

Left Wing Extremism

-A Challenge to Internal Security

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OBJECTIVES

- The historical background of the emergence of left wing in India
- Understand the ideology and modus operandi of the leftist parties .
- To analyse the impact of the LWE on socio-political and economic sphere.
- Factors led to the rise of Left Wing Extremism.
- Threats posed by Left Wing Extremists
- Initiatives taken by the Government to solve the challenge.
- Issues in Government measures

INTRODUCTION

- India has been dealing with three variants of the Internal Security challenge for decades and each has its own complexities — a proxy war and terrorism in Kashmir, sub-national separatist movements in the Northeast and the Naxal-Maoist Insurgency in the Red Corridor.
- The Left Wing Extremism (LWE) or Naxal insurgency in India originated in a 1967 uprising in Naxalbari, West Bengal by the Communist Party of India (Marxist).
- They are the group of people who believe in the political theory derived from the teachings of the Chinese political leader Mao Zedong.
- The Naxals strongly believe that the solution to social and economic discrimination is to overthrow the existing political system.
- This tragic incidents caused by the Left Wing is a major and embarrassing setback to the IS (internal security) capability of India at many levels and highlights the challenge that LWE continues to pose.

CURRENT SCENARIO

- Around 22 Jawans of Security forces Martyred and 31 injured in a deadly encounter with Naxals on Sukma Bijapur border on 3rd April 2021.
- The attack involved the use of modern weapons like Lightweight machine guns and Rocket launchers that enhanced the casualties.
- The Maoist PLGA (People's Liberation Guerrilla Army) Battalion led the attack under the leadership of Maoist Madvi Hidma.

Deadly attacks

Sukma has witnessed several Maoist attacks in the past. A look at some of the previous encounters



MARCH 23, 2021: Five DRG personnel of the Chhattisgarh police killed after their bus is blown up by a powerful bomb in Narayanpur district

MAY 9, 2020: A sub-inspector of the Chhattisgarh police killed in an encounter with the Maoists in Rajnandgaon

MARCH 22, 2020: 17 members of a police patrol killed in an ambush in Sukma

OCT. 27, 2018: Four CRPF personnel killed in an ambush in Bijapur district

MARCH 11, 2017: 12 CRPF personnel killed in an ambush in Sukma district

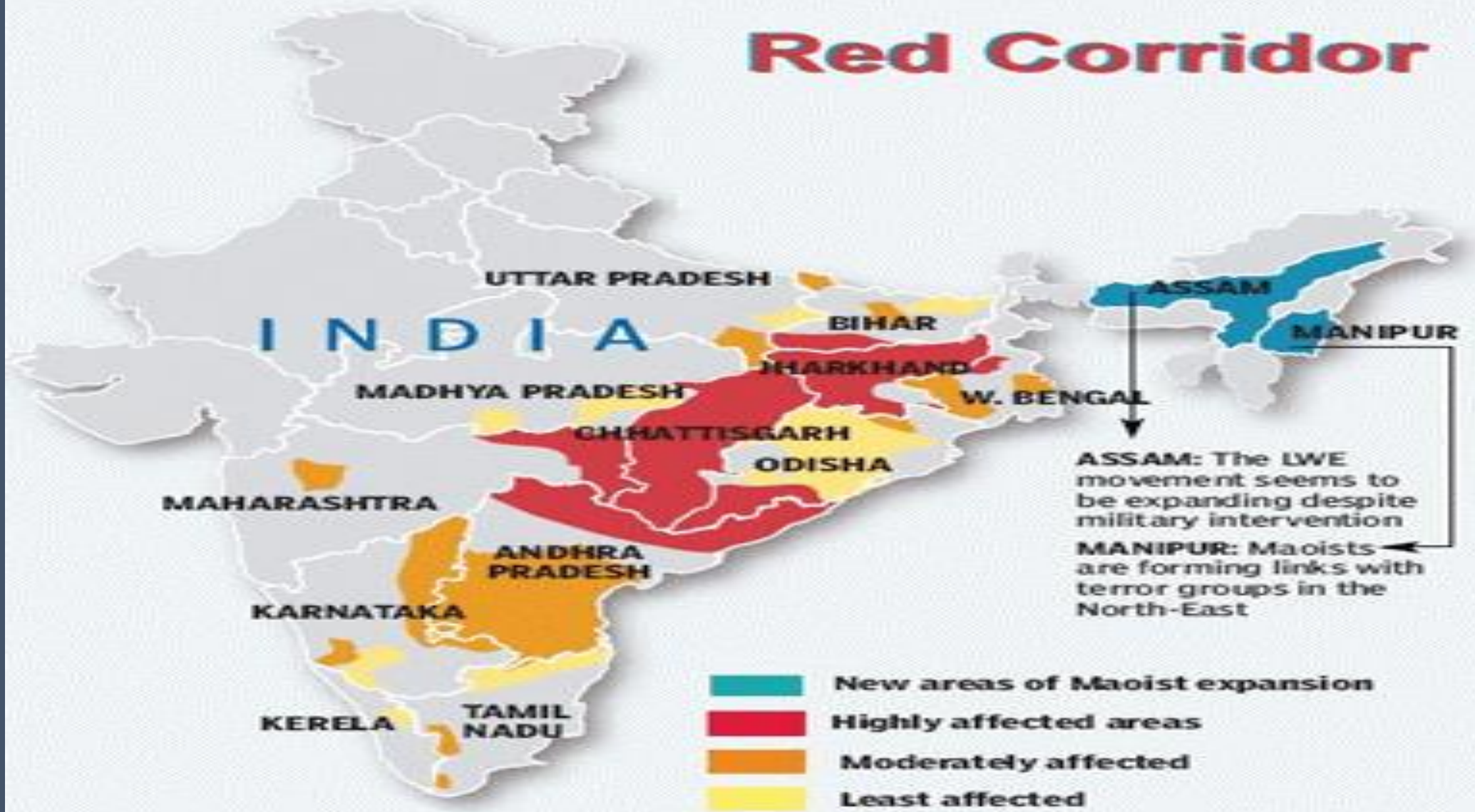
ORIGIN OF LEFT WING EXTREMISM

- The origins of the LWE can be traced back to 1967 in the three areas of Naxalbari , Phansidewa and Khoribari in West Bengal's Darjeeling District.
- The initial uprising was led by Charu Majumdar, Kanu Sanyal and Jangal Santhal, who were members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).
- The initial uprising was in the form of a peasant revolt .
- Two years later in 1969, the Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist) was formed.
- Although originated in West Bengal, the movement spread to the less-developed rural regions of southern and eastern India, in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Chhattisgarh.
- Today, almost all the Naxal groups trace their origins to the CPI (M-L).
- The Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) was formed in 1975. This group merged with the People's War Group in 2004, to form the CPI (Maoist).

PREVALENCE OF MAOISM IN INDIA

- Left Wing Extremism or Naxal Attacks or Maoist attacks have been present in India for five decades.
- According to a conservative estimate, about 15,000 lives have been lost in Naxal-led violence during the last 25 years.
- It began around the Naxalbari area of West Bengal in the 1960s. The movement was led by Charu Mazumdar.
- The death of Charu Mazumdar in 1972 followed a split in the movement and gave an impression that it was about to end.
- However, the People's War group was formed in Andhra Pradesh in 1980 and sustained the movement.
- Some setbacks were received in the 1990s and early 2000s but the movement revived again in 2004.
- This happened as the People's War and the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) merged to form CPI (Maoist).
- Since then it is present in some states of central, eastern, and southern India as shown by the Red Corridor .
- As of February 2019, 90 districts across 11 states are affected by extremism.

Red Corridor



FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RISE OF LWE

1. Tribal dissatisfaction arises from the Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980, which prohibits tribes who rely on forest resources for their livelihood from even harvesting bark.
2. The implementation of development projects, mining operations, and other factors has resulted in significant displacement of tribal populations in states affected by LWE.
3. Vulnerable individuals lacking sustainable means of support become susceptible to joining the Naxalite movement. Maoists exploit this situation by providing weapons, ammunition, and financial assistance to these individuals.
4. The country's socio-economic system exhibits gaps wherein the government measures its success based on the number of violent attacks in Naxal-affected regions, rather than focusing on developmental efforts.
5. Insufficient technical intelligence hampers effective strategies against Naxalism.

6. Following the police's control over a region, the administration often fails to deliver essential services to the local population, leaving them without the necessary support.

7. There is confusion regarding how to approach Naxalism, whether as a social issue or a security threat.

State governments tend to perceive Naxalism as the responsibility of the central government, resulting in a lack of proactive initiatives to combat it.

LEFT WING EXTREMIST'S MODUS OPERANDI

- The LWE organisations, in pursuit of their stated goal of overthrowing the government, resort to armed violence against anyone they perceive to be their enemy, and this includes innocent civilians also.
- They indulge in murders, abductions, extortions, etc.
- In many instances, they carry out high-profile murders and kidnappings to instil fear in their opponents and civilians.
- In many cases, they get the support of the tribal population in an area since they are seen as deliverers, in a situation where the authorities have failed to provide the basic amenities.
- However, the main sufferers in LWE are chiefly the tribal and poor sections of the population. The Naxals do not hesitate to kill the tribal people themselves if they are suspected of being 'informers'.
- They routinely indulge in the killing of elected representatives at the local levels, in Panchayats, etc. to desist people from taking part in the democratic process.
- They also intend to create a vacuum in the low-levels paving the way for their entrenchment in a parallel system of governance there.

- In spite of their violent means and stated rejection of religion, they get sympathy from some sections because they are seen as selfless in the pursuit of ‘delivering justice to the people’.
- In many places where they have dominant control, they collect taxes from the people.
- In LWE parlance, the Naxals seek to ‘liberate’ areas.
 - Areas, where they have a dominant position vis-a-vis the State, are called liberated areas or zones.
 - In guerilla zones, the Maoists and the government have an ‘equal footing’.
 - Places, where the government has the dominant control, are called base areas.
- The Naxal ideology exhorts violence and guerilla warfare as the means to achieve their socio-politico-economic goals.
- The CPI – Maoist, primarily, wants to usher in a ‘new democratic revolution’ in India.

FEATURE OF THE LWE FRONT ORGANISATION

- Most Maoist organisations have front organisations which are led by educated people, who sympathise with the Maoist cause.
- These organisations are important because they help the parent organisation in spreading their agenda, in propaganda and also in recruiting people.
- They help the parent organisations to survive by escaping legal liability.
- They also publish magazines and pamphlets espousing their ideology.
- They serve as a cover for the parent Naxal bodies by sanitising the bloodletting and making them more acceptable to the urban public and the mainstream media.
- They take up issues such as corporate exploitation, human rights violation and tribal displacement.
- Many young people are waylaid by these front organisations.
- They nurture romantic illusions about the Maoists and their work because of a lack of understanding of their complete ideology.

THREATS POSED BY LWE

- 1.They threaten the locals before the conduct of elections and prevent them from voting. Violating the principle of participative democracy.
- 2.They resort to violence through their guerrilla tactics and attempt to setup their own government in the local villages.
- 3.They destroy the roads, transport system and government resources, thereby creating hindrance in governance and connectivity.
- 4.Urban Naxals, who sometimes operate under the cloak of NGOs or social-work units, raise questions about the use of force by government machinery.

This helps them build a strong bastion of sympathisers and volunteers in towns and cities and across social media.

5.They resort to extortion, abduction of important personalities like Politicians, bureaucrats, police etc. and put up their demand.

6.They hire vulnerable people who have low literacy levels, unemployed or low income, particularly the tribals, who aren't aware of consequences of joining such forces, building up their cadre.

7.They also have nexus with politicians, they find this as a medium to put up their demands through voices of Politicians.

8.They attack the police, government and collect weapons, technological devices to fight against them on technological front.

GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO COUNTER NAXAL VIOLENCE

- The government has taken up a holistic approach to tackling the Naxal problem.
- It has used security-related interventions coupled with developmental measures to root out the violent uprisings.
- The Bandyopadhyay Committee (2006) highlighted the lack of governance, economic, socio-political and cultural discrimination against the tribals as the chief reason for the spread of Naxalism.
- The Committee recommended tribal-friendly land acquisition and rehabilitation as a means to counter this issue.
- In May 2017, the Government of India allocated Rs 11,000 crores to build road connectivity in 44 districts affected by Maoist activities.
- By 2018, 1326 km of roads were constructed in Bastar, Rajnandgaon, and Surgujia areas, the highly Naxal infested areas of Chhattisgarh.

- 995 bridges were constructed and 138 of them were in the worst affected area – Bastar.
- The annual budget of the Public Works Department in Chhattisgarh was Rs 7795 crores in 2016-17.
- Roads and bridges were constructed in Sukma, another area massively hit by Naxalism.
- Local villagers are being provided with basic facilities like healthcare, education and more employment opportunities.
- Due to developmental activities and choking the funding of Naxalism, there was a spike in surrenders in Jharkhand from 676 in 2014 to 1442 in 2016.

CURRENT TRENDS OF LEFT WING EXTREMISM

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah has recently commented that violence related to Left Wing Extremism (LWE) had come down by 76% in 2022 as compared to 2010, owing to the Centre's three-pronged strategy — a “ruthless approach to curb extremist violence”, better coordination with the affected States and development through public participation.
- The Naxal violence in India has decreased by 77 per cent over the past 12 years and the number of deaths in related incidents has also reduced by 90 per cent during the same period, the government said in Lok Sabha.
- There has been a decline in geographical spread of violence is also reflected in the reduced number of districts covered under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) scheme.
- 126 districts were covered under the SRE scheme in 2010 but that number came down to 90 in April 2018 and further to 70 in July 2021.

REASONS FOR THE DECLINE IN LWE EXTREMISM

- Greater presence of security forces across the LWE affected States.
- Loss of leaders on account of arrests, surrender and desertions.
- Rehabilitation programs by the governments.
- Better monitoring and shortage of funds and arms.
- Intelligence sharing and raising of a separate- 66 Indian Reserve Battalion (IRBs), CRPF battalions like COBRA battalion, Bastariya battalion etc. were done by the government to curb the menace of LWE organisations

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES TO FIGHT LWE

- **Operation Green Hunt:** It was started in 2009-10 and massive deployment of security forces was done in the Naxal-affected areas
- **Aspirational Districts Programme:** Launched in 2018, it aims to rapidly transform the districts that have shown relatively lesser progress in key social areas.
- **SAMADHAN doctrine** is the one-stop solution for the LWE problem. It encompasses the entire strategy of government from short-term policy to long-term policy formulated at different levels. SAMADHAN stands for-
 - S- Smart Leadership,
 - A- Aggressive Strategy,
 - M- Motivation and Training,
 - A - Actionable Intelligence,
 - D- Dashboard Based KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and KRAs (Key Result Areas),
 - H- Harnessing Technology,
 - A- Action plan for each Theatre,
 - N- No access to Financing.

- ROSHNI is a special initiative under, Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (Formerly Aajeevika Skills), launched in June 2013 for training and placement of rural poor youth from 27 LWE affected districts in 09 States.
- Road Connectivity: Construction of 17,462 km of roadways had been sanctioned to improve road connectivity, of which work on about 11,811 km had been completed.
- Mobile Connectivity: For better mobile connectivity, 2,343 mobile towers had been installed in the first phase during the last eight years, and approval given to upgrade them to 4G. This apart, 2,542 new mobile towers were being installed in the second phase.

- Ekalavya Residential Model School: More than 100 Ekalavya Residential Model Schools were sanctioned in 21 years prior to 2019, while in the past three years, 103 have been sanctioned.
 - So far, 245 Ekalavya schools had been sanctioned in 90 LWE-affected districts and 121 of them were now functional.
- Banks, ATMs and Post offices for financial inclusion:
 - The government also facilitated the opening of 1,258 bank branches and 1,348 ATMs in the worst hit districts, besides 4,903 post offices.

COUNTER-INSURGENCIES ACROSS LWE AREAS

- **Salwa Judum:** Salwa Judum (peace force) was launched by villagers angered by Naxal interference in the local trade of tendu leaves.
 - It recruited local tribals and former Naxalites and made them Special Police Officers (SPOs).
- **Grey Hounds:** It is the elite commando force of combined Andhra Pradesh state, created to fight left-wing extremists. It is considered the best anti-Naxalite force in the country.
 - It follows the **guerrilla approach**, which is near similar to that of the Maoists, making them effective.
- **Operation Green Hunt:** It was an unofficial term used to describe the “all-out offensive” launched by the government of India’s paramilitary forces and the state’s forces to defeat the Naxalites.

NEW EMERGING DEVELOPMENTS

New developments which were taking place quietly. These are:

- They are spreading to new areas.
- There is increasing militarisation
- They focus on denying intelligence through targeted killing of alleged informers
- They resort to greater propaganda through co-opting civil society groups
- They are attempting to penetrate urban areas and working class movements
- They are setting up over-ground organisations
- They are mobilising people over issues like land acquisition, fake encounters, tribal land rights etc.
- They are using technology for propaganda and communication
- They are extorting from contractors and industries in their areas of domination at a large scale

ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT MEASURES

- **Intelligence inputs:** The traditional method of gathering intelligence through police receivers placed on hills is not delivering optimum results. The recent April attack exposed this lacuna as Maoists deliberately gave false information over it.
- **Large troop operations:** It is believed that larger forces give better protection but the recent attack exposed their vulnerability..
- **Existence of Trust Deficit:** The common masses don't trust the forces/administrative authorities due to varied cultures and external appearance. This automatically reduces the impact of tribal friendly measures.
- **Lacunae in protecting state informers:** The people who give information to security forces are often tortured and killed by Maoists.
- **Approach in Tackling:** More emphasis is placed on looking at LWE as a security problem. However, in reality, it is more of a socio-economic and political issue.
- **Lack of Conviction:** Some local politicians covertly support the conduct of Naxals that impairs the intensity of anti LWE operations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Firstly, the government of India and the Maoists should try to sign Peace agreements that would be a win-win situation for all. Example-The Mizo Accord.
- Secondly, Ensure all-round development of the Naxal-affected areas.
- Thirdly, employ more local people in the administrative process which can act as a bridge to curtail the trust deficit. Further support of civil society can be taken for awaking tribals.
- E.g.- A peace march was organised in March 2021 where about 150 tribals from Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Telangana participated under the slogan of 'Bastar maange hinsa se azadi'.
- Fourthly, the forces should be used in small groups for maintaining greater efficiency. For instance, the Greyhounds involved the use of small teams that operate on solid human intelligence.
- Fifthly, policy measures that provide indirect benefits should be implemented with due care.
- For instance, effective implementation of the Forest Rights Act,2006 can ensure better control of local communities over Minor Forest Produce.

WAY FORWARD

- Innovative measures are required to be employed in preventing IED(Improvised Explosive Device) related incidents which have caused significant casualties in recent years.
- Emphasis should be laid on the capacity-building and modernization of the local police forces.
- States should rationalize their surrender policy in order to bring innocent individuals caught in the trap of LWE in the mainstream.
- States also need to adopt a focused time-bound approach to completely eliminate LWE groups and ensure all-round development of the affected regions.
- What makes the LWE particularly disturbing is its correlation with the demographic youth bulge in the general Indian population.
 - If the Indian state fails, the widespread unemployment could lead to a serious internal security situation.
- The Centre and the States should make efforts in synchronise that are crucial in eliminating such radicalization amongst groups.

CONCLUSION

- A one-dimensional approach, focusing excessively on security aspects, is not enough to effectively tackle LWE in India.
- There has to be an empathetic approach to address the conditions of the poor and the tribals so that their dissatisfaction is checked and not diverted into a movement.
- Creation of road and rail infrastructure will not just enhance economic growth and development but will also help in countering Maoist propaganda against the state.
- An ideology based on violence and annihilation is doomed to fail in a democracy which offers legitimate forums of grievance redressal.
- Through a holistic approach focusing on development and security related interventions, the LWE problem can be successfully tackled.

QUIZ

1. What among the following is not included in internal security?

A. Prevention of illegal activities within borders of the country

B. To prevent activities that are detrimental to the security of the country.

C. Maintaining law and order.

D. Protection of foreign affairs.

2. Which of the following is not a measure to maintain internal security?

A. To equip the defence forces with modern weapons.

B. To protect the citizens residing outside the country.

C. Developing strong organizational mechanisms to deal with cybercrimes.

D. Stringent laws and their effective implementation to end corruption.

3. Which are not the factors of the internal security of India?

- A. Peaceful coexistence and maintaining communal harmony
- B. Not maintaining law and order.
- C. Security of the sovereignty of the nation
- D. All of the above

4. What are the drawbacks of internal security management?

A. Not modifying its internal security principle according to the circumstances

B. Making long term policies

C. Not complying with the old system

D. Government is serious about complying with judicial directions.

5. What are the measures to improve internal security?
- A. By raising the economic standard of living of the people
 - B. By giving jobs to people
 - C. By running an anti-Naxalism and terrorism campaign
 - D. None of these

6. For what reasons can the internal security of the country be threatened?

- A. From the capital of foreign nationals
- B. Minerals found outside the country's border
- C. Weak cyber security of the country
- D. International conference to be held in the country

7. When was the Internal Security Act passed?

A. 1961

B. 1971

C. 1972

D. 1962

8. What is the MISA law related to?

A. Foreign Policy

B. Defence of the country

C. Foreign nationals

D. Internal security

9. How can we cooperate on the internal security of the country?

A. By increasing own income

B. Earning money by going abroad

C. To follow the constitution and law itself and get others to do it too

D. By helping others

10. What is not included in the components of internal security principle?

- A. Cyber Security
- B. Border Management
- C. Tax Evasion
- D. Centre-State Coordination

11. What measures have been taken to strengthen internal security in the last years?

- A. Unlawful Activities Act 1967
- B. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme
- C. Stand up India Scheme
- D. Income Tax Act 1961

12. How many kilometres of the border does India share with Pakistan?

A. 3,323 KM

B. 3,488 KM

C. 1,643 KM

D. 4,096 KM

THANK YOU