

# CONTOURS OF DISSENT: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS INTERPRETING THE NAXAL MOVEMENT

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**Abstract:** The current article critically analyzes the origin and course of the Naxalite Movement in the context of social movement theories. It endeavors to question whether the Naxalite phenomenon can be considered a social movement in the sociological context, and how far prevailing theoretical models can adequately explain its development. Basing itself largely on the classical Marxian analysis—specifically its focus on class struggle and structural inequality—the article uses this theoretical framework as an analytical tool to understand the socio-economic realities that bred and nourished the movement in the long term. Methodologically, it is founded on a triangulated method using both primary (via field observations and interviews) and secondary (such as archival documents, scholarly texts, and government reports) sources of information to get an in-depth as well as holistic view of the movement's dynamics and significance.

**Keywords:** Paradigm; Naxal; Institutionalization; Mobilization; Identity; Social Movement.

## INTRODUCTION

The Naxalite movement is essentially a class-based movement that highlights the structural conflict between the underprivileged and the privileged—basically, a conflict between the "haves" and the "have-nots." A perceptive look reveals that the origin of the movement was characterized by a prevalent socio-economic rift, with the result that a strong wave of resentment against systemic inequities arose. Against this backdrop, the researcher considered it appropriate to analyze the movement in the framework of traditional social movement theory in Indian society. Theoretical accounts of social movements in general, and the Naxalite movement specifically, are marked by ideological diversities of orientation and changing paradigms. These accounts not only represent divergent conceptual schemes but also flow from alternative socio-political environments, leading to diverse explanations. For this reason, the movement's discourse is filled with competing narratives influenced by both changing academic thinking and changing ground realities.

The essay "Contours of Dissent: Theoretical Frameworks Interpreting the Naxal Movement" is a must-read for scholars, policy researchers, and students of one of India's most enduring socio-political rebellions. It provides an overarching analytical prism to interpret the ideological, structural, and systemic origins of the Naxal movement using classical sociological theory. By an in-depth analysis of the intersection between class struggle, repression by the state, and disparity

in development, the article promotes a more profound understanding of revolutionary dissent dynamics. It also creates a theoretical foundation through which one can assess state reaction and policy implications for areas of conflict.

This article is organized into four different sections. The conceptual framework of social movements is described in the first section. The institutionalization and mobilization processes are the center of attention in the second section. The third section analyzes the dynamics of identity formation within movements. The fourth section finally engages with the applicability and utility of classical Marxian theory while analyzing the emergence and growth of the Naxalite movement in India.

## THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Wilkinson (1971) defines social movement as a deliberate collective endeavour to promote change in any direction and by any means, not excluding violence, illegality, revolution or withdrawal into utopian community. A social movement must evince a minimal degree of organization, though this may range from a loose, informal or partial level of organization to the highly institutionalized and bureaucratized movement and the corporate group. As defined in the Encyclopedia Britannica, social movement is "loosely organized but sustained campaign in support of a social goal,

typically either the implementation or the prevention of a change in society's structure or values. Although SMs differ in size, they are all essentially collective. That is, they result from the more or less spontaneous coming together of people whose relationships are not defined by rules and procedures but who merely share a common outlook on society.”

Melluci (1995) has defined social movement as a form of collective action, which is based on solidarity, carrying on a conflict, breaking the limits of the system in which action occurs. These dimensions, which are entirely analytical, enable one to separate social movements from other collective phenomena, which are very often empirically associated with movement and protest.

Whittier (2002: 289): Social movements are neither fixed nor narrowly bounded in space, time, or membership. Instead, they are made up of shifting clusters of organizations, networks, communities, and activist individuals, connected by participation in challenges and collective identities through which participants define the boundaries and significance of their groups.

Blumer (1969) has classified social movements as general or specific. General movements involve a change of values across society—for example, changes in the views and status of women brought about by the women's movement. These movements are not sharply focused on methods, which may actually be diffuse, with different branches of the movement supporting different activities (letter-writing campaigns, sit-ins, hiring a lobbyist, etc..

David (1966) has described four types of social movement including: alternative, redemptive, reformative and revolutionary social movements based upon two characteristics (1) who is the movement attempting to change and (2) how much change is being advocated.

Gough (1968) has conceptually classified movements into five types in terms of goals, ideology and methods of organization:

- 1) Restorative rebellious efforts to derive out the British rule and restore earlier rules and social relations.
- 2) Religious movements for liberations of a region or an ethnic group under a new form of government

3) Social band

4) Terrorist Vengeance; with ideas of meeting out collective justice

5) Mass insurrections for the redress of popular grievance.

Dhanagre (1975) has also applied a class framework in the analysis of social movements. He studied the peasant movements which took place in India between 1920 and 1950. He argues that it is very difficult to use the class model in the analysis of the agrarian social structure in a traditional society. Despite this difficulty, Dhanagre has made an attempt to apply Marxian perspectives in the study of some of the important agrarian movements namely, the Mophla rebellion, Tebhaga, Champaran rebellion and the Bardoli Satyagraha Peasant movements run by the left parties. Oommen (2010), a noted writer on social movement, has depicted three important approaches to the study of social movement: historical, psychological and sociological. Oommen (1972) gives a picture of that if the ideology of a movement emerges first it will have primacy over other aspects, viz., organization and leadership, which may subsequently emerge.

Mukherjee (1972), a noted scholar in social movement says ‘a social movement is a product of the social structure and has consequences for it, it is an agent of change and at the same time it has a target on which it operates’. To him, the studies of social movement should emphasize on evolution and structure of the movement, its ideology, its sequential progression or regression, its mistakes and so on, with hardly any analysis of the causes of its emergence.

P.N. Mukherjee (1979) argues that the Naxalbari struggle like the Tebhaga is yet another instance of the use of non-institutionalized means for securing intra-systemic changes. However, neither the objective conditions nor the subjective preparations warranted such a strategy.

Rudolf (1951) perceives social movements as a "collectivity" having a group identity and a set of constitutive ideas. Social movements attempt to bring about fundamental changes in the social order especially in property and labor relations. In sum, social movements derive from institutional inadequacies in a given society. Rao (2008) analyses that transformative movements aim at

bringing about middle level structural changes in the traditional distribution of power and in the system of differential allocation of resources, rights and privileges by attacking the monopoly of the upper classes and castes in different areas of the including religion.

Shah (2002) writes that objectives, ideology, programmes, leadership, and organization are important components of social movements. They are independent, influencing each other. The objectives of the movement change from narrow particular local issues to broad aims of social transformation.

Castells (1996) explains this notion by using other words: identity means the self definition of the movement, what movement is, in the name of whom the movement speaks; opponent - the principle of opposition - is the in adversary of the movement, which the movement designates consciously as such; societal objective - the principle of totality - is the idea the movement has on the type of social order, or social organization, to which it wishes to lead toward a historical horizon of its collective action.

Wilson(1973) describes the movement organization is not a separate entity either, however; it is a manifestation of behavioural practices and characteristics of certain kind which can be more or less present in the various segments of the movement.

SMOs as organizers of collective movement actions are most of the time involved in two different but overlapping types of discourses - internal and external. The internal discourse centres on organizational matters and the mobilization of resources (McCarthy and Zald 1977). It mainly concerns building the ideology and identity of the movement and devising the interpretive packages with which people can be mobilized into action and funds assembled (Snow and Benford 1988, Gamson 1988, 1992; Klandermans 1988; Tarrow 1994).

Frank and Fuentes (1987) emphasized that social movements are not anti-systemic in the sense that they do not attempt and succeed to destroy the system and replace it by another one or none at all. They added that the systemic means, ends and consequences of social movement are to modify the system only by changing its systemic linkages.

Klandermans (1997) says that movement participation is the outcome of a process consisting of four different types; being a sympathiser, being targeted by Mobilization attempts, becoming motivated to participate and actually participating. Tischler (2010) has defined a social movement is a form of collective behaviour in which large numbers of people are organised or altered to support and bring about or to resist social change. By their very nature, social movement is an expression of dissatisfaction with the ways things are or with changes that are about to take place. Furthermore, he says, for people to join a social movement, they must think that their own values, needs, goals or beliefs are being stifled or challenged by the social structure or specific individual, people feel that this situation is undesirable and that something must be done to set things right.

David Aberle (1966) had suggested that "relative deprivation" is a necessary condition for precipitating social movements, however, later research, has identified ideology, informal or formal organization and orientation to change as the other necessary ingredients for sprouting SMs.

## INSTITUTIONALIZATION

The concept of institutionalization can be better understood by analyzing the mobilization aspects of the movement and the conceptual framework of the movement.

Mobilization attempts by a movement organization have the aim of winning participants. That is, persuading people to support the movement organization by material or non-material means. Mobilization attempts always contains two components i.e. consensus mobilization and action mobilization. The first one refers to a process through which a social movement tries to obtain support for its viewpoints. It involves (a) collective good (b) a movement strategy(c) confrontation with the opponent (d) result achieved.

The action mobilization is the process by which an organization in a social movement calls up people to participate. Consensus mobilization does not necessarily go together with action mobilization, but action mobilization cannot go without consensus mobilization. Action mobilization involves motivating people to

participate. Smelser (1971) writes that consensus mobilization bears resemblances to the spread of generalized beliefs. Consensus mobilization is a purposeful effort of social movement organization.

Oberschall (1997) defines that mobilization refers to the process through which individual, group members resources are surrendered, assembled and committed for obtaining common goals for defending group interests. Because, the mobilization is facilitated or impeded by the internal organization and structure of collectivity, group structure is a major variable in the analysis. The extent and forms of collective goals depend on levels of mobilization and on repertoires of collective action.

Singhroy (2004) has rightly analyzed that due to persisting agricultural backwardness, poverty, unemployment, non-availability Potential Avenue of alternative employment, increasingly marginal sizes of land holding, lack of appropriate technology for cultivation have provided the backdrop for the sustenance of mobilization. Women are used as the principal instrument to mobilize the villagers/peasants, tribals for mass mobilization. Mass mobilization results in collective action.

Rao (2005) describes that collective mobilization, which is crucial in movement, is not only related to ideology, but to the nature of leadership and organization. He notes that in case of charismatic leadership, collective mobilization tends to be spontaneous. The process of recruitment, which is an important aspect of collective mobilization, tends to be highly diversified, depending on the talents of the people involved.

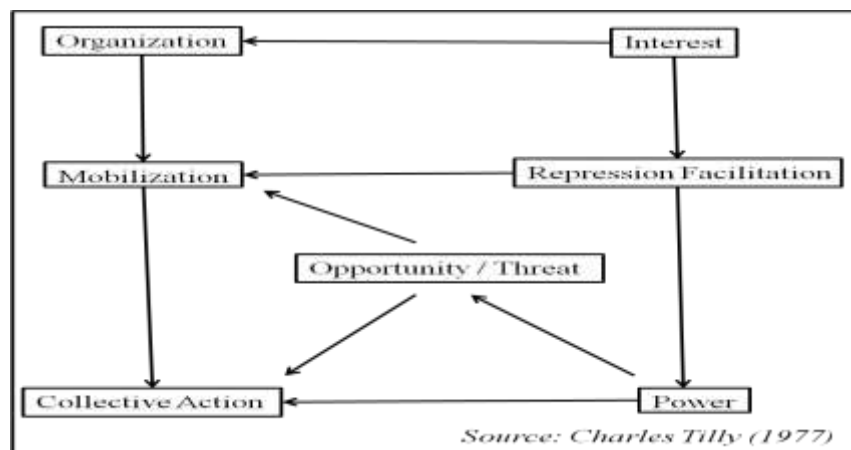
Mohanty (2013) Collective mobilization gives people a collective identity, the strength of solidarity and a common goal in their struggle. People come together to act collectively for a bigger purpose -- against colonialism, for civil rights and social justice, gender equality, peace, protection of the environment. People also act collectively for their everyday survival needs – water, housing, education, electricity. The goal of collective mobilization is the public good as opposed to individual gains.

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Mukherjee writes (1987)” Any social mobilization for action directed explicitly towards an alteration or transformation of the structure(s) of a system, or against an explicit threat to an alteration or transformation of a system, can be properly understood as a social movement. Mobilizations aimed at changes within a system are quasi-movements. Social movements of an explicitly transformatory character are revolutionary movements.”

The Naxalites adopt a specific mobilization tactics to indoctrinate common people to their organization. Their mobilization method is highly impressive and attracts people to join the group to fulfill their interests.

**Figure 1:** Schematic Form of Mobilization Model.



This diagram clearly reflects the main determinants of a group's mobilization are its organization, its interest in possible interaction with other contenders, the current opportunity or threat of those interactions and the group's subjection to repression. The diagram represents that the group's subjection to repression is mainly a function of the sort of interest it represents. It treats the extent of a contender's collective action as a resultant of its power, its mobilization and the opportunities and threats confronting its interest. Interest refers to the shared advantages or disadvantages likely to accrue to the population in question as a consequence of various possible interactions with other populations. Here the organization refers to the extent of common identity and unifying structure among the individuals in the population. Here they develop common identity and the common identity develops collective interest and the collective interest reproduces collective action among the group members. Tilly (1977) says that the collective action refers to the contenders' joint action in pursuit of common ends, as a process, the joint action itself.

The Communist Party of India mobilized the landless peasants, laborers, tribals and other marginalized masses to establish their rights and position in the society. It mobilized peasants, landless labourers and tribal class people by studying their socio-economic problems and later propagandized the exploitation and oppression of the same class by the upper class people. The lower class people became class conscious through the process of mobilization and developed their specific class interest. Their class awareness motivated them to develop collective action to annihilate the monopoly of landlords and bourgeois elements. When the landless peasants and tribals directly challenged the power structure of landlords and capitalists, the oppressor group (landlords) threatened the oppressed group (landless) and used different power plays to repress their movement. This ignites discontent and dissatisfaction among the rural bourgeoisie. The collective action of the backward class certainly threatened the power structure of the bourgeois class. It facilitated the backward mass by giving them rights/power over their own land. No doubt, the cost of collective action favoured the interests of the marginalized. At present the Naxalites directly challenge the bourgeois structure of India's democracy. They have been mobilizing the rural

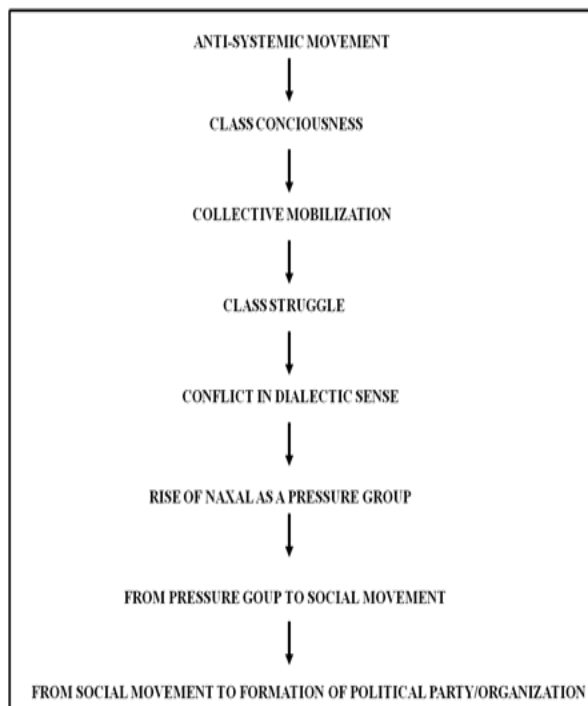
people to join the movement to replace the bourgeois form of democracy in order to establish people's democracy. The Naxalites emphasize on mass mobilization to build a strong people's army to wage violent revolution against the state to capture political power. They have threatened the power structure of the state and established their liberated zone. The objectives of Naxalites are to delink the common mass from the capitalist mode of production and mobilize them for transition to socialism.

At present, the Naxalites identify themselves as a strong group who hold a common and collective belief to strengthen their organization. They have their own standard name which is known to their members and non-members alike. The members of the group have appeared in the public as a group identified by a particular name. They have standard symbols, slogans, songs, styles of dress and other identification marks. The Naxalite groups hold more than one organization in which the members of the group recognize their authority, who represents the members and speak for the group. The Naxalite groups have well-organized structures and spaces which are open to members of the group as a whole. The organizations of the Naxalites run by the groups exercise control over its group members' allocation of time and energy in the name of the group.

The concept of institutionalization can be better understood after explaining the conceptual framework of the movement. A conceptual framework is a tool researchers use to guide their inquiry; it is a set of ideas used to structure the research, a sort of map that may include the research question, the literature review, methods and data analysis. Researchers use a conceptual framework to guide their data collection and analysis. If, for example, the researcher wanted to know whether boys did better than girls in a certain subject then he might look at literature on the development of both sexes, and on the methods of socialization of boys and girls as this could influence what subjects were of interest. The researcher would then look at existing literature on male and female development and socialization as this would help to clarify what questions she should ask e.g. are girls more interested in history when it is concerned with actual people or do boys prefer the history of battles etc. The ways in which boys and girls viewed a subject could influence their progress in that area.

The Naxalite movement is an anti-systemic movement. The anti-state activities of Naxals have threatened the basic structure and function of Indian Democracy and posed a serious law and order problem within the state in general and Koraput in particular. Naxal movement is posing a great threat to the state political establishment and civil society as it is challenging the very legitimacy of Indian political system. Naxalites threat to the development of government as well as public sector in the state. They threat the government officials, contractors and other agents of government. Naxalites terrorize people by blowing police stations, panchayat offices and other establishment of the government. The state calls this movement anti-democratic, anti-state and anti-peoples movement as they do not participate in democratic political process. So, all these factors combine Naxalite movement as an anti-systemic movement.

**Figure 2:** Concept Defined.



In Naxalite movement, the landless and tribal people have been exploited and subjugated by the landlords for many centuries. Though they were living in their class system, they were not aware about their class position. Marx terms this as Class-in-itself. They realize the pain of oppression and unwanted exploitation. Due to lack of awareness about the class interest, they do not raise their voice against the Socio-economic oppression of landlords, moneylenders, forest officials and wine

traders. The grinding poverty, the rising inequality and poor governance in rural and tribal areas have invited the Naxalite leaders to start their mobilization campaign in the backward regions of Odisha.

Naxalite movement has possessed mobilization potential. In this movement, landless peasants, labourers and tribals are prepared in a general way to engage in action campaign to attain the goals pursued by the Naxalites. Collective mobilization gives the tribals a collective identity, the strength of solidarity and a common goal in their struggle. They develop a sense of loyalty to the group. The tribals are integrated into groups activity is likely to develop a sense that their group is entitled to certain collective goods as a matter of right and justice.

People from different rural and tribal hamlet come together to act collectively for a bigger purpose – to overthrow the capitalist society. The Naxalite leaders adopt unique strategy to mobilize the backward people. They survey the villages and identify the socio-economic problem of marginalized. They mobilize people collectively by propagandizing against government's failure in providing them good governance, continuous exploitation of Zamindars, exploitation of police officials, forest officials and other agents of bourgeoisie society. They organize meetings, folk dance, folk song and drama to mobilize the target mass to accept their ideology. They campaign to prove the collective strength as a pressure mechanism to fight against government. They also impart education on Mao's ideology. In this way different tribal people are brought into face to face interaction and they become conscious about their class position and prepare themselves for collective action. Through collective mobilization the Naxalites indoctrinate the tribal and other members (of same class position) into their revolutionary group to raise their arm and ammunition against the class enemies to establish a classless society. They convince them that the present form government is ruled by capitalists. This is against people's democracy. In order to replace the present form of government, all the defined class members have to adopt protracted peoples war to annihilate the class enemies. The collective mobilization has certainly developed the class-consciousness among the suffered mass and prepared them to fight against their enemy collectively. Through collective

mobilization, the tribals could easily think and understand their situation and organize and initiate action for their recovery within their own initiative and creativity. Collective mobilization helps them to organise to take action collectively by developing their own plan and strategy.

Heberle(1951) writes that class consciousness usually evolves gradually. Factors which tend to arouse class consciousness are (1) threats to the economic interest of certain groups of individuals, such as small farmers felling encroached upon by planters or ranchers.(2) factory workers feeling exploited by employers;(3) large number of people in the same economic position living together in a local community or(4) a manifest division of the population of the community into separate, economically determined groups. Class consciousness develops not by reasoning, but arises from repeated experiences of class differentiation, discrimination, and antagonism.

Collective class-consciousness is the most important aspect of social movement. It means the awareness of individuals in a particular social class that they share common interests and a common social situation. Class-consciousness is associated with the development of a 'class-for-itself' where individuals within the class unite to pursue their shared interests. Class-consciousness means a social class, sharing common conditions of life, and a social movement organised around a demand for justice and a vision of the future.

In Naxalite movement, the landless and tribal people have been exploited and subjugated by the Landlord for many centuries. Though they were living in their class system, they were not aware about their class position. Marx terms this as Class-In-Itself. Through the process of collective mobilization, class-in-itself has been transformed into Class-For-Itself. Class-For-Itself refers to a class of individual's conscious of sharing a common social situation and who unite to pursue common interests. The more the group becomes conscious about the class, the more are the collective mobilization results in collective action. This collective action of the landless tribals resulted in class struggle. This class struggle continues throughout the history. For example many communist ideologues under the charismatic leadership of Nagabhusan Patnaik, mobilized the poor and exploited landless peasants and tribal at Koraput, to have their right over the land. The

collective mobilization of the tribals by the communist revolutionaries developed a strong sense of class-consciousness and prepared them for class struggle. This class struggle became known as Naxalite movement.

The class struggle between the landlords and the landless resulted in conflict in dialectic sense. The term dialectic refers to belief that social organization, culture and intellectual ideas change because of the development of contradictions that create challenges to the existing state of affairs and lead to the emergence of something new from this tension. Marx says that the contradictions arise in capitalism and the resolution of these contradictions produces a new type of social and economic system. This suggests that the seeds of capitalism's demise or transformation are located within capitalism and are not generated from outside. In brief", states Lenin, "dialectics can be defined as the doctrine of the unity of opposites. This embodies the essence of dialectics. It is the class struggle — the struggle between the capitalist and landowning classes, on the one hand, and the proletariat and peasantry, on the other — that creates the dynamic of history. The laws of historical dialectics are seen to be so powerful that individual leaders are of little historical consequence. Dialectical materialism has a crucial role to play in helping revolutionaries formulate their strategy and tactics in such a way that they reflect the needs of the situation and consider all the relevant factors.

Dialectical materialism is the revolutionary arm of the proletariat. The dialectical method applied to every stage of the class struggle, illuminates the path, assists in turning the ideas into a material force and brings closer the day when men and women can pass over from the realm of necessity into the realm of human freedom.

Collective mobilization and higher class consciousness converted the Naxalites into strong pressure groups. Useem and Zald (1982) write that pressure groups are ordinarily part of the polity. The set of groups that can routinely influence government decisions and can ensure that their interests are normally recognized in the decision making process. When pressure groups take actions to influence the government, they normally rely on previously mobilized constituencies. Pressure groups, on the other hand employ a political systems conventional forms of collective action.

Zald and Ash (1966) explains that a social movement organization becomes a pressure group when it gains routine representation in, and access to, the government. The new member of the polity may still use the rhetoric of a social movement, but in actual behaviour and tactical form the movement resembles other groups in polity. It moves from outside to inside the legislative and administrative arenas. Much of the sociological interpretation of the transformation of social movement emphasizes the reutilization, institutionalization and growing conservatism of organization that once led vital social movement.

The Naxalite movement qualifies as a social movement in so far as it has mobilized an uncommitted constituency, lost much of its ability to routinely influence the government policy and emphasized a new repertoire of social movement tactics. The transformation of Naxal forces from a pressure group to a social movement was response a threat to its polity. The Naxalite as a pressure group has challenged the feudal structure of Indian democracy. They have systematically organized the mass; collectively mobilize the weaker section to emerge as a pressure group against the feudal mentality of government officials and bureaucrats.

The Naxalites as pressure group promotes the causes of the landless tribals in Odisha. They influence the administrative structure of the government through their armed struggle in order to discourage privatization, globalization and investment of foreign capital for the establishment of industry and factory in tribal region. They are building pressure on government by kidnapping bureaucrats and political executives, killing police officials, bombarding police stations and destroying police network system. The Naxalites, from a pressure group, develops into large informal group defined by shared political commitment and encourages the attributes of both pressure groups and political parties. Gradually, they adopt different non- institutionalized means to reform or alternate the present form of social structure in Odisha. The Naxalite groups continue their effort to bring change in socio-political structure of the society, backed by the mass support and continue its armed struggle for a longer time to reach the movement goal. Naxalites advance their particular claims, cultivating alliances, employing a definite political strategies and tactics by affecting the mainstream of institutional politics and policy. Naxalite movement is continuous series of

collective actions which aims at binging radical change in the structure and function of the state. Naxalite movements have a high degree of organization and are of longer duration.

Naxalites adopt both institutionalized and non-institutionalized methods. They adopt non- violent means (Institutionalized means) like strike, boycott, propaganda, leaflets, posters, public rallies, protest marches, judicial body and other means to fulfill their demand. Wilson (1973) explained that a pattern of behavior is said to be institutionalized when it is widely accepted as a binding in society or part of society. There are many institutionalized methods of expressing a grievance and pressing for solutions to a particular problem in the institutionalized liberal democratic model such as petitioning, and organizing boycotts and strikes. Sometimes, they adopt non-institutionalized means like looting and killing of police personnel, bombarding public institutions and killing the same class people as police informer, trashing buildings & burning autos, street fights, riots, assaults, bank robberies, bombings, assassinations. The Naxalite have their own organizational ideology, definite goal, hierarchy in cadres, formal rules and regulation and proper recruitment policy. They have their own party, which is regulating all the administrative, political, military and mechanical wing of Naxalites organizations. All the members of the party follow the command of the respective leaders. Presently, the Naxalite organization is well-structured, centralized control, well financed operations and large number of supportive members. The Naxalite organization not only develop internally (e.g. greater formalization, bureaucratization, professionalization, and membership growth) but also put their energies into building other kinds of movement related organizations. The Naxalites maintain their organizational principles strictly. The Naxalites claim that they provide political education to all cadres who can understand the basic tenants of the present movement.

## IDENTITY BUILDING BY NAXALITES

Schroder(2009) has defined identities are seen as the product of political processes that articulate competing interests struggling over the definitions of the content of that identity. Identity creation, according to Schroder, operates within three social frameworks:



- (1) The local, everyday life world, where identities are reproduced without critical reflection, through quotidian practices and long term social relations,
- (2) The state where the hegemonic impact of models of a national identity impinges upon everybody forms of identification. Identity discourses in public space are monopolized by official representations of a dominant vision of identity that privatizes what it cannot incorporate.
- (3) Anti state forms of identity, articulated in the framework of social movements or by ethnic minorities resisting incorporation.

If a movement constituency has a shared collective identity and the institutions and the social networks that provide a cultural space from which to act, then community building and empowerment will be forfeited to instrumental goals of policy attainment. He says there are three analytical dimension of identity i.e. identity for empowerment, identity as goal and identity as strategy. The first type posits that activists must draw on an existing identity or construct a new collective identity in order to create and mobilise a constituency. The particular identity chosen will have implications for further activism. The second type implies that the activists may challenge stigmatised identities, seek recognition for new identities, or deconstruct restrictive social categories as goals of collective action. Third, identities may be deployed strategically as a form of collective action. Identity deployment is defined as expressing identity such that the terrain of conflict becomes the individual person so that the values, categories, and practices of individuals become subject to debate. Identity for critique confronts the values, categories, and practice of the dominant culture.

Polletta and Jasper (2001) state that the role of identity in four phases of protest; the creation of collective claims, recruitment into the movements, strategy and tactical decision making and movement outcomes.. One movement have emerged, complete with organisaions, organizers, and recruitment camping, strategic efforts to craft mobilizing identities become important. Even identities that are similar, long standing, and enforced by law and custom frequently need to re-imagine by movement activists. At the very last, they must be integrated with a movement identity

i.e. collective identity based on shared membership in a movement.

Through the process of collective mobilization, the tribal's individual identity is submerged into the group identity. He emotionally attaches himself with other group members. When one accepts the Naxalites ideology, works for the Naxalite groups, he is identified as Naxal. He enjoys status, power and position in the society not as a landless peasant/tribal but as a Naxal. Many people are attracted to build their identity as a member of Naxalite groups because they enjoy different status and position in their community. First, they escape themselves from class and caste haterdness, atrocity on their women and children. Secondly, the landlords and daru mafias and forest officials do not dare to harass the family members. Thirdly, the possession of a gun sanctions him more dignity and power in the community.

The tribals /landless peasants join in the collective mobilization process, protest against his class enemy for the collective claims, enjoy the status of the member of the Naxal organization, participate in decision-making process, and decide the strategy and tactics of the group. This helps him to build a strong collective identity within the group set up. It is seen that the tribals /landless marginalized people from their collective identity based on caste, class or ethnic backdrop. If we observe the case of undivided Koraput district, large numbers of tribals (same ethnic and same class background) have joined the Naxalite movement. Some of the upper caste people are leading the movement in order to build a separate identity among their class groups.

## **NAXALITE'S AS A SOCIAL MOVEMENT (CLASSICAL)**

Social movements have traditionally been included in the subfield of sociology known as collective behaviour (Smelser: 1963). The range of phenomena usually subsumed under the label of collective behaviour is distinguished by the extent to which norms have emerged to inform behaviour or the degree to which normative structures have been institutionalized. To define it precisely, a social movement is a conscious, collective, organized attempt to bring about or resist large-scale change in the social order by non-institutionalized means (Wilson: 1973). But it is

not always necessary to follow the non-institutionalized means to take up collective action; some social movements may also adopt institutionalized means. Conventionally regarded as part of the field of collective behaviour (sharing the characteristics with crowds and mobs) and yet being not too dissimilar to more institutionalized collectivities such as political parties, social movements are obviously situated at an important point of connection between the institutionalized and non-institutionalized aspects of life. This situation facilitates their function as an agent of social change.

Social movements on its outset necessary involve collective mobilization. Mobilizations generally refer to situations where an affected group is brought into action. It is the process whereby people are prepared for active service for a cause that they see as consonant with their own interests (Wilson: 1977). Mobilizations also include the process by which the general discontent and unrest amongst an alienated collectivity is harnessed around organized group(s) which gives direction and substance to the alienation and there by prepares the members of the collectivity for action for cause which they value as an end rather than as means to an end (Mukherjee, 1977, 1979). Here we have to be alert that not all collective mobilizations for action need to be social movements. According to Mukherjee (ibid), there are three kinds of collective mobilizations.

- 1) Collective mobilization of formal corporate type (Example-effort of government to
- 2) Movement while other two types are not mobilize people).
- 3) Collective mobilization acting as pressure groups (Example-caste associations mobilizing a particular caste on a particular issue say reservation.)
- 4) Collective mobilization for change of the system. The third type of mobilization is termed as social.

Three types of changes take place with respect to social system.

- a) Accumulative- changes occurring within the system.
- b) Alternative- creation of new alternative structures in place of existing ones.

c) Transformative- changes in the existing structure without replacing the same.

Out of these three types of changes first type is termed as Quasi-movement and the second and third type are considered as social movements. When social movement becomes all pervasive influencing all most all the aspects of social structure, it is termed as revolution. In the course of time a Quasi-movement may be converted in to social movement and a social movement into revolution, but it does not always happen.

Naxalite movement intends to bring about transformative change in the socio- economic and political system. It says existing political and economic structure is anti-people and it does not fulfill the aspirations of the common mass. So it needs to be changed and replaced by effective political and economic systems based on the ideas of Mao Tse Dung. Manifestly, it tries to bring total change in the entire system and its replacement with a new one They are trying to create an alternative power structure for they know the fact that existing democratic structure of the state is very difficult to challenge and thus to replace it. They follow both institutional and non-institutional (mostly non-institutional) means to achieve their goals. The present research proposes to find out how the leaders mobilize various types of resources (human, financial, organizational and communication), the exact strategies they adopt to achieve their end, etc. It will also look at the life cycle of Naxalite movement and its relationship with other Maoists movement existing in other parts of the world. The study will use conflict as a tool of analyzing the movement. As it is a class based movement it will be viewed from classical social movement perspective.

Naxalite's is a movement manifestly transformative and latently alternative movement. The Naxalite movement in India is a painful record of attempts, both heroic and loutish at times- to bring about a revolutionary transformation in the economic and social living conditions of the rural poor. The chronicle of battles against the state machinery is followed by self-sacrifice of thousands of guerillas and the patient effort by the dedicated cadre to initiate land reforms and social changes in their areas of control. They propagate that Indian democracy is not free from imperialism and feudalism, which is against the interest of poor mass of the country. This form of democracy

cannot establish social justice and equality among the common masses. They oppose this form of government and support communist ideology through which they can establish a classless society. Their principal goal is to transform the government from democratic one to Maoist one. Thus, they consider it as a transformative movement.

The aim of the Naxalite movement was the total transformation of the Political-Economic and social order through armed struggle, but it having failed to attain its declared purpose continues to peruse it. However it did not produce certain consequences which were not intended by it. The unintended consequence of Naxalite Movement became manifest in all civil spheres of the life in Odisha by giving rise to a cult of violence. The state and the media now treat them as terrorist organizations.

The Naxalite movement is latently an alternative movement. The Naxal theoretical premises might look development oriented, but its practice of violence and terror tactics is in no way contributing to the growth of the people for whom it allegedly stands. Over the years the Naxal movement has become excessively conspiratorial and violent, relying on terror strike by its guerrilla squads, rather than peasant mobilization. This method not only affects their cause but also alienate them from large democratic process and civil society. The Naxalite knows that their so-called revolutionary movement cannot replace the vast establishment of mighty state. Still they have adopted violent method to protect their interests. They play power game with the government. As an alternative to the state, the Naxalites run the parallel government to establish the law of their own in the interior areas of their control.

Naxalites is a strategic movement favored by geographical isolation. Local population in the jungle territory is used as a canopy. They mainly operate in the forest and hilly areas. The reason is that people of that region are educationally backward, economically underdeveloped and socio-politically segregated. They involve these common mass by spreading their ideology and propagating the objective of their movement. Due to economic exploitation by the local bourgeoisie (the emigrants from coastal belt), the tribals are forced to support Naxalites and the Naxalites treat these unprivileged as their canopy.

## CONTEXTUALIZING MARXIAN THEORY OF CLASS STRUGGLE

The social movements relate to the social processes often reflecting the inherent contradictions of the society. These movements are concerned with different segments of society namely peasants, tribal, workers movements and other communities in India. An attempt has been made by the researcher to study the applicability of Marxist theory of class and class struggle to study Indian Naxalism. Karl Marx is very popular for his theory of class and class struggle. He was a champion of proletarian revolution and architect of the theory of class and class struggle. He was the principal ideologue of the world communism.

Marx wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." Class struggle moved the society from one stage to the next, in a dialectical process. In each stage, an ownership class controls the means of production while a lower class provides labor for production. The two classes come into conflict and that conflict leads to social change. For instance, in the feudal stage, feudal lords owned the land used to produce agricultural goods, while serfs provided the labor to plant, raise, and harvest crops. When the serfs rose up and overthrew the feudal lords, the feudal stage ended and ushered in a new stage: capitalism. Similarly, capitalism will be overthrown with the collective effort of the proletariat.

According to Marx, society evolves through different modes of production in which the upper class controls the means of production and the lower class is forced to provide labor. The bourgeoisie try to preserve capitalism by promoting ideologies and false consciousness that motivate workers to revolt against the capitalist class. Marx predicted that class conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat would lead to capitalism's downfall.

The Marxist studies focused on the capitalist system of production disassociating labourer from their products. As a result, they feel alienated. Their alienation gives birth to class antagonism (class struggle) against the capitalist. Marxists assumed that the proletariats were already annoyed and displeased due to their inability to control their own

means of production. Due to orthodox principle of the traditional society, they fail to identify the true source of their exploitation. As soon as the true nature of the production relationship is revealed to them, the proletariats would take up arms against the capitalist system, which is based on their exploitation by the rich mass. When Marx uttered Marx, the role of revolutionary leadership is to educate the proletariat of their only identity, their economic class, Mao and Lenin proposed extensive education for the politicizations of masses. In Indian scenario, Charu Mazumdar, argued for the armed struggle to serve as the catalyst force to ignite the fire of class struggle.

Karl Marx advocated for bringing revolution through organised proletariats, and different revolutionaries, including the Indian Maoists, moulding it to suit their prevalent social, economic and political scenario, have used the idea. Both Lenin and Mao used Marx as a base for bringing in revolutions. Mao Tse-tung propagated the theory of organised peasant insurrection, in which political power is captured through protracted armed struggle through the strategy of guerrilla warfare. Naxalites in India have combined the ideologies of Marx, Mao and Lenin to achieve their objective of creating "people's government" through protracted people's war. The Naxalites have a well-laid-out plan for how to achieve their stated objective.

Parkin (1979), while analyzing the Marx concept of class, argued that class refers to an individual position within a class hierarchy is determined by his role in the productive process. He opined that political and ideological consciousness is determined by class position. Within the Marxian theory of class, the structure of the productive process forms the basis of class construction. Marx talks about two principal classes (1) Bourgeoisie (those who own the means of production) and (2) Proletariat (those who do not own the means of production). Marx analyses that one's class is determined not by occupation or income but by the position an individual occupies and the function he performs in the process of production.

Naxalite movement in India is the replica of Marxian-Lenin ideology and Mao's thought. This is a class basis movement where there is a contradiction and conflict between haves and have not. The principal reason of the conflict is control over the distribution of economic rewards between

the classes. The non-owning class like the landless peasants, labourer, and tribals raise their hand and voice against the exploitation and oppression by the Landlord and other bourgeoisie elements. Because of the exploitation since past, the same class people get united and their ideas and actions are readily disseminated. When they solidify their unity, class-consciousness develops. Gradually, a feeling of solidarity and understanding of their past role helps them to realize their position in the class structure. Due to profound dissatisfaction of lower class over his inability to control the economic structure of which it feels itself to be exploited. Due to poor economic structure, the historical situation and maturation of class-consciousness motivated the backward class to establish a political organization/ party to protect their class interest.

In Naxalism, there is a physical concentration of the masses of people, easy communication among them, and repeated conflict over economic development and strong sense of class-consciousness. The peasants, landless labourers and tribal form a vast mass and live in a similar condition. Marx says that the class war has always been between the oppressor and the oppressed. Marx made a distinction between class-in-itself and class-for-itself to reflect the movement from a class's potential self-awareness to actual self awareness.

Presently, the lower class people are very much conscious about their class position. Marx says private property is the cause of contradiction in the society. One of the causes of Naxalite movement in Odisha is land issue. The landlords monopolize over the land and exploit the tribals to the worst form. The landlords hold the means of production. They enjoy political power by controlling the production process. The political power becomes the means by which the landlords perpetuate their domination and exploitation of landless peasants and tribals. The landlords accumulate wealth and the land through exploitation of many landless peasants and tribals. They use them as their puppet and throw them whenever they wish. The landlords force the landless to work beyond the working time and do not pay their legitimate dues which increased the exploitation of labour. Due to over exploitation of the landlords, Non- possession of land, non-availability of work throughout the year and other reasons forced the tribals to fall into the vicious circle of poverty. The geographical

location, cultural alienation and distinct class position alienated the tribals from the main stream of human society. The communists of India got here a good platform to mobilize the backward class people for a class struggle against the landlord by increasing their mass in order to protect their class interest, which will help them to raise their armed struggle to establish a new democratic revolution.

Marx says at the height of the class war, a violent revolution breaks out which destroys the structure of the capitalist society. Marx writes at a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production, with the property relations, with the property relations within which they have operated up to that time. These relations change from forms of development of the productive forces into their fetter. There then begins an epoch of social revolution. The chief instrument of Marx's revolution is urban proletariat. The Naxalites indoctrinate both the rural and urban proletariat for a strong social revolution.

The Naxalites in India believe in the revolutionary ideology of Karl Marx. They believe that the protracted people's war will dethrow the feudalism and capitalism and will lead to social dictatorship of proletariat. Both Marxian and India Naxalites talk about violent revolution. Marxism preaches violence but Maoism practices violence. Marx does not appreciate mass killings of the capitalist, since property is wrested from them; bourgeoisie will cease to have power and will be transformed into the ranks of proletariat. Like Marx, the Naxalites think that dictatorship as new forms of class struggle of the proletariat and it will destroy bourgeoisie democracy and the creation of proletarian democracy. The Naxalites believe that without broad democracy, for the people, it is impossible for the dictatorship of the proletariat to be consolidated or for political gain to be stable. Without democracy, without arousing masses and without organization of the masses, it is impossible to exercise effective dictatorship over the reactionaries or to remould them effectively; they will continue to make trouble and may come back to power.

As Lenin pointed out, bourgeois democracy is "restricted, truncated, false and hypocritical, a paradise for the rich and a snare and deception for

the exploited, for the poor," whereas proletarian democracy "will for the first time create democracy for the people, for the majority, along with the necessary suppression of the minority — the exploiters. Naxalism believes that "No man has the right to oppress or exploit another. They strongly advocate that proletariat/peasant and land less mass must smash the bourgeois/ landlord state apparatus by systemic violence, rely on the strength of proletarian political power to seize the means of production from the bourgeoisie and put down the resistance of the bourgeoisie. They also believe in Mao's idea that kindness to the enemy is cruelty to the people. If you do not oppress the exploiting classes, they will oppress you. The closer links between state political power and the masses of the people will help to mobilize the revolutionary people in their hundreds of millions to concern themselves with the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and take an active part in exercising dictatorship over the class enemies so that they cannot escape the masses. This strengthens proletarian dictatorship and ensures that the country will always maintain its bright red colour. Mao also believed that even after the establishment of dictatorship of proletariat, it was possible that reactionary elements would again try to surface by taking the advantage of existing circumstances. Therefore, there was a need to eliminate such reactionary elements.

Shah (2002) explains that Marxist approach is primarily interested in bringing about revolutionary change in society. According to them, the causes for social movement are located in the economic structure of society. Antagonistic interests between the propertied and labour class are inherent in a class-based society, which generates contradiction. The former uses the coercive power of the state, as well as of other institutions including religion, education, mass media etc, to impose their ideology on society and control the exploited classes. The latter resist, protect and occasionally revolt or launched organized and collective action against the dominance of the propertied classes. It is their effort to bring about revolutionary political change by overthrowing the dominant classes in power.

Again Shah points out that according to the Marxists scholar, members of the same class not only have common interests vis-a vis the other classes, but also share a common consciousness

regarding their position in society and the common interests they share. These facilities are their collective action against the ruling classes and state. For example in Naxalite movement, the cadres or leaders are not necessarily drawn only from backward castes. Some of the upper caste people join the movement to oblige the lower caste in order to gain their collective support to fight against the capitalist class who hamper their interest and to enjoy authority in the modern power structure.

Odisha Naxalism is the culmination of Marxism, Leninism and Maoism. They follow the ideology of Karl Marx and adopt the strategy and tactics of Mao to establish a people's democracy. The Naxalites in Odisha are highly influenced by the idea of Karl Marx's dialectical materialism, materialistic interpretation of history and class and class struggle. They accept that class struggle is the driving force of history and believe that capitalism as most critical system plagued by greed, avarice, and capitalism as the most critical stage relations to the issue of social revolution. The Naxalites opine that capitalist and imperialist forces rule the present form of democracy. They believe that democracy and capitalism are not compatible. They accepted Marx's principle that the transitional state between capitalism and communism can be only revolutionary dictatorship of proletariat. They also extracted Lenin's principle that the capitalist and imperialist forces could be defeated through a strong organization of the CPI(Maoist) party. The Naxalites do not believe in Marx's idea of peaceful evolution of proletarian democracy. The ideologues of Naxalite movement believe that the proletarian democracy could be possible only through a strong revolution by the proletariat class.

Mao was a radical leader of China who strongly followed the ideological principle of Karl Marx and Lenin. Odishan Naxalites are highly influenced by the Maoist principles of protracted people's war through armed revolution, new democracy, permanence of revolution and proletarian Cultural Revolution. They urge that the peasantry is the most trusted segment of society to fight against capitalist, industrialist and reactionary forces. Hence, countryside is the most suitable to begin a protracted guerrilla war. They emphasize on the strategy to strike from the rural areas and encircle the cities. The Naxalites believe that power does not come automatically. Power comes from the

barrel of the gun. The Naxalites adopt the protracted guerrilla warfare. To launch this guerrilla war, a strong party, an army and a united front are highly essential. They accepted Mao's idea that violence and terrorism are the permanent features of political life.

Like Mao, they believe that the reactionary elements (capitalist) always try to come to power. Even after the establishment of proletarian society, the reactionary elements may try to surface by taking the opportunity of existing circumstances. So it is highly needed to purge such reactionary forces. In order to eliminate reactionary forces, Cultural Revolution is desirable.

### ***AN OVERVIEW***

The Indian Naxalite movement, commonly boiled down to an example of political insurrection or violence, needs to be studied as a complicated and firmly rooted social movement based on intrinsic inequalities of the system. This approach discloses that its roots are not just in extremist ideology but in deep-rooted grievances pertaining to alienation of land, class exploitation, and the systematic marginalization of tribal and rural populations. Based on a classical Marxian analysis, this research highlights how oppressive agrarian formations and uneven state-society relations have bred the social conditions that breed radical dissent. The movement is a historical continuity of peasant resistance molded by the contradictions of Indian capitalist development. Yet, the research also recognizes the weaknesses of traditional Marxist frameworks in explaining the modern development of the movement, especially the emergence of identity-oriented demands and environmental issues.

Unless the state makes structural reforms in land distribution a priority, ensures imposition of forest rights, and makes governance inclusive and representative, alternative movements will continue to thrive as protests of entrenched socio-economic and political disaffection. Rather than criminalizing protest, the state needs to eliminate the causes of alienation through participatory development and recognition of the subaltern voice.

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Received on 01-11-2023

Accepted on 09-11-2023

Published on 23-11-2023

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