sabha and referred to it as merely “lawlessness” (Banarjee, 2002)

*“At the beginning of the movement, when a Jamindar was attacked by the peasants, to deal with the matter, Jamindars approached the West Bengal CPI (M) government, which was in power at the time. The West Bengali government used force to handle the situation or the government’s response to the movement was violent in nature. There was no indication of dialogue between the two parties. The peasants were labelled as terrorists at that particular time”,* a respondent said.

However, at first, the outbreak of violence in Naxalbari received little attention from the central government. It did little more than urge West Bengal that the matter should be handled quickly because it saw the situation largely as local law and order issue (Ghosh, 2020; 37). Despite the attention the early movement received as a result of the Communist Party of China’s support, it was too weak and uncoordinated to earn much more of a response. Naxalism managed to organize and grow throughout 1968-1969, but no official reaction was ever given. This was likely caused, as was previously noted, by the centre’s being diverted by the conflicts over leadership and other political manoeuvres that took place during these years. However, things were starting to shift by 1970. In this context, a respondent said, *“The popular phase of*

*Naxalbari, if you call that the real phase, then it's a very short period, from 1967 to 1970. After that came the repression. And that was the end".*

*"The government's response to the movement was brutal and ruthless. brutal killing and torture of helpless people. Police pick up individuals randomly and brutally abuse them. Some people died, while others were left handicapped", a respondent said.*

Nirav said, *"My father was a movement activist. He fought for the welfare of the people. However, he was arrested by the police in 1970. He told us that he was badly tortured by the authorities. They used to starve him and inject him in order to keep him alive".*

The government would battle the Naxalites with "all the strength at its command", Indira Gandhi declared on August 11, 1970 (Singh, 2006; 112). Subsequently, Operation Steeplechase, a coordinated effort by the Indian army, the Central Reserve Police Force, and local police across adjacent districts of West Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa that were still impacted by Naxalite violence, was initiated by the centre in July 1971. Steeplechase was not entirely successful because several protestors managed to elude the police dragnet. However, it did produce some notable outcomes, including the arrest of hundreds of Naxalites, the seizure of substantial quantities of weaponry, and most critically, the restoration of the rural population's faith in the authority of the government (Singh, 2006; 99-100).

In addition, New Delhi promoted a number of rural development and land reform programs in an effort to undermine the attraction of Naxalism among the wider population (Jawaid, 1978). One such initiative was the West Bengal Land Reform Act, which was passed in January 1970 (Jawaid, 1978). Despite all of the central

government's efforts, Naxal violence remained primarily a state issue. The Constitution of India gave the state control over internal security, therefore it was their decisions and actions that really mattered.

West Bengal's response to the rise of Naxalism was initially quite modest because the CPI (M) held prominent leadership posts in the United Democratic Front government. This was primarily because of conflict within the coalition (Ghosh, 2020). The CPI (M) hesitated as other parties called for a strong reaction to the initial outbreak of violence in Naxalbari. It sought to control its adventurist cadres in Siliguri, but it was afraid of losing its reputation as a revolutionary if it authorized a harsh response (Harnetiaux, 2008). Furthermore, the agitators were still CPI (M) members at this point, and the party hoped to win them back to its cause. Because of this, police responses to the rising violence until July 1967 were very limited (Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Annual Report 2006-07,1). The movement had already gained a sizable following by the time the government was obliged to respond in August and September due to a deteriorating situation. Even though the Naxalbari uprising was successfully put down in a short amount of time, the harm had already been done (Harnetiaux, 2008). In addition, the governments have passed a number of legislation to arm themselves in the fight against the Naxals. To control the rebellion, the West Bengal government implemented the West Bengal (Prevention of Violent Activities) Act 1970<sup>23</sup>.

Although the UDF was forced to dissolve itself in November 1967 due to its incapacity to govern successfully, mid-term elections saw it retake control in February 1969. With a mostly similar makeup, it proved even less able to reach a consensus on policy, especially with regard to the Naxalites. In addition to the government's failure

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<sup>23</sup> See Annexure III

to prohibit the movement, some of its constituent parties actively sought to gain the Maoists' favour in an effort to boost their support among rural voters (Jawaid, 1978; 96-97). This led to a generally inadequate security response, with the police budget actually being cut just as Midnapur and Calcutta's activity started to pick up (Jawaid, 1978; 96-97). In March 1970, the Central government imposed President's Rule in West Bengal because the coalition was hopelessly divided and the security situation was getting worse (Harnetiaux, 2008). Now that the governor was in charge, the security situation quickly got better. The Bengal Suppression of Terrorist Outrage Act of 1932 was swiftly revived, giving the police more detention authority (Jawaid, 1978; 83-84). The amount of money allocated to the state police forces more than doubled, and the number of personnel increased sharply (Jawaid, 1978; 83-84). These additional men were assigned to hotspots of Naxalite activity, including Siliguri, Midnapur, and Calcutta, and were supplemented by members of the Border Security Force of the centre. The Midnapur revolt was swiftly put down in April by a joint operation by the Indian military and the Central Reserve Police Force, in collaboration with state police (Gupta, 2007;171). Although it took some time, it eventually proved to be effective, and thousands of Naxalite cadres and supporters were killed or arrested as a result (Jawaid, 1978; 84). Mazumdar was obliged to formally stop the urban war by the end of 1971 due to increasing losses (Banerjee, 1980; 213).

#### **4.6 End of the Phase**

The movement that had burned so brightly for more than five years came to an appropriately symbolic end with his passing. With the death of its ideologue, the first phase of the Naxalite movement in India came to an end (Jawaid, 1978). Abhijit Mazumdar said, *"on July 16, 1972, my father Charu Mazumdar was arrested after*

*being removed from a safe house in the Entally neighbourhood of Kolkata. On July 28 at the age of 54, he was killed in police custody”.*

By 1972, this edition of the revolution would be pretty much over in Bengal and elsewhere, utterly steamrolled by the state. One of the worst massacres took place in August of that year in Kashipur and Baranagar areas near Calcutta, when police literally dragged out and killed known and suspected Naxals. There is no credible estimate of the numbers killed, beyond “hundreds”. Dozens disappeared, including some well-known Naxal leaders like Saroj Dutta and Sushital Roychoudhary, suave well-to-do intellectuals who looked like kindly uncles or indulgent grandfathers as ever, revolutionaries are difficult to discern till they speak, act, or wear battle garb. Skirmishes continued well into 1973, a year when the number of Naxals in jails across India exceeded 30,000.

*“The Naxalbari movement was suppressed by the government within a few months. But, it impacted Indian society greatly. Naxalbari-type movements immediately raised in Srikakulam of Andhrapradesh, Mushahari of Bihar, Lakhimpur-Keri of Utharpradesh, Bhirboom, Gopi Vallabapoor, Kanksha, Budh Budh, Sonarpoor of west Bengal, Tamilnadu and Kerala”, says Abhay.*

#### **4.7. Conclusion**

The first spark of the Naxalite Movement emerged in 1967 in Naxalbari but the formation of the movement was taking place since very long. The socio-political and economic background of India in general and Naxalbari, in particular, played a vital role to ignite the movement. Before the emergence of the Naxalite Movement in Naxalbari the socio-economic and political situation of India was not favourable. There was social political and economic crisis was rampant in the country. Similarly,

Naxalbari was facing an even more serious problem. The people of Naxalbari relied upon agriculture but the agricultural land was owned by the middle-class owners and people were given a very little amount of their earnings. These caused severe economic inequality in the region. On top of that, there was no educational institution in the region. These caused the local youths to be uneducated. In that situation, people influenced by the communist ideology were highly active in the region. They utilized the condition and spread their ideology to the local enthusiastic youths. Politically India was ruled by the then-ruling government Indian National Congress but leftist political parties were also spreading rapidly throughout the country. Similarly, in west Bengal, a left-front government was sworn in 1957. These created an environment of revolution by introducing the common people to the communist ideology and their achievements throughout the world. When the local people were influenced by the ideology and ready for the revolution the movement was started under the leadership of experienced communists like Charu Mazumdar, Kanu Sanyal, Jangal Santhal, etc. Initially, the movement started in Naxalbari but within a very short period of time, it spread to other parts. However, the ideology of the movement Charu Mazumdar was arrested in 1972, and with the arrest and the death of the ideologue the first phase of the Naxalite movement ended.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion**

Social movements are usually viewed as “collective” or “organized” activities that aim to reform societal institutions, relationships, and significant institutions such as views, attitudes, and values. They might, on the other hand, try to prevent any changes to the above-said societal structures (Ghosh, 2020). However, despite a large body of literature on the subject, a clear and cohesive definition of social movements that are widely accepted remains unclear (Diani, 1992). Social movements encompass a wide range of social and political phenomena, making it difficult to define them.

One of the important features of social movements on which there is general consensus is that social movements aim at either bringing about change or resisting change. Accordingly, another important feature of social movements on which there is broad consensus is that they are not spontaneous uprisings, but rather are primarily organized. An organization would have a leader and a working structure based on clearly defined goals and ideologies.

Naxalbari is a village in the Darjeeling District of West Bengal. It is located in the Terai region, near the base of the Himalayan Mountain Range. Nepal is located to the west of Naxalbari, across the Mechi River. It has played a major role in shaping Indian history. Naxalbari is most known for being the scene of a 1967 uprising that sparked the Naxalite-Maoist conflict which is a pan-India movement today. The events in Naxalbari took the form of a massive rebellion, gaining visibility and support in states such as West Bengal, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, and parts of Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. In today’s context, the movement which originated in Naxalbari is known by the name Naxalite movement.



On the other hand, there will be no mistake to claim that it is a social movement. According to Snow (2014), social movement can be defined by three or more of the following axes: collective or joint action; change-oriented goals or claims; some extra or non-institutional action; some degree of organization; and some degree of temporal continuity. Further, one of the important features of social movement on which there is general consensus is that social movements aim at either bringing about change or resisting change. Thus, the Naxalite movement is a social movement that intended to change their living standard by the way of revolution.

By now it is clear that Naxalism has been Influenced by Maoist ideology as during the time of the movement the activists of the movement themselves uttered the slogan, “China’s Chairman is our Chairman” and Kanu Sanyal’s visit to China to meet Mao. Furthermore, Naxalism is not only confined to India today but it has also influenced neighbouring countries like Nepal. And within a very short period of time Naxalite movement spread to other parts of the country. Naxalism keeps on spreading even after several decades of its eruption. According to the data of 2009 Naxal affected districts were 180. According to the data, Naxalism spread so rapidly and so smoothly because of its strategic location. Strategically, Naxalbari is located at India's northernmost tip, bordering Nepal on the west, Sikkim, and Bhutan on the north, and Bangladesh on the south. China, on the other hand, is not far behind.

The Naxalite movement which emerged in Naxalbari in 1967 was not just a movement that sparked in one day but the formation of the movement was taking place before the movement itself. The socio-political and economic background of India and West Bengal and Naxalbari in particular was responsible for the cause of the movement. Before the emergence of the movement, the economic condition of

India seemed very worst or disparities in economic and social dimensions wreak havoc in India, particularly in the urban areas. As mentioned by Banerjee (2008), the reports of chronic malnutrition, deaths from starvation, self-annihilation by hungry and desperate peasants, and sporadic pillaging of food godowns by men in rags and tatters were flooded in the newspaper at that time. On top of that uneven pattern of land distribution was another problem faced by the rural poor peasants.

Further, different types of difficulties, such as class, caste, gender, and religious conflicts have prevalent in India before the movement. On the other hand, Dalits, lower caste people, were considered untouchables. This proves that there was severe inequality in the economic and social spheres in India.

At the same time, Communist political parties, like CPI were taking birth in India. They claimed that they are to emancipate the people facing economic and other problems. CPI preached to the common people about the peasant revolution happening around the world and introduced their victory. This influenced the common poor people. Thus, initially communist party of India created an environment of revolution in India.

Subsequently, CPI got split in 1964 and a new political party, CPI (M) emerged. CPI (M) was more radical in nature. CPI (M) also spread throughout India within a very short period of time and it even entered into West Bengal. CPI (M) alliance with Unite Front formed the government in West Bengal. At that time similar crisis like the whole of India was happening in West Bengal.

Similarly, before the conflict Naxalbari consisted of the tribals consisting of the large part Santhal, Madesias, Oraons, Mundas, Rajbansis, and others were among the tribals. The large majority of these people have migrated from the Santhal Parganas of

Bihar. The tribes primarily survived depending on agricultural labour. Tea planting was the tribe's chief occupation of the landlord's land. They couldn't farm on the tribe's owned property unless they took those plots of land by force and violence. They could not afford enough food for themselves and their families since, despite their hard work, they only received a part of the profits which was barely enough to keep them alive. Thus, the absence of employment opportunities for young people in the country's most improvised areas, particularly in Naxalbari, permits Naxal groups to recruit an increasing number of members for the movement.

Furthermore, there was no school or college in Naxalbari but the local youths were enthusiastic to learn. At that very time, communist cadres were active in the region and taught the ideology to the local people in the form of education. In that economic and social crisis, they had no choice but to join the Maoists, who were advocating for their cause and teaching them efficient techniques to emancipate themselves, under these depressing economic conditions

The primary motivation for joining the Naxals was to assure a sufficient income. Besides that, there was a huge gap between the two classes i.e. haves and have-nots

The political background of Naxalbari is equally responsible for the emergence of the movement. As mentioned above, before the movement Communist political parties were emerging in India. The communists taught the people about the revolution and imposed that communist ideology can emancipate them from the socio-economic and political problems they are facing. Accordingly, a communist political party, CPI (M) formed the government in West Bengal. These further intensify the feeling of revolution in the mind of the poor people. The ideologue of the revolution Charu Mazumdar was also active in the party and he had also participated in another

movement, the Tebhaga movement, before the Naxalite movement. Thus, from the party, he learned the principle of the revolution. The above-discussed type of communist activities highly influenced the poor people when they were searching for a way to emancipate themselves from all kinds of discrimination in the region.

As far as the government's response to the movement is concerned it received brutal repression. Right from the very beginning government used force to tackle the conflict and there was no sign of dialogue between the two parties. However, initially, the movement received little attention from the government side. They assumed that it is a law and order issue. However, things were starting to shift by 1970. At this particular time government handled it in a violent manner.

On 16th July 1972 the ideologue of the movement, Charu Mazumdar, was arrested and later he died in police custody. After the demise of the ideologue, the intensity of the movement rapidly declined. Thus, the first phase of the Naxalite Movement ended in 1972.

Naxalbari was the village to be influenced by Maoism but today there is no sign of such ideology. It is ruled by BJP and there is no conflict in the region as such. However, Naxalism is not completely eradicated today but is still influential in some other regions of India.

The Naxalbari movement was suppressed by the government within a few months. But, it impacted Indian society greatly. Immediately Naxalbari type movements were raised in Srikakulam of Andhrapradesh, Mushahari of Bihar, Lakhimpur-Keri of Utharpradesh, Bhirboom, Gopi Vallabapoor, Kanksha, Budh Budh, Sonarpoor of west Bengal, Tamilnadu and Kerala and other parts of India.

Thus, though the first phase of the Naxalite Movement was successfully suppressed by the Government the influence of the movement has not been eradicated completely. It is a pan-India movement today which has affected a total of seventy districts of India as of 2020. It continues to be a significant issue for the entire nation and needs an amicable solution.

This study has found that the Naxalite leaders may speak of the “emancipation of the proletariat from the neoliberalist bourgeoisie and the advent of New Democracy”, but to the tribals and landless labourers who suffer from state-sponsored and non-state-sponsored exploitation, such words are meaningless. They are only engaged in the conflict as a result of their frustration with the current situation. Though the government has enacted various laws and policies in recent years, the force has largely been utilised to combat it. It shows that the government’s perspective on the conflict has shifted slightly, but not significantly. Furthermore, counterinsurgency efforts will be ineffective unless the government promotes employment, poverty reduction, and land reform programmes. The government’s policy must be built on the foundations of social justice and inclusive growth. Only through coordinated efforts on the part of the legal and political framework can socioeconomic changes be accomplished and the problem of Naxalism addressed.

Initially, when the movement started only the poor peasants, rural people or people suffering from economic disparities largely participated in the movement but in today’s context, even the urban people, particularly the educated class, have been participating in the movement through different means. It reveals that even the people’s perspective has been changed slightly to see such kind of social movement in India.

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## Appendix I



Plate No.3 Memorial at Huchainmalik, Naxalbari



Plate No. 4. Naxalbari Market



Plate No.5. A Nonagenarian Movement Participant (Respondent)



Plate No. 6. Researcher with a Respondent after Interview

## Appendix II

### List of People Martyred on 25th May 1967



#### Names of Martyrs as per the Memorial mentioned above:-

- Comrade Daneshwari Devi
- Comrade Seemashwari Mallick
- Comrade Nayaneshwari Mallick
- Comrade Surubal Barman
- Comrade Sonamati Singh
- Comrade Fulmoti Devi
- Comrade Samsari Saibani
- Comrade Gaodaro Saibani
- Comrade Kharsingh Mallick and
- Two Infants



## Appendix III

# ***The West Bengal (Prevention Of Violent Activities) Act, 1970***

***President's Act No. 19 of 1970***

WB533

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[22nd November 1970.]

An Act to provide for detention with a view to preventing violent activities and for matters connected therewith.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 3 of the West Bengal State Legislature (Delegation of Powers) Act, 1970, the President is pleased to enact as follows: -

1. Short title, extent and commencement. - (1) This Act may be called the West Bengal (Prevention of Violent Activities) Act, 1970.

(2) It extends to the whole of the State of West Bengal.

(3) It shall come into force at once.

2. Definition. - In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, "detention order" means an order made under section 3.

3. Power to make orders detaining certain persons. - (1) The State Government may, if satisfied with respect to any person that with a view to preventing him from acting in any manner prejudicial to the security of the State or the maintenance of public order, it is necessary so to do, make an order directing that such person be detained.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), the expression "acting in any manner prejudicial to the security of the State or the maintenance of public order" means -

(a) using, or instigating any person by words, either spoken or written, or by signs or by visible representations or otherwise, to use, any lethal weapon -

(i) to promote or propagate any cause or ideology, the promotion or propagation of which affects, or is likely to affect, adversely the security of the State or the maintenance of public order; or

(ii) to overthrow or to overawe the Government established by law in India.

*Explanation.* - In this clause, "lethal weapon" includes firearms, explosive or corrosive substances, swords, spears, daggers, bows and arrows; or

(b) committing mischief, within the meaning of section 425 of the Indian Penal Code, by fire or any explosive substance on any property of Government or any local authority or any corporation owned or controlled by Government or any University or other educational institution or on any public building, where the commission of such mischief disturbs or is likely to disturb, public order; or

(c) causing insult to the Indian National Flag or to any other object of public veneration, whether by mutilating, damaging, burning, defiling, destroying or otherwise, or instigating any person to do so.

*Explanation.* - In this clause, "object of public veneration" includes any portrait or statue of an eminent Indian, installed in a public place as a mark of respect to him or to his memory; or

(d) committing, or instigating any person to commit, any offence punishable with death or imprisonment for life or imprisonment for a term extending to seven years or more or any offence under the Arms Act, 1959 or the Explosive Substances Act, 1908, where the commission of such offence disturbs, or is likely to disturb, public order; or

(e) in the case of a person referred to in clauses (a) to (f) of section 110 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, committing any offence punishable with imprisonment where the commission of such offence disturbs, or is likely to disturb public order.

(3) Any of the following officers, namely:-

(a) District Magistrates,

(b) Additional District Magistrates specially empowered on this behalf by the State Government,

(c) in the Presidency-town of Calcutta, the Commissioner of Police, Calcutta,

may, if satisfied as provided in sub-section (1), exercise the power conferred by the said sub-section.

(4) When any order is made under this section by an officer specified in sub-section (3), he shall forthwith report the fact to the State Government together with the grounds on which the order has been made and such other particulars as in his

opinion have a bearing on the matter and no such order shall remain in force for more than twelve days after the making thereof unless, in the meantime, it has been approved by the State Government.

(5) When any order is made or approved by the State Government under this section, the State Government shall, as soon as may be, report the fact to the Central Government together with the grounds on which the order has been made and such other particulars as, in the opinion of the State Government, have a bearing on the necessity for the order.

4. Execution of detention orders. - A detention order may be executed at any place in the State of West Bengal in the manner provided for the execution of warrants of arrest under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.

5. Power to regulate place and conditions of detention. - Every person in respect of whom a detention order has been made shall be liable -

(a) to be detained in such place and under such conditions, including conditions as to maintenance, discipline and punishment for breaches of discipline, as the State Government may, by general or special order, specify; and

(b) to be removed from one place of detention to another place of detention, within the State of West Bengal, by order of the State Government.

6. Detention orders are not to be invalid or inoperative on certain grounds. - No detention order shall be invalid or inoperative merely by reason -

(a) that the person to be detained thereunder, though within the State of West Bengal, is outside the limits of the territorial jurisdiction of the officer making the order; or

(b) that the place of detention of a such person, though within the State of West Bengal, is outside the limits of the territorial jurisdiction of the officer making the order.

7. Powers in relation to absconding persons. - (1) If the State Government or an officer specified in sub-section (3) of section 3, as the case may be, has reason to believe that a person in respect of whom a detention order has been made has absconded or is concealing himself so that the order cannot be executed, that Government or officer may -

- (a) make a report in writing of the fact to a Presidency Magistrate or a Magistrate of the first class having jurisdiction in the place where the said person ordinarily resides; and thereupon the provisions of sections 87, 88 and 89 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, shall apply in respect of the said person and his property as if the order directing that he be detained, were a warrant issued by the Magistrate;
- (b) by order notified in the Official Gazette direct the said person to appear before such officer, at such place said within such period as may be specified in the order; and if the and person fails to comply with such direction, he shall, unless he proves that it was not possible for him to comply therewith and that he had, within the period specified in the order, informed the officer mentioned in the order of the reason, which rendered compliance therewith impossible and of his whereabouts, be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine, or with both.

(2) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, every offence under clause (b) of sub-section (1) shall be cognizable.

8. Grounds of the order of detention to be disclosed to the person affected by the order. - (1) When a person is detained in pursuance of a detention order, the authority making the order shall, as soon as may be, but not later than five days from the date of detention, communicate to him the grounds on which the order has been made, and shall afford him the earliest opportunity of making a representation against the order to the State Government.

(2) Nothing in sub-section (1) shall require the authority to disclose facts which it considers to be against the public interest to disclose.

9. Constitution of Advisory Boards. - (1) The State Government shall, whenever necessary; constitute one or more Advisory Boards for the purposes of this Act.

(2) Every such Board shall consist of three persons who are, or have been, or are qualified to be appointed as, Judges of a High Court, and such persons shall be appointed by the State Government.

(3) The State Government shall appoint one of the members of the Advisory Board who is or has been a Judges of a High Court to be its Chairman.

10. Reference to Advisory Boards. - In every case where a detention order has been made under this Act, the State Government shall, within thirty days from the date of detention under the order, place before the Advisory Board, constituted by it under section 9, the grounds on which the order has been made and the representation, if any, made by the person affected by that order, and in the case where the order has been made by an officer specified in sub-section (3) of section 3, also the report made by a such officer under sub-section (4) of section 3.

11. Procedure of Advisory Boards. - (1) The Advisory Board shall, after considering the materials placed before it and, after calling for such further information as it may deem necessary from the State Government or from any person called for the purpose through the State Government or from the person concerned, and if in any particular case it considers it essential so to do or if the person concerned desires to be heard, after hearing him in person, submit its report to the State Government within ten weeks from the date of detention.

(2) The report of the Advisory Board shall specify in a separate part thereof the opinion of the Advisory Board as to whether or not there is sufficient cause for the detention of the person concerned.

(3) When there is a difference of opinion among the members forming the Advisory Board, the opinion of the majority of such members shall be deemed to be the opinion of the Board.

(4) Nothing in this section shall entitle any person against whom a detention order has been made to appear by any legal practitioner in, any matter connected with the reference to the Advisory Board, and the proceedings of the Advisory Board and its report, excepting that part of the report in which the opinion of the Advisory Board is specified, shall be confidential.

12. Action upon the report of Advisory Board. - (1) In any case where the Advisory Board has reported that there is, in its opinion, sufficient cause for the detention of a person, the State Government may confirm the detention order and continue the detention of the person concerned for such period as it thinks fit.

(2) In any case where the Advisory Board has reported that there is, in its opinion, no sufficient cause for the detention of the person concerned, the State Government shall revoke the detention order and cause the person to be released forthwith.

13. Maximum period of detention. - The maximum period for which any person may be detained in pursuance of any detention order which has been confirmed under section 12 shall be twelve months from the date of detention.

14. Revocation of detention order. - (1) Without prejudice to the provisions of section 22 of the Bengal General Clauses Act, 1899, a detention order may at any time be revoked or modified by the State Government notwithstanding that the order has been made by an officer specified in sub-section (3) of section 3.

(2) The revocation or expiry of a detention order shall not bar the making of a fresh detention order under section 3 against the same person in any case where fresh facts have arisen after the date of revocation or expiry on which the State Government or an officer specified in sub-section (3) of section 3, as the case may be, is satisfied, that such an order should be made.

15. Temporary release of persons detained. - (1) The State Government may at any time direct that any person detained in pursuance of a detention order may be released for any specified period either without conditions or upon such conditions specified in the direction as that person accepts, and may at any time cancel his release.

(2) In directing the release of any person under sub-section (1), the State Government may require him to enter into a bond with or without sureties for the due observance of the conditions specified in the direction.

(3) Any person released under sub-section (1) shall surrender himself at the time and place, and to the authority, specified in the order directing his release or cancelling his release, as the case may be.

(4) If any person fails without sufficient cause to surrender himself in the manner specified in sub-section (3), he shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years, or with a fine, or with both.

(5) If any person released under sub-section (1) fails to fulfil any of the conditions imposed upon him under the said sub-section or in the bond entered into by him, the bond shall be declared to be forfeited and any person bound thereby shall be liable to pay the penalty thereof.

16. Protection of action taken under the Act. - No suit or other legal proceeding shall lie against the State Government, and no suit, prosecution or other legal proceedings shall lie against any person, for anything in good faith done or intended to be done in pursuance of this Act

### **Reasons for the enactment**

There is increasing anxiety over the continuing violent activities, in West Bengal, of the "Naxalites", other similar extremist groups, and anti-social elements operating with them. As the existing laws have been found to be inadequate for dealing with the situation, it is necessary to vest the State administration with powers to detain persons to prevent them from indulging in the aforesaid activities. It is, therefore, proposed to enact this Bill.

2. The Committee constituted under the proviso to sub-section (2) of section 3 of the West Bengal State Legislature (Delegation of Powers) Act, 1970 (17 of 1970), has been consulted before the enactment of this measure as a President's Act.

Source: <https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/14566/1/1970-19.pdf> (Accessed on 16/11/2022)