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Title: Socio-economic Exclusion: A Comparative Study of Naxalite Movement in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra

The problem of Naxalism continues to remain an eye sore not only for powers that be but also some regions of the Indian Society. It is unfortunate that the issue was not addressed in a proper perspective and several interpretations were offered to understand the genesis of the problem. This thesis is an analytical exercise to understand the primary root causes of the Naxal problem and the narration revealed in the thesis essentially point to the basic issue of marginalization of the forest dwellers, ironically, by the very government that is meant for their protection. Needless to mention, that security of the citizens is the paramount duty of any given state to ensure good governance and the all round development of not only the society at large but also the individual per se.

It is no secret that lands form the basic source of sustenance for the forest dwellers and for centuries together they have been dependent on lands for survival. It is unfortunate that the governments of the day not only snatches their lands in an arbitrary manner thus alienating them from their prime source of sustenance but at the same time allots the lands to the Multinational Corporations in the name of development. It is at this juncture that the victimization of forest dwellers begins invoking the element of militancy in them to take up arms against the government in turn as a measure of retaliation to be suppressed by the government by resorting to draconian measure like the Chhattisgarh Special Public Safety Act 2005, Salwa Judum or the Greyhound. Several state agencies also indulge in structural violence involving restrictive forest policy, land acquisition for industrial projects, and deficient resettlement measures. Further even non-violent protests in this regard are suppressed violently using security forces.

All these add to the frustration in the forest inhabitant and a loss of confidence in the state machinery of these areas, facilitating a climate and opportunity congenial for the Naxals to seize and utilize. Further, a nexus between the Naxalites and political leaders is evident for their mutual advantage. The politicians seek the help of the rebels during elections, while the Naxalites benefit from loose prosecution and minor interventions from the state. It is a sordid saga that the state machineries look at Naxalism largely as a law and order issue and a problem of security concern and not as a social movement to address the long sufferings of the tribal people. Consequently, the government simply resorts to a symptomatic resolution of the problem on a short term basis instead of a long term policy initiative to find everlasting remedy at its very root. As such, this attitude of the state towards Naxalism further complicates it and strengthens the movement. Hence, it may not be an exaggeration to argue that the government is equally responsible and has a fair share in promoting Naxalism. A direct consequence of this mindset of the people in power made them suspect every individual who showed concern for the welfare of the suffering tribals as a sympathizer of Naxalism and even branded them as Naxalites.

The history of Naxalism in the country, the initial agenda with which it was launched as a tirade against exclusion of certain groups, the various phases in which the protest evolved and grew into a social movement over the years, the inertia and callousness shown by the state machinery

in addressing the issue in the beginning itself, the advent of globalization and resultant euphoria of the governments for modernization, all vindicate the hypothesis formulated in the thesis that socio-economic exclusion and neglect of the Adivasis and marginalized strata of society are the root causes for the growth, militancy, violence and even terrorism.

Therefore it is pertinent to look at the whole issue from the developmental perspective to alleviate the perception of alienation of particularly the Adivasis and tribals from the mainstream. It is not to deny that in the name of good governance, economic benefits have simply passed over to specific parts of the affected areas and the Naxalites continue to thrive in this vacuum created by the inadequacy of administrative and political institutions espousing local demands, taking advantage of the prevalent injustice among the exploited segments of the population. As a counter to the Naxal ideology, developing an alternative programme to undertake developmental activities such as literacy, health and housing in Naxal affected areas is a prerequisite. The role of intelligence and the role of NGO's in this regard become equally vital.

Social exclusion is a big curse on this part of the planet. It has turned in to a powerful form of discriminatory practices, segregating groups of people from the social, political, economic, cultural, educational and religious domains and generating a sense of superiority and inferiority among the members of the same culture eventually culminating into a system of domination and subjugation and its resultant effects - oppression and exploitation.

A comparison of the Naxalite movement in Andhra Pradesh with that of Maharashtra, though, indicates a number of commonalities, particularly concerning unleashing of violence, use of weapons, intimidating the government officials, incidence of arsons, nevertheless, the two movements cannot be treated at par with each other. These movements are region specific and context specific. The Naxalite movement in Andhra Pradesh has a long history, which has its roots in the tribal rebellion supported by the farmers against the feudal order of the Nizam regime, which is remembered as the first Telangana Movement that provided impetus to the rise of Naxalism in the Naxalbari region of West Bengal. The Naxalite movement in Andhra Pradesh is guided much by the Left philosophy whereas that philosophy gets marginally diluted when the movement reaches Maharashtra.

Today, the government seems to be caught in the dichotomy between the forces of globalization and the indigenous tribes whose sole earning source remains land which the promoters of globalization are eyeing. A via media, to reconcile the two contradictory forces, is the need of the hour. Unless the unfinished tasks of the agrarian reforms, provision of bare minimum livelihood, sense of security and protection from state discrimination and unless a check on the haphazard and unplanned transfer of forest and agricultural lands to the industry, mining and agri-business mafia is completed, Naxalism would continue to remain an attractive proposition to the impoverished and oppressed mass of the people.