

**India's Response to Internal Armed Violence:
Surrender and Rehabilitation in Maoist India**

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Dedicated to my father S.C. Kaushik who taught me how to think, wonder and
introduced the cosmos;
Iggy, an imp of a cat but the most wonderful companion;
But most importantly, to the people of Bastar who gave me their time, shared their
homes, food, love and trust.

For all your care, empathy and resilience.

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I hope this thesis lives up to the expectations and test of academic rigour for producing an original piece of work that can stand the test of time that provides space for a dialogue on new approaches and alternatives to undesirable consequences of militarisation and war-making.

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3. **May 2021:** Presented my paper ‘Surrender/Insurgent: Leaving/Living a revolution’ at online workshop on ‘Perspectives on Governance by Non-State Armed Actors’ organised by the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence
4. **February 2020.** Presented observations from fieldwork in Chhattisgarh, India at a UNICEF staff workshop on working in ‘Emergencies and Conflict’, Chhattisgarh, India.

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List of Abbreviations:

1. DDR: Disarmament
Demobilisation and
Reintegration
2. DRG: District Reserved Guards
3. LWE: Left-Wing Extremism
4. UAPA: Unlawful Activities
(Prevention) Act, 1967
5. PESA: Panchayats (Extension to
Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996
6. AFSPA: Armed Forces (Special
Powers) Act, 1958
7. PRT: Provincial Reconstruction
Teams
8. IRA: Irish Republican Army
9. COIN: Counter Insurgency
10. DFA: Department of Foreign
Affairs, Republic of Ireland
11. EEVFAM: The Extrajudicial
Execution Victim Families
Association Manipur
12. ACLED: Armed Conflict Location
and Event Data
13. UCDP: Uppsala Conflict Data
Program
14. CPI: Communist Party of India
15. CPI (M-L): Communist Party of
India (Marxist-Leninist)
16. CPI (ML): Communist Party of
India (Marxist Liberation)
17. MCC: Maoist Communist Centre
of India
18. PLGA: People's Liberation
Guerrilla Army
19. PWG: People's War Group
20. CC: Central Committee
21. RSU: Radical Students Union
22. MHA: Ministry of Home Affairs,
Government of India
23. CMSS: Chhattisgarh Mines
Shramik Sangh
24. CMM: Chhattisgarh Mukti
Morcha
25. BJP: Bhartiya Janata Party
26. INC: Indian National Congress
27. PHM: People's Health Movement
28. PUCL: People's Union for Civil
Liberties
29. NGO: Non-Governmental
Organisation
30. ASHA: Accredited Social Health
Activist
31. ITBP: Indo-Tibetan Border
Police
32. CRPF: Central Reserve
Paramilitary Force
33. UNICEF: United Nations
Children's Fund
34. TISS: Tata Institute of Social
Sciences, Mumbai-India
35. PVTG: Particularly Vulnerable
Tribal Groups
36. SC: Scheduled Caste(s)
37. ST: Scheduled Tribe(s)
38. ULFA: United Liberation Front
of Assam
39. WHO: World Health
Organisation

40. PRIO: Peace Research Institute
Oslo
41. M-L-M: Marxist-Leninist-Maoist
42. FARC: Fuerzas Armada
Revolucionaires de Colombia

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Abstract

Vidushi Kaushik

India's Response to Internal Armed Violence: Surrender and Rehabilitation Policy in Maoist India

This research is set within the five-decade long internal conflict between the Indian state and the Maoist insurgents. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in central India, it seeks to understand the intended and unintended consequences of the Indian state's policy of surrender and rehabilitation of ex-guerrillas. Through participant observation, interviews and sharing of space, the study explores the linkages between the policy of disarmament and historically marginalised Adivasi (indigenous) communities. It studies the inter-play of identity and power assertion vis-à-vis the state's (mis) interpretation of disarmament and reintegration and its linkages with state-society structures that perpetuate marginality. The study employs methods of criticality to understand the everyday lived experiences of individuals and communities who are influenced by this 'surrender policy', as they continually endure pervasive violence on them, and their homeland over past seven decades of history of independent India.

The study intersects the sub-disciplines of critical peace studies and the study of South Asia. The project attempts to unpack the conceptualisation of disarmament in instances of protracted low-intensity internal armed conflict. Breaking away from traditional research into disarmament that follows a linear trajectory of conflict mediation or resolution, peace agreements and DDR (disarmament demobilisation and reintegration), the study embraces the call for a 'local turn' in critical peace and conflict studies. 'Surrender' in this instance, does not come at the end of a 'peace' process, and the boundaries between the categories of war, counterinsurgency and peacebuilding are often fluid from the 'local' perspective. The research focusses on moving beyond the state-centric discourse on disarmament and shifts the reference of analysis to the community whose members become the primary actors in the processes of disarmament and reintegration and peace-making.

Set against the backdrop of forms of subaltern resistance to traditional state led assertions of power, the Maoist guerrilla isn't just a revolutionary to be reformed but is also an agent restricted by the overarching structural oppression through state practices.

Embedded in historical marginalization, Adivasis form the large guerrilla armies as well as being the custodians of their land and forests. Analysis of the Maoist conflict is therefore restricted by imagining it as a conflict between two actors. The counterinsurgency and ‘winning hearts and minds’ strategy translated in the state’s practices of violence management inadvertently views the Adivasis as ‘the Other’—distant from ideas of modernity and political agency. Deep-rooted notions of liberal peacebuilding meanwhile ignore Adivasi agency altogether. The study makes an argument for acknowledging Adivasi and indigenous political and lifeworld, which is resisting structural inequality and the ‘civilising project’ of the state. This requires us to deliberate about the pitfalls of liberal peacebuilding—where local agency is sutured into modernity through practices of disarmament as an aid to counterinsurgency practices.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis focusses on the central question “*What spaces for conflict transformation does the Indian State’s policy on disarmament (surrender and rehabilitation policy) create in the case of the protracted conflict with the Maoists?*” with the intent of exploring an epistemological contribution by employing ethnographic methods, with thematic theoretical insights from the sub-disciplines of peace studies, critical security studies, indigenous politics in South Asia and anthropology of peace and conflict studies. Set in the context of the fifty-six yearlong Maoist conflict in the central and central-eastern part of India, the thesis unpacks the policy of disarmament and reintegration in non-international conflict spaces and its unintended consequences of it in everyday lives.

Using thick description and participant observation, the research locates itself in the state of Chhattisgarh, India with focus on looking at state-society relations. With local and oral testimonies from policy practitioners, security personnel, surrendered or ex-guerillas and, a section of people identified through associations and sharing of space in the field—the study details the unintended consequences of disarmament and the ways through which it intervenes and contributes to the counterinsurgency operations of the State.

The subsequent sections of this introductory chapter, serve as a prelude to the entire thesis. These sections below provide the reader with the scholarly threads of presenting an ontological basis of observing ‘real world’ processes for aim of looking at fundamental changes in human life, in specific, transformation from violent manifestations of power to non-violent means, rooted in the aim of forming a just and equal international society.

1.1 Setting the knowledge-scape

Locating centuries of scholarly reflections on the nature and presence of violence, two broad characterisations took primacy and served as the fundamental lines of analysis—. Rousseau’s imagination of a peaceful noble savage, (Bertram, 2023) or the Hobbesian thinking that the natural order is mired with violence, and it is through the intervention of the modernity and reasoning, forms the basis for building peaceful and less violent societies. These two broad characterisations, follow a common implicit understanding, that violence is understood as a loss of reason, or a rupture in meaning (in an otherwise peaceful co-existence designed through codified laws and value systems) (Williams, 2025).

The imagery of the conflict regions of the world, is replete with photographs of debris of buildings, injuries of non-combatants, security check points, tanks deployed for safety, military deployment, barbed wires sequestering security forces or community spaces...these imageries, signal towards the immediate impacts of violence and the response to these acts of violence. Conventionally, responses to armed political violence, include series of bureaucratic and military actions with the motivation to contain, curb and/or control the spread of violence and to limit damage to material wealth and physical infrastructure. These responses without explicit mention, but through the praxis of containment, create an imagery of exceptionality where rhythm of daily life suffers a rupture. And this rupture, requires a purposeful concerted response for return of order and peace. These functionalist grounded manifestations of governing, create a liminal relationship with violence (or acts of terror) which connotes significant control on the means, performance, and meaning of violence.

From an anthropological lens, interpretation of violence, as suggested by Neil Whitehead (Whitehead, 2005) attaches a moral judgement on it, with the intention of suppressing an aspect of human behaviour. Whitehead observes...

“... consonant with the recognition that violence is not a natural fact but a moral one, current anthropological thinking has moved steadily away from the notion that it is a given category of human behaviour, easily identified through its physical consequences and understood as emerging from the inadequacies of individual moral or social political systems of restraint, or from underlying genetic proclivities. In the light of not only encountering violence more frequently as part of ethnographic fieldwork, but also through more properly understanding the historical importance of colonialism and neocolonialism in establishing certain codes of violent practice, anthropology has now moved toward ideas that stress centrality of bodily and emotive experiences of violence to the normal functioning of any given cultural order, including that of the West. The problem now is not how to end violence but to understand why it occurs in the way it does. This involves recognition that violence is as much a part of meaningful and constructive human living as it is an imagination of the absence and destruction of all cultural and social order,” (Whitehead, 2005, pp. 40–41)

Basing their study on critical events creating ripple-effects of everyday lives of the people impacted by such violent incidents, Veena Das (Das and Singh, 1995) along with Jonathan Spencer (Spencer, 2007) , recognise the inherent tendency of violence as a rupture from the normal daily life and the lasting effects of such violence. For Whitehead, Spencer and Das, violence is not the loss of meaning or a rupture in the everyday life; they along with other scholars researching the anthropology of violence (Aretxaga, 2000; Nordstrom, 1997; Nordstrom and Robben, 1995; Sluka, 2000), provide insights towards building an understanding that violence is inherent and cultural.

These ontological conceptions, provide us a basis to understand the fundamental nature of violence. We can understand that violence, is not a rupture of reason or meaning, but it is an extension of the everyday power manifestations. However, it is important to be cognizant of the role played by events and its interplay in the everyday. This interplay between everyday violence and critical events, reshapes or reconstitutes the structures of society and everyday relationship of the society with the state. For Das, this is evident by the ways through which societies reimagine their social worlds after the rupture triggered by violence. She theorises on the experience of political violence through the body, and in specific women's bodies. This significant contribution on the manifestations of political violence through embodied experiences such as trauma, sexual violence, show the pervasive nature of violence which percolates across structures impacting political institutions, community life and the individual.

Foregrounding the pervasive nature of violence in our cosmologies, the epistemological understanding of political violence may nudge us to confront the remedial interventions preferred within the traditional political science approach in the study of wars and conflict. Through this rationale of looking at violent manifestations of power, this research attempts to understand the use of violence among political dissenting collectives, communities or actors. More specifically, it aims to build knowledge on the transformations from violence to non-violence, premised on the grounds that violence is inherent and controlling means of violence does not ensure more meaningful engagement with the world.

For an empirical inquiry into the transformation from violent to non-violent manifestations of power requires us to recognise and analyse the nature and role of agency in spaces of enduring political violence. Agency, in the broadest sense, is understood as an individual's capacity to act, and these actions are contingent or depend on the individuals' own intentions and structural factors (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). Within international relations, Alexander Wendt provides a poststructuralist conception of agency utilising Anthony Giddens structuration theory (Wendt, 1987). Wendt recognises that structure and agency are mutually co-constitutive and proposes that we conceptualise both of them as mutually reinforcing and without attaching "ontological primitiveness" to either (Wendt, 1999). In simple terms, responding to the philosophical conceptualization of the agency-structure dichotomy in neo-realist and world systems theory, Wendt proposes a more dynamic relationship between agents and structures, which make them both

attuned to dynamism and hence ramifications on larger (international) politics because of these movements/shifts/changes in either or both. This understanding becomes the groundwork for this research. By acknowledging the dynamism in the interplay of power through agents and structures, the thesis looks at non-traditional conceptions of agency especially within the analytical typologies of peace and conflict studies.

1.1.1 New wars and civil wars

Mary Kaldor (2012) presented us with a new typology of understanding the post-cold war global politics especially against the backdrop of the noticeable change in the nature and praxis of war. In a public lecture in 2005, Kaldor explained the difference between the old and new wars. The 'old wars' were fought between nation-states with armies in a battlefield and clear demarcation between a combatant and non-combatant. These old wars, characterised Europe through late eighteenth century to twentieth century and attributed to the rise of the modern nation-state where war made the state and vice versa (Mary Kaldor, 2005, p. 492).

Through formation of armed forces—uniformed actors bound by duty and laws of war, codified through Geneva and Hague conventions— the nation building project congruently contributed to state formation, which had the legitimacy and the moral right to defend the nation against the 'enemy' and form alliances with 'friends' who would ensure and contribute to the territorial integrity of the nation-state. The new wars, in opposition to the old wars were characterised by wars within the state.

These new wars involve state legitimised army fighting against an opponent loosely termed as non-state actors who are resisting the state. The introduction to the research project, which led Kaldor to this new typology sets the context,

“In the summer of 1992, I visited Nagorno-Karabakh in the Transcaucasian region in the midst of a war involving Azerbaijan and Armenia. It was then that I realised that what I had previously observed in the former Yugoslavia was not unique; it was not a throwback to the Balkan past but rather a contemporary predicament especially, or so I thought, to be found in the post-communist part of the world. The Wild West atmosphere of Knin (then the capital of the self-proclaimed Serbian republic in Croatia) and Nagorno-Karabakh, peopled by young men in home-made uniforms, desperate refugees and thuggish, neophyte politicians, was quite distinctive. Later, I embarked on a research project on the character of the new type of wars, and I discovered from my colleagues who had first-hand experience of Africa that what I had noted in Eastern Europe shared many common

≠≠features with the wars taking place in Africa and perhaps also other places, for example South Asia. Indeed, the experience of wars in other places shed new light on my understanding of what was happening in the Balkans and the former Soviet Union,” (Mary Kaldor, 2012, p. 9)

This provides us with a picture of a scholar observing wars, looking at the manifestations of power, and ideating on new definitions to identify, explain and eventually policy interventions for a less violent world. The text above discusses new realities such as multiplicity of non-state actors, challenging the boundaries and sovereignty of the nation-state. While the analytical landscape to study these new wars, was enriched by research on the “margins of Europe”, the year referenced in text, 1992, was a year that marked presence and strength of the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Elam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in the Philippines, the civil war in Sierra Leone and Mozambique and the conflict in Somalia and Afghanistan— all of them analytically contributed to understanding the new contours of armed violence. The research agenda provided the space to deliberate on combatants and non-combatants, multiplicity of non-state actors, and the messiness of containing and transformation of violence (to peace).

A key characteristic of these new wars is that the warring sides comprise of internal actors operating from within the nation-state and, these wars are fought by non-state actors who demand better representation or the right to self-determination for their community or population. The nature of warfare, in these new wars, is primarily fought through a mix of covert and overt operations, characteristically, guerrilla warfare. This is where the complication of blurring of lines between the civilian and the combatants emerge. Such contextualities additionally increase the incidents of violence, human rights abuse and raises questions on criminality and legitimacy of the non-state actors.

The civil wars, literature, as explained by Kalyvas (2003), refutes the ‘newness’ of these wars. To him, these conflicts were a mixture of internal and external forces, central-periphery actors especially when looking at network of actors or loose associations or allies forged during a civil war. Looking at historical cases from the Spanish civil war, the Chinese civil war during the Japanese occupation, the civil war in the Philippines, and the Irish Republican Army in Ireland, Kalyvas expands on the nature of local cleavages between the local actors and central leadership of the political wing of these resistance forces. The nature of fight against the Taliban—involved on looking at concepts of

legitimacy of non-state actors especially due to multiplicity of actors or different iterations of armed groups who may not tightly bound by ideology but align together.

Regardless, Kaldor and Kalyvas' foundational analysis on the nature of violence and the actors, enables a refined research agenda for intra-state conflict and its linkages to international political developments and power shifts. And most of these ramifications are observed in the geographies of what is understood as the Global South. The long drawn 20-year (2001-2021) war in Afghanistan, is a stark example of this. If we look closely, the presence of violent resistances such as the Colombian FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia), India's Maoist conflict, The Nepali Maoist conflict in early 2000s leading to the overthrow of the monarchy—fit partly into the new wars' theory and civil wars. However, neither of these two frameworks can provide a comprehensive analysis to tie them together. Yet, these provide us with a groundwork to study cases and instances of armed violence which have linkages to the global socialist/communist movements from the 1960s and have persisted through international political shifts.

1.2 The case study: India and the Maoist conflict

The section above sets out the theoretical rationale for studying shift from violence to non-violence and the typologies of political violence as observed in the aftermath of the cold war. With the dissolution of the Soviet Nation, and the simultaneous formation of new postcolonial nation states, conflicts and low-intensity armed resistance movements were globally on a rise. The recent report on conflict trends from Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO) observes a steady rise in state-based conflicts between 1946 and 2021 (Júlia et al., 2022). The report further reveals that conflicts in Africa and Asia experience a higher rate or recurrence attributing it to “underlying incompatibilities and grievances of conflict parties are not resolved,” (Júlia et al., 2022, p. 11). The report also notes that the conflicts in these regions have intensified since 1970s.

The literature on inter-state conflicts in the Philippines, El Salvador, Colombia, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan, is robust with knowledge on root causes of these conflicts, the changing nature of violence, illicit drug trade and related economies sustaining these conflicts (Ewans, 2004; Gill, 2008; Nadarajah and Sriskandarajah, 2013; Restrepo et al., 2003; Rubin, 2000; Trawick, 1997). The conflict in Colombia and the Philippines is the one of longest running conflicts spanning over 5 decades. The all-out war in 2009 by the Sri Lankan government against the LTTE was successful in defeating the armed movement,

and complicit in killing over 40,000 civilians in the last months of the war (Anandakugan, 2020) and the fate of the global war against terror which was fought mostly in Afghanistan reached an ambiguous conclusion, with the US troops leaving Afghanistan as the Taliban gained legitimacy and a power transfer agreement brokered by Qatar came in effect in 2021. These conflicts, regardless of their consequences, have been commonly cited and studied cases for understanding manifestations of power, violence and societal transformations. Another reason for prominence of these conflict specific case studies is because of their explicit linkages to internationalisation of these conflicts linked to global arms and illicit drug trade.

However, instances of conflict, though with similar historical longevity, but different material realities remain understudied and under-researched. Within the south Asian context, while the international border conflict between India-China and India-Pakistan is vastly reported and researched, lesser-known inter-state conflicts within national boundaries skip the expert eye, because of their complex historical trajectories and difficulty in categorising these conflicts into clean cut typologies of new wars/civil wars or insurgency/revolution. The violence in these spaces, is pervasive and cyclical and spans over decades with grave consequences for the civilian or non-combatant population residing in these areas.

1.2.1 Maoism in India

The Maoist conflict in India qualifies under these blurred typologies of armed/political violence. With more than seven decades of armed conflict between the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) (CPI-Maoist) and the state of India, the Maoist conflict is one of the longest running conflicts in south/south-east Asia. This conflict, which finds its beginning in the 1940s in southern part of the Indian sub-continent, is an ideological contestation against the "feudal structure" of Independent India demanding for a new people's democratic revolution (Banerjee, 2009; Bhatia, 2005; Mohanty, 2015).

The Maoist movement is one of the many Marxist-Leninist-Maoist (M-L-M) political movements in India, which occupied the political imaginaries set against the backdrop of creating a new independent India. The CPI (Maoist) is one of the more powerful extraparliamentary organisations, which in 2004 (after 20 years of its existence) oriented

their political strategy to adopt use of revolutionary violence to achieve social change (Kaushik and Ripamonti, 2022).

As mentioned before, over seventy years of Maoist revolutionary history, in its present phase, these revolutionary activities are mainly located in the central-eastern belt of India which covers the states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal. This central-eastern belt is also the home of indigenous communities and is rich in natural resources, with a record of low development indicators.

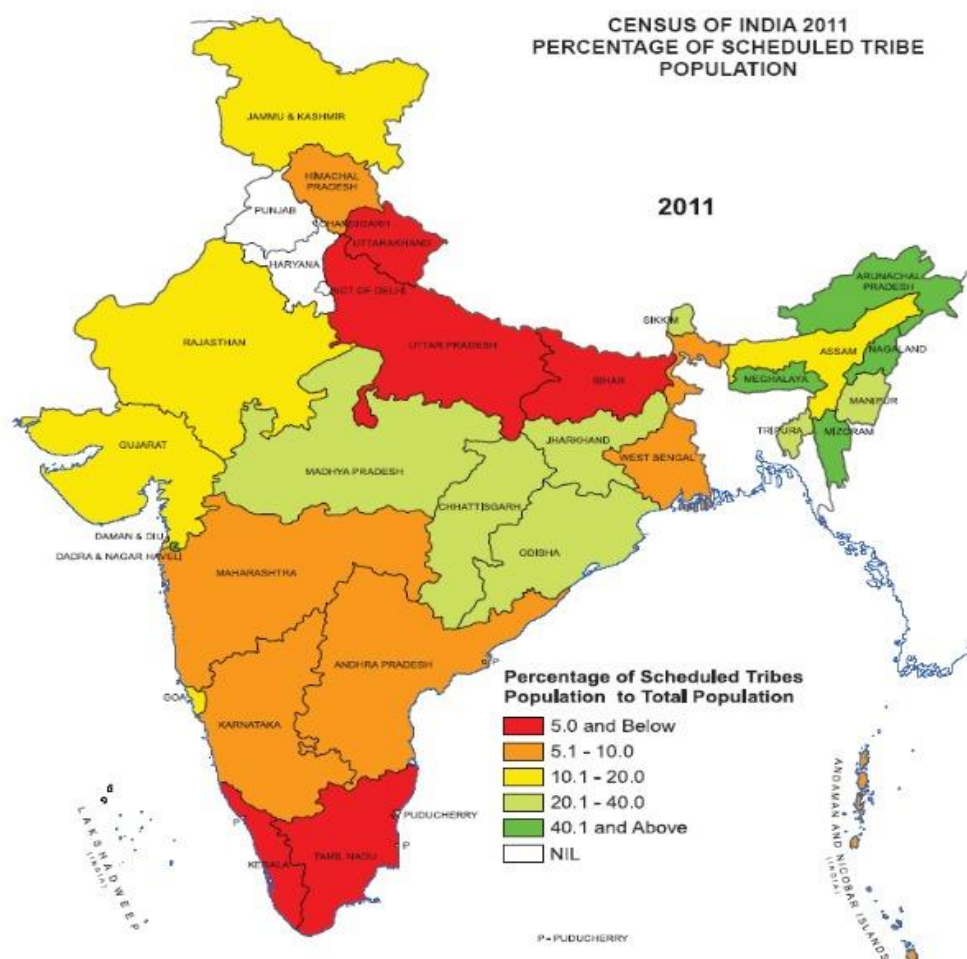


Figure 1.1: Map showing the percentage of indigenous population across India. Source: www.tribal.gov.in

India's domestic politics has played a significant role in the way it articulates and positions itself in the international political realm. Independent India domestically faced territorial challenges with war with Pakistan (in 1947-48, 1965 and 1971) and with China (in 1962)— these crucial years, of a nascent or new nation-state, fraught with hostile

contestations with its neighbouring states, shaped India's support for the Non-alignment Movement (NAM) and promotion of self-interest, state sovereignty, non-violence and international unity in diversity (Wojczeski, 2018). Internally, India's consolidation of its state power through inclusion of pre-independent princely states within a unified nation identity, was challenged with self-determination movements in regions of Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura.

India's approach to resolving internal contestations has primarily focused on accommodating issues of representation through parliamentary democratic processes. However, when these movements have resorted to violence, India's security policy mandates the use of force to contain and ultimately end such violence. Throughout these conflicts, India has remained a strong proponent of state sovereignty and has consistently avoided solutions that would involve either the formation of new nation-states or the participation of international conflict resolution mechanisms¹ in the peaceful negotiation of internal disputes.

This approach of accommodating through parliamentary representation, is affirmed when we look at the response in the Maoist conflict. Between 1940s and 2004, the various articulations of M-L-M-led political violence demanding representation for the marginalised Dalit and Adivasi¹ populations, were viewed and responded through lens of criminality and response was through increased policing (Mukhopadhyay, 2006; Parashar, 2020; K. S. Subramanian, 2010).

At the same time, these M-L-M political formations had internal disagreements over theorising on methods and means of achieving a socialist revolution in India which led to their fragmentation and in some instances of opting for parliamentary politics and

¹ The term Dalit means "oppressed" in Hindi. It was coined by those communities which have been historically excluded from the caste system and discriminated against as untouchables in the Indian society. Even though untouchability was abolished by the Indian constitution in 1950 (art. 17), its practice and other forms of caste-base discrimination still persist nowadays. The majority of Dalits – 16.6% of the total population (Census of India, 2011) – still lack access to key resources (e.g. land) and continue to record low socio-economic indicators, especially in rural areas. These communities are officially recognized as Scheduled Castes (SC) by the Indian government, but they usually prefer to refer to themselves as Dalits. Adivasi is a term referring to the indigenous population residing in India. In Hindi, it means "the original inhabitants of the land". The term Adivasi is preferred by the representative civil society rather than the word 'tribal' and the administrative category of Scheduled Tribes (ST). Comprising approximately 8.6% of the total population of India (Census of India, 2011), Adivasis are spread across Central India and North Eastern India. The Maoists have their stronghold in these parts of India with high levels of participation of Adivasis in their guerrilla army, liberated zones, and in their mid-level leadership.

renouncing extraparliamentary methods. In other instances of political violence or self-determination movements, due to their proximity to the India's international borders found itself with deployment of the army and paramilitary security forces with official stance of classifying them as a threat to India's sovereignty.

In 2004, the CPI-Maoist consolidated themselves and declared the formation of the PLGA and since then, the response from the Indian state towards Maoist violence took a more securitised turn. Temporally, this thesis situates itself in the aftermath of the declaration of Maoist conflict as "the greatest internal security threat to the country" by then Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, in October 2009 (Bhattacharjee, 2020) . The persistence of violence between the Indian state and the Maoist guerrillas, from 2004 onwards, has impacted the everyday lives of Adivasi communities, since the conflict plays out in Adivasi populous states. This thesis attempts to explore the possibilities through India's policy response in enabling spaces for conflict transformation, i.e. from violent to non-violent processes for an ideological conflict which is rooted in principles of social justice.

One of the key policy responses designed for reduction in Maoist related violence, is the policy of surrender and rehabilitation. The surrender and rehabilitation policy directs its focus on Maoist guerrilla fighters, who may consider giving up their arms and provide them with rehabilitation opportunities to pursue a life without violence (Bhayana, 2019; Government of India, 2009; Nath, 2001; Ramana, 2013). The policy, which has been implemented across all geographies of internal armed violence in India (Jammu & Kashmir, Manipur, Nagaland, Assam) is viewed by security experts as a strategy in reduction of violence and eventual cessation of these armed struggles since it reduces the popular support base which sustains these movements, i.e. "winning hearts and minds" (Goswami, 2012; Kennedy and Purushotham, 2012; Parashar, 2018; Rich and Duyvesteyn, 2012; Sundar, 2011a). While existing literature focuses on the policy's effectiveness in reducing violence, there is limited understanding of its transformative potential of the policy at community level, particularly in the context of the protracted Maoist conflict in central India.

This thesis attempts to pursue this line of inquiry, with the central question as:

"What spaces for conflict transformation does the Indian state's policy on disarmament (surrender and rehabilitation policy) create in the case of the protracted conflict with the Maoists?"

To understand how agency operates within spaces for conflict transformation, the question is driven by the following lines of inquiry:

- a) The role of surrender and rehabilitation policy in the protection and maintenance of the security architecture of the State.
- b) The role of the Centre and the Federal State in the implementation of the policy.
- c) The means by which the community/locals engage with surrendered guerrillas.
- d) An exploration of the everyday life of surrendered guerrillas and how they (re)integrate.
- e) The impacts on overall community relations at village and district² level.

For an in-depth exploration of these inquiries, the thesis adopts an ethnographic or interpretivist approach, to understand the underlying meanings signified to praxis of surrender and rehabilitation and the lived experiences of the people/communities where this policy is implemented or instructed. Using an ethnographic approach urges research on conflict and peace studies to take a more nuanced approach to understanding state-society relations, which are at the centre of this research and for the discipline of peace and conflict studies. As discussed earlier in the chapter, to explore the transformation of violence, requires an anthropological lens to understand the different meanings attached to individuals who have associated with forms of political violence. State practices are neither actualised or implemented in a vacuum and often we find analytically, these policies contesting between structural and individual agency.

The subsequent chapters namely, two, three and four, expand in detail on international discourse on disarmament, India's political history vis-à-vis conflict management and transformation, the surrender and rehabilitation policy and the counterinsurgency discourse where often, these policies of rehabilitation are analytically placed. These chapters provide the reader with the holistic view of some mammoth concepts and historical developments pertaining to India's domestic politics which shaped the nature of revolutionary violence and its cyclical longevity.

Chapter four of the thesis details on my ethnographic approach and links the conflict to the local histories of the spaces where revolutionary violence has popular support. The field work for this thesis was done from August 2019 to February 2020 in north Bastar region in Chhattisgarh. A part of the field work impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic,

² District is the primary administrative division within a state.

which stalled travel to the field (as was intended after the first round). The second round was conducted for three weeks in winter (November and December) of 2021. Through the course of building relationships and associations during my initial stay, there was sustained interaction with some of my interlocutors. During the pandemic, responding to the situation in the field pertaining to activities between the state and the Maoists, community collectives adapted to digital spaces and social media platforms such as X (formerly known as Twitter), WhatsApp groups, YouTube channels—which became a source of following local developments and discourse on the issues of security-related incidents and community voices responding to these developments. These details emerge with more clarity in the methodology and the empirical chapters (five, six and seven) of the thesis.

1.3 Contribution to literature

The thesis, seeks to contribute to the growing literature on the local turn in peacebuilding and conceptual argument for adopting a people-centric lens to study of state, war, violence and conflict. The thesis derives its conceptual and intellectual inspiration across disciplines of critical terrorism studies, anthropology of security and peacebuilding literature, MacGinty and Richmond (2013), Paffenholz (2015), Millar (2010) discuss the various threads of recognising the top-down or state centric approaches to peacebuilding missions and programs implemented in conflict or post conflict settings. To further the case for recognising local approaches to peacebuilding is reimagined through methodological extension to ethnographic or interpretivist approach to invert the scale of analysis from state to people to people to state or institutions.

The thesis, is a contribution to this growing body of work, by problematising the limitations of the liberal peacebuilding structures and the conceptual boundaries it inadvertently builds by thinking of the peace and conflict studies as a direct off-shoot from the international liberal peacebuilding architecture and the international institutions it critiques. The case of the Maoist conflict, is peculiar, since it escapes the formal peacebuilding institutional interventions (the Indian state maintains its sovereignty and considers the conflict as a law-and-order problem). So, while the Indian state implements a national policy guideline on disarmament and rehabilitation of armed non-state actors, the structure, mechanism and the consequences on society, largely remain unexamined.

Alongside, the thesis, attempts to support the indigenous relational turn (Behra et al., 2021; Morgan, 2018; Randazzo, 2021) in international relations which foregrounds the co-constitutive nature of agents and structures along with recognising that different societies have distinct cosmological conceptualisations, which are often marginalised due to dominant knowledge that are predominantly state-centric.

The analysis of the Adivasi agency in the context of what is often analysed as a conflict between the state and the Maoists, contributes to this emerging theme in international relations and peace and conflict studies. The empirical chapters in the thesis illustrate the ways through which the Adivasis employ their agency for assertion of their rights, lifeworld and their way of living. The empirical chapters, show a glimpse of the pathways these communities rely on and their relationship with State and the Maoists. The contribution, aims to shed light on what Navinta Behera calls as a blind spot of the experts (Navnita Chadha Behera, 2023). Behera, by (re)looking at the Kashmir conflict in India, states that the subaltern has always been speaking, however, it is the failure of the policymakers, who due to ontological incommensurability, marginalise the repeated claims and assertion by the subaltern. This particularly resonates with the conclusion of this thesis.

The Adivasi, through their commemorative celebrations of their historical leaders, through protests against the governments' policy strategies which harm their lifeworlds, through choosing to leave a revolutionary life into the mainstream—exercises their agency, opinion and choice of denouncing or accepting mainstream or dominant structures, i.e. the Indian state or the Maoist revolutionary state. The subaltern is talking and resisting; however, it is the expert who intentionally mutes these voices. The concluding chapter of this thesis, chapter eight, explicitly discusses the relational turn and the topicality of reorienting analytical lens to include indigenous cosmologies in study of peace and conflict, if we are to seek durable conflict transformation.

1.4 Thesis format and chapter description

Chapter two and three in the thesis, introduces the reader with the literature on conflict in India and traces its response in instances of internal armed violence. Tracing then, through definitions of counter-terrorism, insurgency, social movements and revolution, the literature connects between the intersecting issues of support of people, armed violence, conflict management and interventions in peacebuilding. Chapter two, builds

theoretically on aspects of meaning of surrender, the process of othering that becomes the basis of security policy formations and formulations and contextualising it in the case of the conflict between the Maoist guerillas and government of India.

Chapter four, engages with the historical dimensions of the conflict and the continuity of pre-colonial, colonial practices in law and policy approaches towards inequity when specifically addressing the indigenous population/Adivasis³ in India. This chapter, lays out for the reader, the researcher's position and rationale for using ethnographic method, to provide a nuanced people centric analysis for highlighting the non-linear and broader implications of disarmament and reintegration in the region of north Bastar in the state of Chhattisgarh, India. The chapter, attempts to contextualise the various workers and Adivasi-led movements and the state's response to these movements demand for equity and justice and how these responses shape the security analysis and policies.

Marking what could be seen as the empirical section of the thesis, chapter five introduces the reader with the 'field'. A thick description of the field site along with the some of the main interlocuters that feature in the thesis, the chapter sets the ground for the reader to understand the ways through which the policy guidelines of surrender and rehabilitation are procedurally implemented and the lives of who's it directly impacts. The chapter talks about the daily lives of surrendered guerrillas and in some instances expands on the experiences of the security personnels and policy people involved in the counterinsurgency and security protection operations in the region.

Chapter six, a continuation from the previous chapter, delves further into thick description with detailing personal account of the researcher and people who actively engage with local political and civic issues. This chapter, uses two events in the field, which highlight the stark contrasts between state-led narratives on the peace (conflict) and indigenous people's accounts on the nature of security state, the non-state and their negotiation for

³ The term 'Adivasi' is a self-referential term used by the indigenous population in central India. Breaking away from colonial taxonomy of 'tribal' which marked the difference of a population on the basis of kinship, practicing their animistic religion and living as hunter gatherers with limited form of agriculture. In twentieth century as decolonising project progressed, the word tribal was replaced with the word indigenous- explicating their claim as the original inhabitants/people of the subcontinent. The translation of the word 'indigenous' in Hindi—Adivasi—is specifically deployed by the indigenous people who trace their roots to central India. The same taxonomy is deployed in this thesis. Throughout the thesis, the Adivasi term refers to the indigenous Gondi speaking community who locate themselves in the Central India across the states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Jharkhand, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh with parts of Orissa and Uttar Pradesh.

asserting their rights and claims. The chapter infers, how between the conflict narrative of state and the non-state, the indigenous people, whose land and space is at the centre of the conflict—are ignored or subsumed as either pro or anti state.

Using events from the previous chapter, chapter seven details and problematises the concept of infrastructure and development as an anathema to armed dissent or representation of indigenous people. Critically assessing the narratives for construction of roads, bridges and security camps, the chapter connects the local with the international—connecting practices of securitised development and its imperial and colonial legacies. The chapter builds the argument for the racialised treatment of the Indian state towards the indigenous population who have historically, asserted their sovereignty and their demand for their right to pursue their lifeworld.

Packing the empirical chapters and the initial chapters on literature and methodology; the last chapter of the thesis, chapter eight, presents the reader with both practical policy alterations such as inclusion of accountability mechanisms which could enable a concerted discussion on the nature of disarmament and rehabilitation. It raises ethical questions on the involvement of surrendered guerrillas into state's counterinsurgency operations. It further problematises the analytical blind spot within the disciplines of security studies and peacebuilding literature on relationality and indigenous politics especially in contexts of conflicts that fundamentally interrogate modernity and its consequences on nature, non-capitalistic lifeworlds. Contextualising the growing empirical and everyday impacts of weather variability (and climate change), the thesis critiques militarisation and posits for furthering dialogue and mediation for durable political solution to the conflict.

Chapter 2: Locating India's response to armed violence: militarised nationalism and 'winning hearts and minds'

2.1 Introduction

The chapter provides a detailed account of India's conflict management and response strategy after its independence. The introduction provides us with a glimpse into a shared experience from the field and links it to the larger processes of conflict resolution or management practiced in India. The chapter introduces the various identity or territorial contestations in independent India and the approach of the state in finding durable solutions. Sections of the chapter engage with distinguishing between social movements, self-determination and armed resistance. Subsequent sections of the chapter then move towards linking the international discourse on counterinsurgency and the ways it has consequences for the Indian context. Overall, the chapter lays out the conceptual grounds for understanding historical trajectory of India's response to armed violence and the introduction of international discourse on 'winning hearts and mind' approach conflict management. The chapter then links this international doctrine and the percolation of this discourse in the Indian context and its ramifications.

2.1.1 Snippet from the everyday: negotiating violence and justice

On a cold winter afternoon in 2019, I visited Bina^{*4}, a well-known peace and civil liberties activist and a scholar of Naxalite politics. Bina*, now in her early 50s, spends her time in Jagdalpur—the former seat of the King of Bastar and one of the main cities in the Bastar region in the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh. Bina*, since 2014 after resigning from her teaching position in one of the leading social science universities in India, now practices law and is often found in the district courts of Jagdalpur and sessions courts in the neighbouring districts. When I met her in October 2019, one of the cases she was handling had been recently concluded and she was planning a visit to Bijapur to meet with some of the petitioners of this case. I decided to accompany Bina* to Bijapur to meet these women petitioners. The matter at hand was to speak to these women who were survivors of sexual assault by the State security forces in 2012. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), in recognition of the violations, had directed the state government to pay monetary compensation to survivors and it was in this regard, Bina* wanted to speak to the group. When we arrived, the women, who had travelled for 3 hours from

⁴ For reasons of keeping the respondents and people from any harm, the names have been changed. All of them will be followed by an Asterix (*) to indicate the name change.

their village were already waiting at the office of the district collector (DC)—the administrative bureaucrat that is responsible for the governance of the district/county.

Sitting together in a group, we were greeted with smiling faces. Bina* was joined by another lawyer who was traveling from North of Bastar for this meeting, and she carefully in a low tone, spoke to the women in Hindi,

“Your voices have been heard. The NHRC recognises the violence and wrong that was done to you and your loved ones. This compensation is in acknowledgement of the crimes the State is responsible. Today is the last date to claim the compensation. We had met earlier and discussed this, and I wanted to know your final decision on this.”

The women understood Hindi but couldn't speak it and had appointed a teenage girl to speak on their behalf. This girl, who was conversant in both Hindi and Gondi (the language spoken by the indigenous community in the Bastar region) shared that the women didn't wish to take the compensation granted to them and that what they wish is to take the offenders (the state security officials) to the court for justice.

“We don't want to take this money. Taking money will be a way of absolving them of the crimes they committed and us putting a monetary value to our dignity and respect. We want justice. We won't take the money of the police,” said the girl in a low but assertive tone.

The women gathered, were nodding in unison. Bina* patiently and empathetically tried to reason it with them, she looked at the girl and asked her to tell the women

“Tell them, that taking this money, which is offered by the human rights commission, isn't complying with the security forces. This money is in acknowledgement of the injustice. Think about it, this money could be used for their families, their children's education...”
The reaction of the women to this, was a defiant NO.

Watching this conversation as an outsider, I could sense a hesitation among the women to articulate their thoughts, but it was evident that taking the money didn't settle well with these women. A part of it, as was later discussed, has to do with the notion of money and its normative value especially for the indigenous/Adivasi population. The idea that money could do away with the pain of these families was abhorrent to them. Bina*, wanted to give a last try, she asked the girl in a hushed voice

“... is this what has been decided in consultation with dadalog⁵? Maybe if we travel and organise a meeting with everyone and share our thoughts, it might help? This money is

⁵ Dadalog can be loosely translated to brothers. This term is interchanged with 'mamalog' and is used by locals when referring to the Maoist guerrillas (regardless of the gender of these combatants) that are active in the region. In highly securitized and constantly under surveillance places such as Bastar region, the word helps in providing some form of safeguard against attracting attention from police and their informers.

from the Sarkar (government), and it would go back to them. This money can be helpful for so many of you in the village. It can be used for the community as well..”

Sitting there, it was decided that they would travel to the village to attend this meeting and see if they together can reach a desirable consensus. It was late afternoon by then, and to reach their village would take over 3 hours, the meeting concluded and after some tea, they would leave for the bus stand. I decided to retrace my way back to my fieldwork site, which was another 3-hour bus ride from the district office.

This incident is etched in my memory for two reasons. The first, is the noticeable discomfort of the Adivasi women regarding monetary compensation. It is indicative of the normative value money holds in everyday life. For them, the aspirational promise of currency notes and all that it can acquire fails to be a currency for justice. And this leads to my second observation, the embedded ties between the state, people and non-state groups through a precarious balance of codified law and generational community ties bound by mutual trust. The guerrilla who is considered a threat to the internal security and sovereignty of India, is arguably a trusted ally for communities in their assertion for accountability and justice.

This incident reiterated and affirmed my motivation to study this under-researched facet of security policy, specifically in India— to analyse the varied impacts of state policy which seeks to persuade armed Maoist guerrillas to disarm and surrender, and to understand the processes and mechanisms which enable communities to recover and rebuild lives in a backdrop of cyclical armed violence (and counter-violence) and structural inequity.

2.2 Exploring contours of social movements, self-determination, and armed resistance

India’s experience with counterinsurgency coincided with the country’s independence and nation-building project. Beginning in the mid-1950s, India responded to growing voices of secession and movements of self-determination in the provinces of Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura in the Northeast of India. Similar movements gained prominence in Kashmir and Punjab in the North and the Maoist or the Naxalite movement in East and Central India (initially in West Bengal and later extending to

undivided⁶ Bihar, undivided Madhya Pradesh, undivided Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Orissa).

Barring the Maoists, who are ideologically motivated to establish a communist state and overthrow the present capitalist regime, most of these movements had a common thread of resisting mainland India and its political leadership on grounds of ethnicity or similar articulations concerning their socio-cultural identities. Demand for a separate state, greater political representation, assertion of cultural identity and lack of effective governance (Goswami, 2012) were some of the key concerns which allowed these movements to gather impetus and which later provided mobilised into armed resistance.

Most prominent in garnering international attention, the Kashmiri movement for self-determination, shaped the security and geopolitical strategy for postcolonial South Asia as a whole. Set against the backdrop of the partition of 1947— the largest displacement since the Second World War, the Kashmiri movement became a prominent national security agenda for the newly formed nations of India and Pakistan. The practice of disallowing or delegitimising local Kashmiri voices and their constitutional rights to choose appropriate political representation, through militaristic means became the predominant template for the Indian government to implement across (armed) social movements. For Indian security and military experts, Kashmir is considered a sovereign matter and recourse for conflict resolution is an internal matter .

A similar practice of treating armed movements as ‘internal matters’ is observed in other instances of armed conflicts in India. Noticeably, India’s ambiguity to adhere to the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) especially the statues applicable to non-international armed conflict is indicative of the State’s hesitancy to opening its own conduct to international systems of accountability and critical scrutiny which hints towards India’s colonial past and domestic constraints, driven by larger domestic political issues linked to each of these conflicts (Burra, 2018).

⁶ Usage of the word ‘undivided’ in reference to the states of Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh refer to a time before the states the federal State of India delimited them for electoral purposes. This led to subsequent formation of states of Jharkhand (Northern Bihar), Telangana (from Andhra Pradesh) and Chhattisgarh (from Madhya Pradesh). The state of Punjab was the first to undergo delimitation in independent India, carving out the state of Haryana in 1966. Later as is discussed in chapter three, the state of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh were delimited to form Uttarakhand, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh in 2000. Later after a long-standing movement for demand for Telangana, the state of Andhra Pradesh was delimited in 2014, after the new alliance of BJP led NDA came into power.

Table 2.1 shows the overall fatalities recorded between 2000 and 2024. These fatalities are recorded using national and local newspaper reports. The increased total fatalities from 2007 to 2011, indicate maximum amount of violence and counter-violence between security forces and the Maoist guerrillas. Along with these numbers, looking at the conflict maps, provides us with a comprehensive knowledge about the nature of violence and the geographical nature of this violence.

Figure 2.1 and 2.2 (below) show the conflict map of India from year 2011 and 2024. Figure 2.1 from year 2011, presents to the reader with active conflicts in India. In the north, is the conflict in Kashmir with details of the active non-state actors. Similarly, the map details activities of CPI (Maoist) across central India. In 2011, CPI (Maoist) related incidents were recorded in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar, Jharkhand, West-Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. The movement had a stronghold in Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, West-Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar and Kerala and the bordering districts of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh with Chhattisgarh.

In 2010, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), recorded 83 districts (counties) as 'severely affected' out of an overall count of 220 districts with Maoism-related incidents (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2011)..

Year	Incidents of Killing	Civilians	Security Forces	Terrorists/Insurgents/Extremists	Not Specified	Total
2000*	116	94	40	135	9	278
2001	199	130	116	169	44	459
2002	182	123	115	163	30	431
2003	319	193	114	246	30	583
2004	127	89	82	87	22	280
2005	343	259	147	282	24	712
2006	248	249	128	343	14	734
2007	274	218	234	195	25	672
2008	246	184	215	228	19	646
2009	407	368	319	314	12	1013
2010	481	630	267	265	18	1180
2011	302	259	137	210	0	606
2012	235	156	96	125	1	378
2013	186	164	103	151	0	418
2014	185	127	98	121	4	350
2015	171	90	56	110	0	256
2016	263	122	62	250	0	434
2017	200	107	76	152	0	335
2018	217	108	73	230	0	411
2019	176	99	49	154	0	302
2020	138	61	44	134	0	239
2021	124	58	51	128	0	237
2022	107	53	15	67	0	135
2023	112	61	31	56	0	148
2024	160	80	21	296	0	397

Figure 2.1: Recorded fatalities related to Maoist conflict from 2000 to 2024. Source: www.satp.org

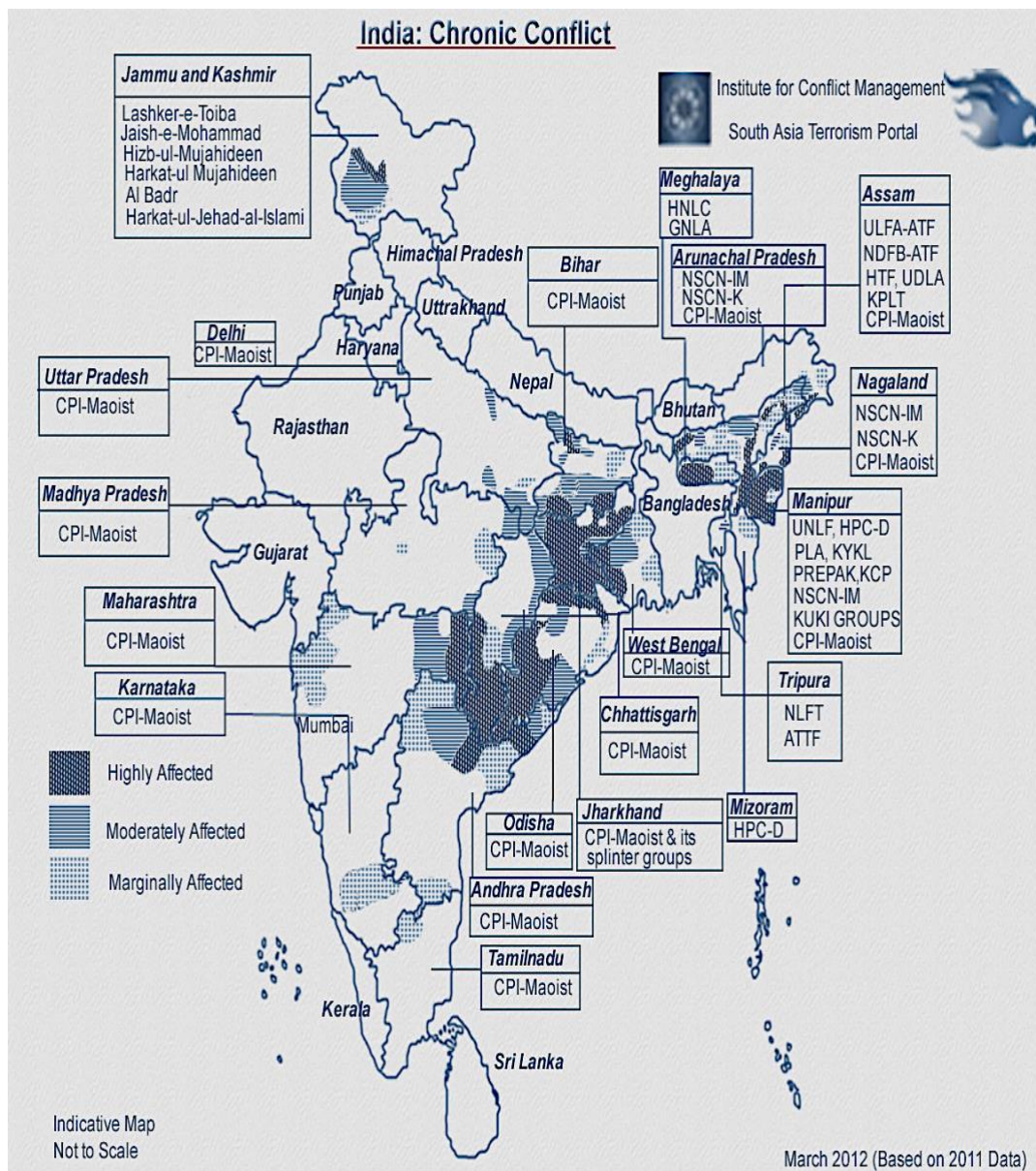


Figure 2.2: Conflict map of India depicting active conflicts as of 2011. The image provides the reader with the context of various the fault lines. Source: www.satp.org

Between 2010 and 2012 recorded high fatalities of the paramilitary and the Maoist guerrillas with the biggest event recorded in December 2010, when 74 paramilitary security personnel were killed in an IED blast by the Maoist guerrillas in the state of Chhattisgarh (Sethi and Rao, 2010). The incident, marked as a ‘wake-up’ call for the security architecture, leading to extensive debates in the parliament deliberating the efficacy of a development-based approach in reduction in dissent and an appeal for a strong military response (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2010, pp. 209–224)

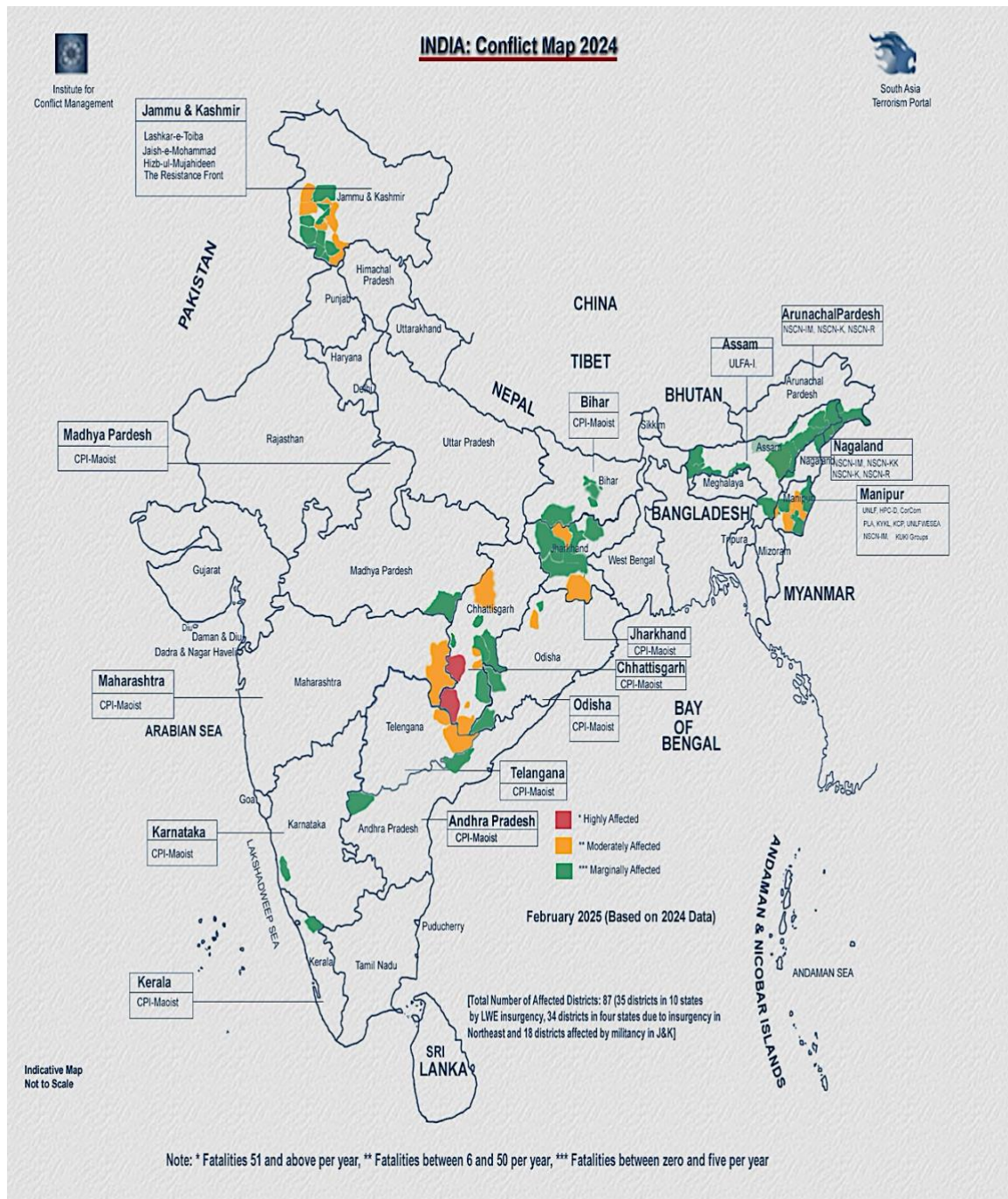


Figure 2.3: Conflict map of India depicting active conflicts as of 2024. The image provides the reader with the context of various the fault lines. Source: www.satp.org

Figure 2.2 shows the present-day map and spread of the Maoist movement as of 2024. The visible change in insurgent activity traced through incident mapping indicates reduction in violence and presence of Maoist guerrillas. As of 2024, the MHA has accounted 12 districts as ‘most affected districts’ recording Maoist insurgent/guerrilla activities. This re-classification of districts impacted by ‘left-wing extremism’ or Maoist

related activities, was initiated in 2014, which incidentally marked the beginning of the BJP led NDA rule in federal India.

India's response to these internal armed conflicts is embedded in a practice of conflict management with solutions focussing on the appeasement of the powerful dominant political elites. In post-partition Punjab, the demand for a similar state on the lines of religion, as Pakistan, led to the rise of the Khalistan movement which gained significant momentum in the 1950s. The Indian state, in the aftermath of the partition of India and Pakistan and the partition of Punjab, was reluctant to accede to this demand. However, in 1966, India conceded and created two separate states of Punjab and Haryana on linguistic lines (Jetly, 2008). This step in providing more decentralised autonomy, while it provided some interim respite, did not calm the sparks for a demand of a separate state. The Khalistan movement, subsequently, became the first instance in independent India, where the use of paramilitary and increased policing with arrests and attacks, became a tool for responding to dissent and in conflict management.

Butler (2009) identifies conflict management as an "...effort to control or contain an ongoing conflict between politically motivated actors operating at the state or sub-state level, typically through the involvement of a third party... conflict management is centrally concerned with making an ongoing conflict less damaging to the parties directly engaged in it." He further cautions the reader against conceptually conflating conflict management and conflict resolution as the same. At a conceptual level, conflict resolution seeks to promote reconciliation by addressing the underlying grievances to the conflict, whereas conflict management "...remains closer to the surface," (Butler, 2009, p. 3).

The policy of carving new sub-national boundaries as a tool in conflict management persists with the formation of Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, and Telangana. Doyle (2019) posits that this form of power-sharing has helped in addressing some of the demands of self-rule, autonomy, or greater representation without them turning into armed conflict. Swenden (2016) indicating these territorial accommodations as a bargaining capacity between the 'centre and the state' is challenged when it concerns "...small but significant border states of the North East," (Swenden, 2016, p. 491).

From 2014 onwards, with the victory of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) led coalition of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the nature of power-sharing between state and the centre has taken a more centralised turn, with an increasing acceptance of ethnic

majoritarianism (Adeney and Swenden, 2019). This was confirmed with the Abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 which concerned the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The constitutional special powers provided under the Art. 370 in case of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, gave legal power to the state, to conducting a plebiscite on its constitutional future, while also providing a degree of autonomy to the state, by according the state a constitution and legislative authority with the exception of foreign affairs, defence, and communication. In an unprecedented amendment to the Indian constitution, the abrogation of Article 370, led to the restructuring of territorial boundaries by splitting Jammu and Kashmir from Ladakh and restricting their powers by making them Union Territories, with direct rule from the centre (Lalwani and Gayner, 2020).

The practice of containment of violence or conflict management, in the Indian context is grounded in an implicit understanding that dissent, while it is an essential characteristic of a democracy, requires timely interjection to avoid escalation. Historically, India has employed legal measures such as the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act 1958, UAPA [Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act], and related legislation which prioritised and perpetuated the colonial strategy of 'use of force', and is almost a patterned response (Kalhan et al., 2005; Manoharan, 2009). By declaring dissent as a "law and order problem", India's security praxis translates to an implementation approach that involves policing measures including but not restricted to, curfews, barricading/security checkpoints, surveillance, village domination exercises, arrests, and overall dense deployment of the army (at the border) or the paramilitary forces (within mainland India).

The fear or insecurity of losing its territorial control especially in the Northeast and in Kashmir, has seen India's conflict response embedded in a "security first" approach justified through the Hobbesian rationale which legitimises state violence or state's monopoly over violence. This translates to actions by the military or the security architecture where retaliation with equal or (dis) proportionate use of force seeks to maintain the status quo wherein the territorial sovereignty of India remains uncompromised.

To understand these dynamics of the Indian state and its processes involved in an eventual response to internal conflict, the Maoist conflict or Left-Wing Extremism⁷, presents a very important case study. It is different from the ethno-political conflicts of the Northeast or the ethno-religious/geopolitical conflict in Kashmir—as the Maoist conflict is fundamentally an ideological struggle and embedded in deeper narratives of social and economic injustices. The response of the state to the localized Maoist violence has, for long periods, largely been the same as that deployed in Kashmir, Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram—increased policing through arrests, the establishment of police camps and checkpoints, and routinised searching operations in civilian populous and rural areas. However, the Maoist movement has now entered its fifty-seventh year (Shah and Jain, 2017), indicating the resilience of the conflict and compelling us to critically assess India’s counterinsurgency (COIN) approach.

Fidler and Ganguly (2012) imply that the Indian military doctrine on COIN whose emergence coincided with the US COIN doctrine (both date to the year 2006) contains many similarities, especially in what is understood as a ‘winning hearts and minds’ approach to countering violent armed struggle. While it would be expected that the approach on COIN would be context-specific, the doctrine(s) on a close study, follows a general pattern or steps of (para) military deployment where the military is additionally responsible for advising on the governance of civilian administration specifically in development assistance, and in taking account of the culture and language of the local population. The difference remains in the sphere of implementation—the US doctrine is focused on populations that are beyond the territorial or sovereign control of the US government and cater to international counterinsurgencies, while the Indian doctrine is focused on domestic and internal armed conflicts or conflicts within the country’s territories.

2.3 International discourse on counterinsurgency

Contemporary literature on counterinsurgency is primarily derived from practices and discourse developed after the ‘9/11’ attacks. The literature is dominated by ‘lessons

⁷ As discussed in the entry on the Maoist conflict in the Palgrave Encyclopaedia of Peace and Conflict Studies (Kaushik and Ripamonti, 2022), the change in the lexicon from Naxalism or Maoist Conflict to Left-Wing Extremism which hints at the change in characterisation since 2006 when the conflict was viewed as a threat to India’s internal security. The change in the terminology reflected in the policy approach which led to the Ministry of Home Affairs introducing a separate division looking at Left-Wing Extremism.

learned' papers emerging out of the US counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan. Considered as a codified document on counterinsurgency (COIN), the *Field Manual 3-24*, jointly published by the US Army and Marine Corps (US Army Infantry School, 2009)⁸, focuses on the importance of military leadership and military operations while protecting civilian populations. The manual became the bible for all overseas operations of the US military as well as the coalition forces fighting against "global terrorism". Karl Eikenberry in his critique of the COIN doctrine asks pertinent and conceptual questions. His first question dealt with one of the central tenets of the doctrine, 'protection of civilian population'. Questioning the basis on which the nomenclature of civilian and non-civilian is formed, Eikenberry (2013) touches upon a pertinent question that eludes most literature on COIN

'Protect the Population' makes for a good bumper sticker, but it raises the question: Protect it from whom and against what? It certainly meant protecting the Afghan people from marauding Taliban insurgents. But what about criminal narco-traffickers, venal local police chiefs, or predatory government officials? What should be done about tribes that turn to the Taliban for help in fighting more powerful tribes with patrons in the Kabul government? And what about complex cases of ethnic violence with roots dating back a century or more? Young men without jobs are supposedly ripe for insurgent recruiting, so should protection be offered against unemployment? The provision of basic health care is frequently cited as a service the Taliban cannot offer... these were not hypothetical questions but rather very real challenges that the US military forces, civilian diplomatic personnel, and development specialists in Afghanistan struggled with daily as they sought to implement COIN doctrine... (Eikenberry, 2013, pp. 2)

Taking a leaf from Eikenberry, to probe further, counter-insurgency analysis would require us to arrive at a working definition of an 'insurgent' and a 'civilian', and this will raise other conceptual and operational questions. Does it matter if an insurgent is a citizen of the state or not? Does a given approach assume that the population is protected only from the insurgents, or also potentially from the state? Going beyond definitional issues does an approach to COIN, understand protection in the classic sense of providing basic security and reducing the risk of death, or violence, or should protection be understood in more structural ways, including human security, combatting structural violence, and socio-economic inequalities?

The literature on social movements and revolutions provides a more nuanced understanding of the question of 'who is an insurgent?' Drennan defines social movements as the

...sum of non-institutional, socially compiled and organized inputs, and episodic interactions and processes of a collectively of people, ideas, and resources involved in public contention occurring outside of established institutional or organizational spheres, surrounding some grievances and advocating some normative or policy change... (Drennan, 2015, p. 18)

⁸ The document was tabled and drafted in 2006 and was made public in 2009.

Social movements, in this sense, are classically understood as the articulation of dissatisfaction of civil society against the institutional mechanisms of the state. While social movements utilize non-violent and peaceful ways of articulating discord, revolutions, on the other hand, may choose to resort to violent forms of protest. Revolutions aim at the overthrow of a dominant regime or the ruling polity through means that may involve coercion and armed action.

Following this perspective, the difference between an 'insurgency' and a social movement or 'revolution' lies in the positioning of the violence. This segue and conceptual conflation between social movement and revolution enunciates the evolution of the research agenda and praxis in the study of contentious politics (Goldstone and Ritter, 2018). However, even so, McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2009) raise caution and argue against this conceptual marriage between the two. For them, clubbing social movements and revolutions is erroneous because social movements are common in democratic regimes while revolutions are a function of more repressive authoritarian regimes. And subsequently, while social movements are more commonly peaceful (with arbitrary incidents of violence in the form of arrests of protestors), revolutions have a tendency to develop into civil wars (McAdam et al., 2009, p. 278).

A revolution can derive critical support from both a section of the elites (who may be either in a position of official power or exert power through means of production such as media, industry, etc.) and the masses, with the aim of forming institutions or correcting institutional power centres. Insurgency, on the other hand, defined in this way, is seen as a series of strategically directed armed actions, without much popular support or support from a significant section of society's elites. This may not be empirically true for all cases that are characterised as insurgencies, and hence it posits a question about the definition itself.

A second defining element of insurgency within COIN literature is the assumption that armed attacks can continue over an extended period of time and be sustained without counter-insurgency interventions from the actors involved or under attack. Classically, revolutions are seen as time-specific events, just as mass social movements, such as the 'Arab Spring in 2010-2011' or 'the second wave of feminism'. Both these examples are characterised by the short duration of mobilization and involvement of political elites and other prominent actors from civil society. The demand in an insurgency for a complete

state overthrow may be the eventual goal, but the pathway to fulfilling the goal may not be sequential or linear and may in some instances remain a distant dream. However, the fighting or armed action persists without any declaration of victory or loss. Additionally, the intensity of armed violence may be at an 'acceptable' degree to the state and its security architecture where the violence does not typically threaten the existence of the state and its institutional power. Such insurgencies continue over decades as is observed in the instances of the Philippines and the violence between the Moro National Liberation Force (MNLF) and later the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the Mindanao islands, the armed violence by the Taliban in Afghanistan, the long years of the rule of the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam) in northern Sri Lanka and the Maoist violence against the Indian state across central and eastern India.

Regardless of legitimacy from civil society or the power elites—insurgencies and revolutions derive their support from local populations, even if the level of support varies or goes through phases of popular support followed by criticism and vice-versa. In most instances, the distinction between an insurgent and a civilian is blurred since the constituent population, leadership and support are fundamental for insurgency to continue. This refers to the question purported above: 'Who is an insurgent?' The insurgent, conceptually, is no different from the civilian—the difference exists rather, between the state and the civilian. The insurgent through tangible use of force and arms articulates its difference and dissent. The state—in that very moment of time and space—often identifies the civilian population, or a very large part of it, as an insurgent. However, the grievances remain the same. The act of differentiating through new typologies is an act of withdrawing the rights of the civilian as universal and excluding (from full citizenship rights) the non-abiding, violent civilian into an insurgent. Through this process, the act in itself seeks to distance the insurgent from the civilian or as a citizen and the state utilizes this discourse in rationalizing and implementing policies that further the cause of criminalizing the insurgent and moving them away from 'a civilian' life and identity.

Characteristically, COIN as a strategy focuses on the reduction of violence and combatting insurgent recruitment through an amalgamation of security measures along with developmental activities. In Afghanistan, the primary complementary strategy to counter the Taliban was through strengthening the local government at both national and provincial levels. A similar strategy was used in the case of Iraq. In both countries, the power of decision-making and delegation of responsibilities was with the military. The

military commanders led the operations. In order to reduce instability and to combat an increase in the insurgent's support base, there was in both cases, a concerted effort to promote development activities such as the construction of roads, primary schools, and health centres. Much of the literature has explored the question of whether these activities helped in the long run. Keane and Wood (2016), for example, investigated the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan, which were first introduced in 2002 with the objective of promoting security, reconstruction, and good governance. While the then US administration hailed PRTs as a model for civil-military relations, Keane and Wood, based on their collective interviews with members associated with the PRTs, concluded that rather than facilitating a "holistic" approach to 'winning hearts and minds' the PRTs got stuck in what they define as 'role conflict' between different member institutions, namely, the United States Military, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department of State and Department of Agriculture. The authors conclude

...As documentation including USAID's Fragile State Strategy encapsulated, the overarching goals of the mission were to promote security, economic development, and democracy. Backed by military operations, substantial progress in these areas would emasculate the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. What transpired, however, was the disaggregation of a nominal ideal agency-wide understanding of the national purpose into several practically incompatible conceptions predominating within disparate agency silos. Although these roles may each have been conceived, comprehended, and pursued with some degree of competence, a paradoxical consequence is that they often manifested as a suboptimal and at worst dysfunctional whole. This can happen when different role conceptions promote incongruous interpretations of how to reach an ultimate goal. Author interviews reveal that there was no clear route mapped out to meet core objectives. Instead, US officials were guided by the behavioural norms of their respective agencies... (Keane and Wood, 2016, p. 102)

The authors indicate that while there was an attempt to look at holistic solutions for reconstruction and hence in countering insurgent-based violence, the traditional mindset of individual office bearers from their institutional perspective bound or oriented their thinking. The outcome was that the military strategy was embedded into the PRT program and hence reconstruction became a part of the counterinsurgency plan with the objective of targeting the Taliban. The initial objective of strengthening governance was relegated secondary to ensuring 'security'. Eventually, even though it was designed and administered through separate divisions, PRT became a part of COIN and was relatively narrowly defined in a security-first frame, rather than being seen as an essential part of a conflict resolution strategy. This trend as illustrated by the case of Afghanistan and the USA's policy of securitized development, is a trend that is not new.

Similar ideas of security and development were prevalent during the 1940s and through the Cold War Era. The British in Malay followed a policy of selective hamleting; displacement of population from inaccessible villages to the vicinity of military camps; and it was through these measures that the Malay communist movement was thwarted. Similar measures were utilized by the US in South Vietnam when they gained the knowledge that the Viet Cong had constructed an extensive civilian infrastructure to support its military campaign, but in Vietnam, this strategy however did not achieve the desired result and led to the eventual detraction of the US military (Mac Ginty, 2010).

International aid was strongly linked to strategic goals by both superpowers during the Cold War and while the early post-Cold War era may have opened a broader space for development, the turn of events after 9/11 had a direct impact on the nature of providing international or foreign aid. The fusing of security and development into one rubric may have been justified by the rationale of a global increase in violence and international terrorism, but this line of argument takes the focus away from a reduction in global inequalities, environment conservation, and sustainable development as a whole. Beall, Goodfellow, and Putzel (2006) warn of the dangers of the same

...One of the dangers of the securitisation of development is that, as a paradigm, it ignored certain crucial aspects of the development process, not least the development agenda of partner governments and other regional, national, and local organisations. Furthermore, turning development into a vehicle for security may actually make the latter more elusive. The tendency now is towards increased aid and large amounts of aid with a military counter-terrorism bias, but development is of course not just about aid. Quite aside from the interventions that are being jettisoned or that are losing out financially because funders do not perceive them as relevant to the new security agenda, there is also the question of how healthy civil societies and good governance should be fostered in the first place. Thus, there is a problem that not only does the security-development nexus endanger the poverty reduction focus of aid, but also ignores some of the most effective means by which development can be harnessed to make societies more secure... (Beall et al., 2006, p. 62)

The discussion on securitized development further questions the idea of whose security and protection for whom? The logic of 'war on terror' has made an attempt to simplify the difference between the victims and the aggressors, and the global discourse, as mentioned earlier has been largely shaped by the USA foreign policy and their doctrine to combat violence in the aftermath of 9/11. The transnational nature of the global security agenda further complicates the discourse and raises questions about whether there is a distinction to be made between the 'developed' and 'developing' world (Beall et al., 2006). The question then arises of how the international community defines terrorism and counterterrorism (CT), and does it differ from what has been defined as insurgency and COIN?

Olivier Lewis (2015) attempts to differentiate between CT and COIN. While both terrorism and insurgency represent a form or kind of political violence, they are independent of each other. He further propounds

...It has been said that the defining characteristic of terrorism is not a specific political goal, but the tactics employed (i.e. the use of fear and violence against illegitimate targets). The defining characteristic of insurgency, however, is the specific political goal of removing “an established authority” (typically a state or an empire) and “building structures to take over power and political responsibility”. (Lewis, 2015, p. 8)

Lewis’ definition is however problematic in some respects. If terrorism is defined purely in terms of its use of fear and violence against ‘illegitimate’ targets, it assumes that we can reach an agreement on what constitutes legitimate and illegitimate targets. In all instances of counter-insurgency the ‘established authority’ will seek to delegitimize the insurgency movement and in almost all armed conflicts groups will not only target those in the uniforms of clearly defined armed groups but will also target infrastructure and support groups or use air power or artillery in the case of state forces to weaken their defence; with full knowledge that civilians are likely to be impacted by this violence, and what is often termed as ‘collateral damage’ in popular security parlance. Therefore, any attempt to distinguish CT from COIN needs to unpack ‘legitimacy’ by rejecting a simplistic and uncontested understanding of the term. This critical inquiry is a possible starting point for exploring state responses to different types of armed violence.

If the state response to internal armed conflict is seen in a continuum, is it possible to distinguish state strategy and tactics and draw assumptions about a state’s views on the levels of popular support they perceive a rebellion to possess, even if public discourse seeks to deny this? If a state believes that either they can completely ignore local opinion (as is observable in an authoritarian state, or during a military occupation), or believe an armed group has limited local support, then military tactics may be dominant, with little attention paid to winning hearts and minds. If on the other hand, a state believes that dealing with underlying issues is important, or since there is significant public support for an insurgency, the state may adopt a different approach—providing space for dialogue and policy attention to underlying issues such as underdevelopment, discrimination, and rights over resources.

Going by this conceptual distinction between the two, it can be understood that while CT is a political tactic to delegitimize dissent as an ‘act of terror’ devoid of political or emancipatory motive, COIN is a political struggle that seeks to counter a threat to authority. Both concepts, however, share a common normative state-centric

conceptualisation. Furthermore, there may be practical and methodological difficulties in determining a government's actual analysis of levels of popular support, given they are likely to adopt or public posture by claiming that an insurgency has minimal popular support. This doesn't discount the merit of conceptually using these terms—since they define and elaborate on notions of violence and legitimacy and can be used to conceptually build as well as borrow other approaches to understanding violence.

Lewis adds that if insurgencies are defined as being of the people and for the people, insurgents usually have the support of at least some of the population and hence, a counterinsurgent must garner support or legitimacy in the eye of the population, to continue for any appreciable length of time. Hence, counterinsurgency as a concept is competing with an insurgency for legitimacy and for mobilizing population support. Like CT, non-combatants are crucial to COIN and its definition. If insurgencies are defined as grassroots movements represented by communities and actors coordinating actions (both violent and non-violent) dissenting against the oppressive nature of the state or against the failure of the state in addressing the grievances of the population, then the fundamental goal of overthrowing the state comes from the failure of the state or its ineptness in catering to the demands of its citizens. The connection between insurgency and social movements is often ignored and hence the literature on insurgencies and COIN is distinctly different from the literature on social movements or revolutions (Drennan, 2015), and overall limits in a nuanced understanding and interplay between dissent, non-violent, and armed action.

Drennan critiques the prominent literature on COIN and concludes

.... authors of COIN texts either ignore or implicitly accept prima facie that the conditions facilitating an insurgency's beginning are sufficiently explained either by theories on traditional war (civil or state vs. state war) or by insurgency theorists- they are not. And, as the focus of COIN is the cessation of the insurgency, and theorists of the subject come largely from a military background, the tendency is to focus on the factors that are both evident and easily manipulated by battlefield commanders; largely force structure, leadership and personnel characteristics, and the engagement of the local populace... (Drennan, 2015, p. 20)

Drennan (2015) suggests an analytical framework by drawing conceptual parallels between social movements, revolutions, and insurgencies. Embedded in the prominence of state and representative institutions, he stresses the use of social movement theory and its analytical lens for "applying effective preventative, diminutive or even encouraging political and/or military action against revolutions and insurgencies" (Drennan, 2015, p. 35). Most of the literature referred to derives its intellectual

foundations in the recognition of the state and violent dissent as an impediment to the existence of the state itself. The overarching insecurity of the state—posited as an existential threat, reduces the space for deliberation on the possible ramifications of an impetus for revolution or insurgencies and the space it provides for reform of the state and its institutions (which may lead to a change in the nature of the democratic state it).

The tactics employed as a part of conflict management strategy, be it in the cases of Afghanistan and Iraq or historically in Malay, and Vietnam— share a common goal of the military defeat of insurgents to end the violence caused by the conflict. The cycle of violence and counter-violence steered the focus of the parties involved away from a political course that might have looked for a constructive solution that would address the ‘root causes’ of the conflict. Vietnam was a singular case where the US had to withdraw and admit military defeat, and which was world-over viewed as a victory of communism and assertion/victory of communities over imperial and colonial powers. The conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq— over the years have changed course. What began as a US-led ‘war on terror’ in 2002 in Afghanistan morphed into a complex internal and external network of armed actors and a focus on reconstruction and stabilization of the country was promulgated through introducing elections and setting up of liberal democracy with power-sharing pacts with provincial militias that were favourable to the US agenda. The twenty-year military intervention, eventually led to the US forces leaving the country in 2021 as the Taliban gained power and resumed its control over the country—through the peace agreement (Doha accord) between the US and the Taliban, mediated by Qatar in 2020.

2.4 Counterinsurgency and the Maoist conflict in India

In the case of the Maoist conflict in India, the elite-level discourse built both nationally and internationally labels the violence and the Maoists as an ideological movement devoid of a legitimate reason for its popularity and existence. The critique of the movement not only comes from the office bearers, or the bureaucracy and the paramilitaries deployed in the regions impacted with violence and counterviolence, it includes Marxist intellectuals who condemn the violent means of the Communist Party of India (CPI) (Maoist) and its guerrilla wing— the People’s Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA). Aditya Nigam (2009) concludes that democracy is a work in progress and that democracy lies in the mass mobilization and the power it exerts towards a loose locus embodied through liberal constitutionalism. Using Carl Schmitt and his difference

between mass democracy and liberal parliamentary constitutionalism, Nigam contextualizes the Indian scenario and propounds that

...Power is no longer the hereditary right of the chosen dynasty, it introduces a constitutive instability into the very structures of sovereign power. Democracy, on this view, would be the 'entry of the masses' into the very heart of the political, which cannot but remain a threat to order and stability. That is why, it is sought to be contained and tamed- by liberal constitutionalism (through fictions of rule law), by revolutionaries (through democratic centralism and proletarian dictatorship), and fascists (through institutions of the organic community (Nigam, 2009, p. 36)

Nigam further ridicules the idea of a Maoist struggle, stating that military struggle is merely representational and the real struggle for democracy emerges from mass politics for demanding land rights, equal representation, and accountability in governance. In a nutshell, while Nigam understands the means of violence for creating revolutionary change, he abhors the idea that it is the nature of the state that requires innovation or restructuring. According to him, regardless of the victory of a particular ideology, eventually, as is the nature of democracy, the mass population will de-centre the power shift, finding a balance in this constant interplay between mass politics and sovereign state.



Figure 2.4: Campaigning for local municipal (council) elections. This image is representative of the argument made by Nigam in the text above. Source: Author⁹

The Maoist conflict in India that has seen its origins in what is known as the 'Naxalbari' movement in the late 1960s is therefore an interesting case to look at in this context. The

⁹ This photo was taken during the campaigning season for the local municipal elections. The person with the mic is Kawasi Lakhma, an indigenous leader who was the Minister of Commerce and Industry in Chhattisgarh between 2018 to 2023.

origin of the conflict germinated with the motivation of overthrowing the feudal structure of the agrarian society and over the years, the support base for the movement increased and decreased following a wave-like pattern across India. The movement saw an ideological shift and took up arms between the late 1990s to early 2000 with the aim of armed struggle to seize power and promote alternative mechanisms of governance in designated 'liberated zones.'

Since 2004, the Maoist guerrilla forces have been in direct armed confrontation with the state of India through staging numerous attacks on the state security forces, within the tribal heartland of India comprising of states of Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Odisha. The significant time period involved, and its long-lasting nature in an established democracy makes the analysis of India's use of counter-insurgency pertinent.

In order to counter the attacks and the violence by the guerrilla forces, the Indian state, since 2004 has been involved in a counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign that takes its lead from the global discourse of COIN involving a cocktail of securitized development and a military response, with deployment of paramilitary forces to counter the attacks of the guerrilla forces on various symbols of the state such as the local government units and political leaders, but primarily by attacks on the paramilitary camps and personnel. As a part of the 'winning hearts and minds' of the local populace, the government of India, specifically in the state of Chhattisgarh (whose dense forest covers provide safe spaces for the guerrillas to hide and continue their armed struggle) has introduced various developmental as well as security sector related schemes, in order to tackle the popularity of the movement among the resident tribal population.

One such policy is the Surrender and Rehabilitation guidelines. The policy guidelines issued by the central government of India (2009) focuses on rewards and a 'points system' that incentivizes the surrender of arms by Maoist cadres, by offering a monetary package that increases based on the quality and quantity of arms surrendered. There is a hierarchy in the guidelines with more lucrative incentives and protection for senior cadres as opposed to the lower ranks. To bolster its COIN capabilities, the Indian state has attempted to strengthen its information and intelligence gathering, by utilizing former armed cadres who have either been captured or surrendered under the scheme and by forming village defence committees—for enhanced policing by a local population who are better equipped with local knowledge (Fidler and Ganguly, 2012; Staniland, 2012).

**GUIDELINES FOR SURRENDER-CUM-REHABILITATION SCHEME
OF LEFT WING EXTREMISTS IN THE AFFECTED STATES**

1. INTRODUCTION:

The Surrender and Rehabilitation policy has been framed keeping in mind the specific geographical and social landscape to help those Left Wing Extremists (LWEs) who want to abjure violence, surrender and join the mainstream. It is part of a multi-pronged conflict management and resolution strategy and is required to be implemented along with firm legal action by the police against those who follow the path of violence. The Policy aims at providing gainful employment and entrepreneurial opportunities to the surrendered LWEs so that they are encouraged to join the mainstream and do not return to the fold of the LWE movement.

2. OBJECTIVE:

The objectives of these guidelines for surrender-cum-Rehabilitation of LWEs in the affected States are:

- a) to wean away the hardcore LWE cadres who have strayed into the fold of LWE movement and now find themselves trapped in that net.
- b) to ensure that the LWE cadres who surrender do not find it attractive to join the LWE movement again.

Note: Tactical surrenders by those elements attempting to utilize the benefits extended by the Government to further their vested interests should not be permitted under the Scheme.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

- a) The guidelines are applicable to those LWE cadres who surrender with or without arms.
- b) The eligibility of such LWE cadres for assistance under the scheme would be scrutinized by a Screening-cum-Rehabilitation Committee constituted by the State Government concerned.
- c) The benefits of the scheme shall not be available to a surrenderee who has already surrendered and benefited under the existing surrender/rehabilitation scheme of any of the LWE affected States. Hence, the State Level Screening Committee should consult other LWE affected States before finalizing their cases.

4. BENEFITS UNDER THE POLICY:

- a) **Grant:** An immediate grant of Rs. 5.0 lakh for higher ranked LWE cadres like (i) State Committee Members (ii) Regional Committee Members (iii) Central Committee Members (iv) Politbureau Members and Rs. 2.5 lakh for middle/lower ranked LWE cadres like (i) Area Commanders (ii) Sub-Zonal Commanders (iii) Zonal Commanders (iv) Any hardcore LWE Cadre identified by the State Screening-cum-Rehabilitation Committee, shall be kept in a bank in the name of the surrenderee as a fixed deposit, which may be withdrawn by the surrenderee after completion of 3 years, subject to good behavior certified by the authorities designated for this purpose by the State concerned. This money can also be utilized as collateral security/margin money against loans to be availed of by the surrenderee from any bank for self-employment.

* States may effectively utilize the provisions of the scheme and in case of any specific quality surrender, wherein a State consider higher amounts necessary beyond the stipulated limits, State(s) may send proposal separately to Ministry of Home Affairs for consideration.

- b) The following additional incentives are included for surrendered weapons/ammunition:

S.No.	Weapons	Incentive
1.	LMG/GPMG/Pika/RPG/Sniper Rifle/Rocket launcher/Similar Weapon	Rs. 35000 per weapon
2.	AK 47 /55/74 Rifles	Rs. 25000 per weapon
3.	Pistol/Revolver/SLR/Carbine/StenGun/303	Rs. 10000 per weapon
4.	Rockets	Rs. 1000 per rocket
5.	Grenade / Hand grenade / Stick grenade	Rs. 500 per grenade
6.	Remote Control Device	Rs. 3000 each device
7.	Ammunition of all types	Rs. 3 per round
8.	IED	Rs. 1000 each
9.	Mines	Rs. 3000
10.	Explosive Material	Rs. 1000 per kg.
11.	Wireless Set (a) Short Range (b) Long Range	Rs. 1,000 per each set Rs. 5,000 per each set
12.	Satellite Phone	Rs. 10000
13.	VHF / HF Communication sets	Rs. 5000
14.	a) Electronic Detonators b) Other Detonators	Rs. 50 Rs. 10

Note: The incentive given for the surrender of the aforesaid arms shall be deposited in the form of a Fixed Deposit in the name of the surrenderee, which may be withdrawn by the surrenderee after completion of 3 years, subject to good behaviour certified by the authorities designated for this purpose by the States concerned.

Figure 2.5 A snapshot of the first two pages of the surrender and rehabilitation policy. Source: <https://www.mha.gov.in/en/commoncontent/policies-guidelines>.

As mentioned before, the peculiarity of the Maoist conflict in the Indian context arises out of the fact that the struggle is ideological, rather than one for devolution of authority, and the insurgents' idea of victory is rooted in a regime change. In this context what forms of resolution can then be conceived? The state views the conflict actors as criminals that undermine democratic processes. Larger issues of social and economic justice remain unaddressed and neglected. It is with the logic of 'neutralising' the violence, that the Indian state has devised a COIN strategy that aims to target both armed cadres (irrespective of their seniority within the movement or the role they play in the decision-making) and civilian or non-combatant population for intelligence gathering.

The use of such methods is not new in the study of counterinsurgency or conflict studies. Hafez and Hatfield (2006) through their empirical analysis of Targeted Assassinations (TA) by the Israeli government as a part of the Israeli government's counterinsurgency tactic against the Palestinian resistance found that the strategy does not have any significant impact on the Palestinian movement for self-determination. Calling it the Repression/Rebellion Puzzle, the impact of TA, they argue could have four possibilities:

- a) The assassinations act as a *deterrent* for militant organisations to plan more attacks,

- b) The assassinations enrage the militants and increase the level of violence- *backlash effect*,
- c) TA deprives the movements/organisations of their valued commanders and hence causing *disruption effect*- diminishing the chances of successful attacks; and
- d) TA themselves are insufficient to increase or decrease the Palestinian violence however, combined with other military strategies, it may have a *diminishing effect* (Hafez and Hatfield, 2006, p. 360).

This particular study is of significant importance since the foremost rationale for targeted violence and policies targeting leadership of an armed movement by a state is grounded in the assumption (in most cases it is understood as common-sense or logical) that it would disrupt the organisation or psychologically impact the morale of the members of the organisation, effectively acting as a deterrent for future instances of armed violence.

Along with TA, another method for data gathering that was historically used was Social Network Analysis (SNA). A technique developed by anthropologists, SNA was a tool to capture patterned relationships within human societies by mapping social relations and understanding complex human relations which as an outsider in a community or a space, may not be easily understood. This analytical framework helped in fostering relationships that could facilitate information sharing and subsequent support for researchers when in the field. Over the years, with contributions from sociologists, management studies, this technique became more inter-disciplinary with inclusion of quantitative methodologies to analyse large data sets, and for its use in understanding public policy issues such as drug addiction or inter-ethnic relations (Mac Ginty, 2010). SNA over the years has been deployed for tracking gangs of organized crime and international terror networks.

“The logic is simple: in order to counter ‘terrorists’ and insurgents, they must be understood, and SNA appeared to be a useful tool for that purpose,” (Mac Ginty, 2010, p. 211).

SNA leads to a set of COIN practices that may lead to eventual actions on ground such as targeted killings, screening of non-combatant population, displacement of non-combatant population into screened hamlets or camps—in order to track the movements and ensure better surveillance. All of these practices together, create a ubiquitous presence of the security apparatus that is then understood as ‘pressure tactics’ with the hope that ‘supporting’ non-combatant population would provide strategic or tactical information that would help in capturing combatants or put them in a vulnerable position leading to reduction of violence.

Mac Ginty through his analysis and chronological account of the Sri Lankan war between 2008 and 2009 highlights the ramifications and consequences of using SNA for COIN operations. Mac Ginty further states five repercussions:

No one left to talk to: targeting of hardliners of a particular movement may be deemed as a good move for most COIN and military specialists, the absence of strong leadership may prove counterproductive at times of negotiating peace/peace talks;

- *Targeting of wrong people using technocratic means:* SNA identifies networks and connections between the hardliners and the support community at large. This may lead to situations wherein, people who were at the fringe may be considered as combatant or insurgent themselves. *The arrest of Binayak Sen, a physician working with the labour movement in Chhattisgarh resonates. Sen, was accused by the security forces for working as a courier for the Maoists while he was tending to inmates in the district jail in Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh*¹⁰;
- *The fluidity of networks may be overlooked:* as understood in most insurgencies, the targeting or killing of hardliners of a movement may lead to stagnation in the movement. However, this may not always be true and the new leadership that may emerge could learn from past incidents and manoeuvre new tactics in violence. *The Salwa Judum*¹¹—a village defence force that aimed at displacing villagers and in diffusing the support base for the Maoists—eventually aided in increasing the recruitment of lower cadres for the Maoists, since many were affected by the violence as well as emotions of revenge.
- *Does not address the underlying causes of conflict:* as mentioned earlier, the violent tactics and counter-tactics may serve a short-term purpose of deterring violence, however the larger issues of the causes of conflict remain unaddressed. *This is especially true in the Maoists affected areas— where matters of forest rights, land distribution, development induced displacement etc. lead to further marginalization of communities who have traditionally resided in these regions. While there are legislations that may provide democratic means for resolution of resource-based conflicts, miss-governance and apathy of the state bureaucracy exacerbates the conflict.*
- *Denudes community of social capital:* the importance of social relations within a community to rebuild a society especially in the aftermath of conflict and the pivotal role— social relations play in post conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding has been well acknowledged. Through use of SNA, if all possible human relations are considered as ‘larger terror networks’ or ‘support base’— this would eventually result in targeting of potential youth leaders and subsequent leaders who could play an active role in building the community as well as in providing political representation, (Mac Ginty 2010).

It is noteworthy, that both Hafez and Hatfield and Mac Ginty, conclude that tactics such as surveillance, targeted violence and unethical use of demographic data and community ties in case of insurgencies does not counter or contain the violence or the conflict. Ignoring the political nature of these conflicts, and the human rights violations through perpetuating violence, the studies, even in classical military terms, acknowledge the ineffectiveness of such policies. Using SNA as a tactic can lead to securitization of

¹⁰The case of Binayak Sen is discussed in Chapter three on methodology. To provide a brief context at this point in the text, please see: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/libertycentral/2011/apr/14/binayak-sen-india-supreme-court-sedition> accessed on 10.02.2018.

¹¹ A more detailed account and description of Salwa Judum will follow in subsequent chapters.

everyday relationships in communities in conflict and perpetuates an atmosphere of insecurity and fear.

The breakdown of familial ties and/or kinship relationships against the backdrop of counterinsurgency operations have been acknowledged in anthropological accounts of Alpa Shah and George Kunnath in context of the Maoist conflict in India (2017). Shah (2009) using the example of her host family, talks about how the uncertainty and constant mistrust between the representatives of the state and their suspicion of the communities living in Maoist affected areas, leads to growing mistrust among the community members. A friend becomes a suspected informer, or an extortionist and this interplay leads to the protagonist eventually joining the Maoist cadres. The schisms in communities living in the shadow of armed violence bring about the constant fear of surveillance further feeding into the discontent of communities who have experienced historical injustices.

These counterproductive effects of COIN tactics are well known but have not as yet led to any substantial adjustment of military doctrine. It seems that there is a certain path dependency among the policy practitioners and political leadership that tends to assume a 'security first' approach for tackling non-state armed actors. How effective a COIN strategy has been in resolving a conflict, remains unattended.

The COIN literature, while focused on tackling insurgencies, is dominated by writing which seeks technical or technocratic solutions from a militaristic point of view. The literature appears to be speaking in echo-chambers, with a selected group of military and administrative experts, who conduct analysis in order to run similar operations to produce better outcomes, rather than seeking a deeper analysis probing for the causes behind rising discontent among the population that resorts to seeking violent means for articulating dissent and grievance redressal. The limitation of both, the literature and practice of COIN requires a more critical inquiry. Regardless of whether an analysts conceives the armed actor either as an insurgent or a terrorist, the mystery behind the continued support of civilian population and mobilisation for insurgent support needs further exploration, unless the authorities start to believe their own propaganda, that a movement has no local support.

According to Elizabeth Wood (2015) in the study of contentious politics or political violence, the connections between mobilization and civil wars or insurgency is an

analytically sparse field. Based on her fieldwork in El Salvador, Wood (2003) establishes that civilian mobilisation is not restricted to providing cover for non-combatants, intelligence, supplies and other related logistics. In many instances, these support for insurgent actors and insurgency is deeply motivated from a space of moral outrage against state violence,

“... Despite massive influx of aid and training of state forces and major counterinsurgent reforms, the insurgency in El Salvador was not defeated due to the provision of such intelligence by networks of deeply committed civilians, support that reflected at the moral outrage at state violence and the pleasure of agency on the part of the hitherto subordinate actors,” (Wood, 2015, p. 458)

Closer home, on the topic of mobilisation in the context of the Maoist conflict, Juhi Tyagi (2016) argues that formation of decentralised and autonomous collective action village level organisations which could collectivise towards ideological consciousness in alignment with the Maoist ideology, created more resilient armed movements with consistent mobilisation and participation.

This sustained mobilization and the continued support of the population or groups within it (who may be historically disadvantaged and denied dignity and justice) becomes the backbone for scholars of peace and conflict studies, to understand:

- a. what happens when the same sustained resilient participating population, choses to leave the revolution or insurgency?
- b. What modes of retribution, and reformation lead to a transformation from violence to non-violent forms of grievance redressal?
- c. What does this abandonment of armed action signify for the everyday lives of former combatants, the communities they leave and the communities they move to?

These questions and thematic explorations are now emerging within the discipline, but there is little evidence that this search to understand complexity and local specificity is making any impact on COIN strategy at an official level, either in India, or other dominant strategies such as that of the USA. This official context is however an important part of understanding the local impacts of understanding India's surrender and rehabilitation approach in manging dissent or armed violence. Though the COIN approach lays out the strategy for 'neutralising' armed violence, this top-down approach is inherently blind to the life of the people who come under the fold of this approach. Or effectively, restricts them within the agentic bounds of a structure limiting space for their individual agency and its articulations.

2.5 Conclusion

Another strand of international literature based on praxis concerning the transition from violence to non-violence is codified through the discourse on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) which has been a part of the international development and international security's peace agenda. It too has its limitations, but it provides another analytical framework which, in slightly different contexts, has sought to engage with the issues identified as limitations in COIN strategy—even if it very rarely directly references them. The next section of the thesis, chapter three, discuss the conceptual categories of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and what it means in instances of localised long-term conflict such as the Maoist conflict.

Chapter 3: Counterinsurgency, disarmament, or peace? India's policy on surrender and rehabilitation

3.1 Introduction

Chapter one discussed India's policy and practice on surrender and rehabilitation within the context of global military doctrine on counter-terrorism and counter insurgency operations, and their national or domestic counterparts. This chapter introduces a parallel strand of literature—the international discourse on disarmament demobilisation and reintegration (DDR)—which analyses similar issues, though largely (if not exclusively) in the context of a ceasefire agreement. The literature has its origins in peacebuilding and civil society activity and though it has become more mainstream in security studies, it still largely sits apart from the debates on COIN, with the authors in each school rarely engaging with each other.

The Indian state's, 'surrender and rehabilitation' policy has seen different iterations play out in the context of the conflicts in Kashmir, Manipur, and Assam. Placed under the larger umbrella of "multi-pronged conflict management and resolution strategy" the guidelines aim to provide financial and livelihoods-based supports to 'left-wing extremists' or armed insurgents. 'Surrender and rehabilitation' is one of the few state driven initiatives that attempts to sociologically address the issue of armed men and women as people, and provide measures which could in theory at least enable a transition from violent to non-violent means of grievance redressal.

The guidelines, which were first introduced in India in Kashmir for active armed insurgents, explicitly draws a causal link between concepts of unemployment, deradicalization and gainful employment as the avenues for reducing armed internal violence. First introduced in Kashmir in 1995, the published guideline in the instance of Kashmir declares that the state will,

"... offer facility to those 'terrorists' who undergo change of heart and eschew the path of violence and who accepts the integrity of India and the Indian constitution to encourage them to join the mainstream and lead a normal life and contribute towards prosperity and progress of the State as well as the Nation," (Government of Jammu and Kashmir, 2004)

In a similar tone but with different in its articulation, the policy in the instance of Maoist conflict or 'Left-Wing Extremism'¹² articulates the objective as follows:

“... as the naxal problem has arisen on account of real and perceived neglect, deprivation and disaffection, mainly towards the downtrodden, the solution should aim at providing gainful employment and entrepreneurial opportunities to the surrendered naxalites so that they are encouraged to join the mainstream and do not return to the fold of naxal movement,” (Government of India, 2009)

The wording in case of Kashmir, limits the scheme to individuals who are willing to affirm their loyalty to the Indian State, while the Maoists or surrendered LWE extremists are “encouraged to join the mainstream” recognising their grievances as “real and perceived neglect”. These guidelines indicate a somewhat reluctant policy, which is based in nuance and context specificity. These intentional and unintentional consequences caused due to inherent biases and prejudices of the policy-makers can create an analytical paralysis, even between the different Indian cases, impacting negatively on the room for alterations and context focussed implementation strategies.

The following sections of this chapter, introduce the discussions related to the surrender and rehabilitation policy within India and then moves to look at the international discourse on disarmament demobilisation and reintegration (DDR). Finally the chapter explores conceptually how such policies can be research and analysed in a people-centric manner, including the possibly unintended consequences of the policy on everyday lives.

3.2 Policy of surrender and rehabilitation in India

The policy guidelines on surrender and rehabilitation of the Indian government set out an objective of the disarmament of armed non-state actors with the promise of a rehabilitation package that would create space for the non-state armed actors to move into everyday economic activities and into establishing a relationship with the market or as Samaddar puts it, “marketization of economic relations” (Samaddar 2015). While this policy is not a new addition in the lexicon of policy recommendations of the Indian state, the advantage of implementing this policy in spaces of internal armed conflict, has been rarely questioned or examined. The pattern of the Indian state in using surrender finds a

¹² The change in terminology of reference between ‘naxalbari’, ‘maoist’ and ‘left-wing extremism’ for this socio-political armed struggle is explained at length in the chapter on methodology. Each of these terms, while popularly interchangeable, is symbolic of a material and ideological time within the broader political spectrum of revolutionary politics in India.

brief mention in Sammadar's critical work on governmentality and peacebuilding, a project which began during the colonial rule and followed a continuum in the post-colonial state. Commenting on the state strategies in the case of India's Northeast Sammadar analyses

...let us continue taking note of governmental measures with regard to peace-building in the Northeast...in the first phase of the conflict, territorial reorganization, grant of statehood and introduction, and introduction of the model of peace accords resulting in the grant of autonomy were the main features- with military operations, of course, continuing all along. Yet more important was the way in which each major military operation was followed by major administrative measures of territorial reorganization... in the second phase, there was a deliberate policy to introduce *panchayati raj*¹³, and more importantly territorial autonomies along ethnic lines were created throughout the last two decades within the states of the region. Likewise, new forms of local volunteer armies were raised (principally in Assam and Tripura). Policies to encourage and ensure surrender of the armed cadres of the underground became crucial in this stage of peace-making. Surrender schemes were devised in Assam in 1992 and strengthened in 1998. To give some instances, benefits up to Rs. 200,000¹⁴ per surrendered individual were introduced... In other words, in a region where poverty and unemployment were rampant, and resource constraints acute, the government was simply handing out over 90 times and more of the then State annual per capita income to anyone who was a surrendered militant or expressed willingness to surrender (Sammadar 2015 p. 36)

In case of Kashmir the rehabilitated terrorists or radicalised youth were retrained to become a part of the Ikhwan force, a pro-government militia which was later accused of involvement in human rights violations. In the security circles, the Ikhwani network is defined as part of the fault lines among the separatist groups within Kashmir and a response to the direct threat that some of the armed defectors felt from their erstwhile group members (Staniland, 2012; Bhayana, 2019; Dutta, 2020; Mehraj and Manecksha, 2017). In case of Assam, those who surrendered are colloquially referred as SULFA (Surrendered United Liberation Front of Assam)¹⁵ and are notorious for their state patronage and their involvement in illicit money-making avenues using "mafia-style mode of operations," (Nath, 2001).

¹³ *Panchyati Raj* is a system of local governance introduced in 1992 with the 73rd Constitutional Amendment in the Indian Constitution. It is a devolved system of governance grounded in the philosophy of providing greater autonomy to provincial governments and for communities to have more representation in decision making.

¹⁴ Rs 200,000 is equivalent to 2500 Euro (approximately).

¹⁵ The United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) was formed in 1979 with their main demand being the creation of an independent sovereign Assam. ULFA's meteoric rise in popularity and sympathy within the local population emerged because of the historical neglect and the exploitative treatment and colonial treatment of Assam as "unheeded hinterland". The history and evolution of the movement is well documented and it reflects on the nature of armed violence which had popular support from civilian population. The surrender policy, when implemented in Assam, received political patronage from certain parts of the local leadership which led to extrajudicial rights being granted to these surrendered ULFA members.

The policy, in the Maoist areas, the focus of this thesis, was first introduced in Andhra Pradesh in 1989 with amendments to the guidelines in 1993. The Andhra Pradesh experience of surrender and rehabilitation is deemed as a “successful” process since the state saw many surrenders especially throughout the 1990s (Ramana, 2013). Historically, many of the districts (counties) across Andhra Pradesh were actively involved in the Maoist movement and there was a robust presence of both overground and underground members participating. At the same time, because of an active and vibrant civil liberties movement, the state was engaged in a robust public discourse critically assessing both state and non-state violence. It was the presence of people who were a part of this loose coalition of activists from different parts of rural Andhra Pradesh and representation from marginalised groups (especially from Dalit and Adivasi communities) wherein despite repressive policies and state violence, surrendered guerrillas/Maoists were provided space for rehabilitation which didn’t involve re-arming as state-led militia as observed in Kashmir and Assam.

Rather, peculiarly to just the state of Andhra Pradesh, the policy, genuinely offered spaces for many of the Maoist cadre to surrender and find a durable solution which involved many of them moving back to agrarian life or becoming activists within the civil liberties movement. Rumela Sen unpacks this particular aspect of surrender and rehabilitation, wherein she terms this peaceful transition from a violent to a non-violent life as ‘rebel retirement’ grounding the process more sociologically (Sen, 2021). Sen, by looking at the process of surrender and rehabilitation in Andhra Pradesh and the northern state of Jharkhand observes and concludes, that the sub-national variation in the implementation and social experience of the same policy across different geographies is attributed to the informal exit networks carved through the what she terms as trust networks. These trust networks, which are stronger in the southern states such as Andhra Pradesh, are attributed to the presence of the civil society which has acts as trusted buffer space for political and ideological adversaries. Another important contribution, Sen makes is to establish, that retiring from a revolution doesn’t require or entail that the individual has ideologically de-aligned from the movement. It rather asserts that retirement unlike surrender, provides a peaceful space for negotiating for the ideologically motivated to return to an alternative life. This possibility of continuing a radical, if now non-violent political activism, after leaving an armed group, was in sharp contrast to the Kashmiri context – where militants were also required to abandon completely their political goals, and not just their methods.

3.3 Placing surrender and rehabilitation in the international discourse on disarmament

While the literature on DDR is dominated by 'post conflict' cases-studies in instances or cases where a resolution is achieved either through international interventions or by the military defeat of one of the conflict actors. These cases, are divided sequentially into 'conflict' and 'post conflict' and indicate a reduction or cessation of conflict-related armed violence, followed by DDR. DDR, nonetheless still provides a useful lens to explore conceptually the use of surrender in ongoing conflicts. Statistically a majority of peace agreements will fail, and conflict will re-start. Therefore the absolute division between conflict and post-conflict is not only conceptually problematic at times, it is also often a grey area empirically. The changing nature and practice of DDR is explored in detail in the forthcoming pages but before we move towards the describing different generations of DDR, the following section first explores the genesis of DDR as a practice and policy.

The international literature on disarmament, reintegration and rehabilitation (DDR) of non-state armed actors derives its knowledge from varied set of contextual case studies such as Colombia, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Rwanda and Nepal. In most instances, the commonalities exist in the way these conflicts follow a seemingly linear trajectory (in analysis) of a peace agreement following a cease-fire, establishment of an international monitoring commission that leads up to setting up of a DDR commission (Gleichmann et al., 2004; Jr, 2010; Muggah, 2009; Torjesen, 2006). DDR commissions initiate the process of disarmament with subsequent processes of linking reintegration and/or rehabilitation efforts with larger development-based activities. The dominant literature on DDR (Berdal, 1996; Muggah, 2009; Pascual and Boada, 2009) is praxis oriented and focuses on prescriptive forms of 'lessons learnt' case-studies. Comprised of activities from arms control, disarmament and decommissioning of armed groups, DDR activities involve a myriad of international agencies, national agencies and government intervention or involvement. Suitable for practitioners, the DDR literature is critiqued for its "narrowly focused, inflexible and technocratic and detached from the political transition or broader recovery and reconstruction strategies." (Muggah 2009, p.1).

Muggah further comments

...DDR is typically described as consisting of series of carefully designed and phased activities to create sustainable environment for stability and development to proceed. From the beginning, supporters presumed that all three components- disarmament, demobilization and reintegration- were interlocking and mutually reinforcing activities. The collection of arms and munitions- or disarmament- was from the beginning understood to comprise a necessary but insufficient means of promoting security. Many DDR supporters still insisted on disarmament as a primary step towards stabilization and

highlighted the importance of generating visible and tangible evidence of success in the form of collected units of arms and munitions. On the ground, however, specialists were adamant that disarmament needed to be complemented with parallel activities lest they generate security dilemmas. Parallel activities such as information sharing, confidence-building and security-enhancing activities (including so-called 'reconciliation' initiatives) together with credible policing and the promotion of the rule of law were all prioritized even if unevenly implemented. (Muggah 2009 p. 9)

The long chain of DDR initiatives is often laden with multiple channels of bureaucracy and multiple donors driving aid into initiatives that combine with what are commonly understood as security-sector reforms (SSR). The nexus between development and security is deeply entangled in these efforts at disarmament and the attempt to minimize violence. Most of these initiatives are well-funded by external actors and hence the accountability of implementation agencies is to international donors and their priorities (often narrowly defined as maintaining a ceasefire), as opposed to accountability to the communities or constituencies where these programs are implemented.

Programmatically, disarmament initiatives are designed with an inherent paradox— the act of disarming itself is grounded in the politics of legitimacy. In instances where the legitimacy of violence was with the state, the violent armed actors were a direct threat to the legitimacy of the state. The conundrum comes in when, in an attempt to establish peace, there is an attempt to re-negotiate the legitimacy of both state and non-state actors. In each conflict setting, the form of negotiations initiated for resolution vary. It would be safe to assume that commonly, if there is involvement of international community and agencies in the DDR process, the negotiations between the state and the non-state actors are fragile, since the state institutions themselves do not have sufficient legitimacy to manage the process without external involvement, and non-state institutions have support from the communities and international actors, at the very least for their engagement in the process. The process is grounded in establishing mutual trust and power sharing that would lead to control over forms of violence as well as in establishing non-violent institutional mechanisms for grievance redressal.

As mentioned earlier, DDR is primarily focused on procedural 'lessons learnt' as it acknowledges the complexities encountered while disarming combatants and their transition to civilian life or reintegration (Dudouet et al., 2012; Kilroy, 2014; Phayal et al., 2015). In praxis, disarming involves providing monetary reward to combatants along with voluntary training in a vocation of their choice or from a list of possible vocations. Some of the procedural problems that emerged, ranged from unregulated demand or preference of vocational training to selling of disarmament rewards/packages in informal markets for

monetary rewards (Bhatia & Muggah, 2009). These procedural issues in reintegration and rehabilitation are fundamentally grounded in lack of synergy between conceptualizing DDR initiatives and the larger socio-economic processes at play in given contexts.

The researchers working at both macro-level and micro-level analysis of DDR programmes (Muggah 2009, Humphreys and Weinstein 2009, Bhatia and Muggah, 2009) echo the need for a more context specific implementation of DDR policies without de-linking of these processes from larger political and social transformations in these conflict-affected societies. Without addressing or instituting justice mechanisms or providing social and economic legitimacy to ex-combatants, DDR programmes need to be cautious of exacerbating conflicts between civilians and ex-combatants, ex-combatants and political representatives, ex-combatants and ex-combatants.

The changing context of wars and conflicts has an impact in the way DDR is conceptualized. There is growing recognition that DDR has moved on from what was understood as a restricted set of activities implemented after establishment of peace treaties or cease-fires, and is now also pursued in the midst of armed conflicts or armed conflict like settings including criminal and gang-type violence. DDR in some instances is now understood as a wide cluster of activities that may include negotiating the terms of peace itself (Muggah and O'Donnell 2015). In this regard the later literature moves much closer to the Indian experience.

This increasing interaction between DDR and wider peacebuilding reinforces the need and importance of participatory approaches in disarmament and subsequent reintegration initiatives. Kilroy aptly problematizes and brings out the different forms of participation and the need to move away from tokenism in the name of participation to a deeper engagement towards 'Self Mobilization' (Kilroy 2015). The aspect of participation becomes integral to implementation of the program and transition of a society and its constituents towards a more just society. The issue of participation plays a rather significant role especially in instances of on-going conflict, since the recourse to violence is easy and accessible. Bhatia and Muggah echo this analysis based on the experience of demobilization in Afghanistan.

“... the presence of other opportunities for (profitable) armed employment- including the coalition-driven war economy- meant that individuals could opt out of the DDR programme at each phase. Predictably, demobilized soldiers without a range of alternative income opportunities could opt for working with a private security company or in the poppy economy. But the prevailing assumption that exclusively economic factors determined, and sustained mobilization neglected the broader motives of status, authority

and protection derived from membership of one armed group or another. Thus, it could be credibly argued that the challenges of the Afghanistan New Beginning's Program (ANBP) DDR programme were connected not just to structural flaws, but also the profound inability of the international donor community or the Afghan government to elaborate a coherent plan to promote security and minimize security dilemmas..." (Bhatia and Muggah 2009, p. 135).

Afghanistan posits as one of the most challenging instance of implementing a DDR programme. The rising level of violence in Syria, Iraq or Yemen in the coming years would posit such similar dilemmas, if those situations move towards a context where DDR is more feasible. In areas of extended historical violence and multiplicity of armed actors it would be a challenging task to move away from violence and to initiate contexts that could enable peaceful coexistence. While the scale of death toll and the weaponry used in the Maoist conflict is not at the same level as Afghanistan or Iraq, it does share some similarities in being a complex, long-lived conflict, which has moved through many phases and where a simple linear move from conflict to peace is unlikely. Participation in peacebuilding is therefore likely to involve many overlapping groups, not just armed actors and the state, but communities and organisations who may be more or less sympathetic to armed action, but still separate from it – with their own political programs. Participation is not therefore a simple matter of 'two sides'.

These concerns are echoed by the recent literature emerging on DDR and what has been termed as 'next generation' DDR (Muggah and O'Donnell 2015). Typologically, the shift from a linear approach of peace agreement → disarmament → reintegration in its avatar as second-generation DDR has a more holistic approach moving towards the looking at broader goals of building conditions for sustainable peace.

The focus moved away from negative peace to positive peace as explained by Galtung (Galtung, 1969). The second-generation DDR depicted the changing nature of conflict worldwide (from inter-state wars to internal conflicts). The next generation of DDR is shifting towards attuning itself with the more recent changes in the nature of conflicts and the addition of multiple actors within these conflicts. Another aspect of this move from traditional notions of DDR is the flexibility of sequencing of peace agreements and allied activities. The non-sequencing has opened options for negotiating a peace agreement with different armed actors- where reintegration or formalization of ties are initiated before any talk of disarmament or demobilization and instead of DDR it could be RDD (Reintegration, Disarmament and Demobilisation) and hence the implication, that it could be negotiated during conflict (Kyed & Gravers, 2015).

Persistence of violence and hybridization of long-term conflicts has led to re-orienting the lens of DDR and moving away from a linear conceptualization of DDR. Recent literature on DDR shifts the focus from traditional definitions of non-state armed actors to armed non-statutory actors (ANSA), the logic cited stresses that the non-state label

“...can easily be a misnomer since such armed actors often have close relationships with state and political elites, yet they are not necessarily under the control of state authorities. Rather their trajectories can be similar to those of ‘twilight institutions’ with no fixed relationship to the state actors – one day supporting them, the next day opposing them, so to speak. Hence, while these armed actors can be in open conflict with statutory security forces, or operate in situations of ‘no peace, no war’ they can also be linked to state institutions in wider networks of security governance or security assemblages...” (Munive & Stepputat, 2015, p. 3)

Acknowledging the multiplicity and diversity of non-state armed actors is an important step towards context-specific DDR programs. The traditional notion of DDR, disarmament in specific and “its causal relation to violence reduction and prevention of the resurgence of war as empirically unfounded” (Munive & Stepputat, 2015). Observations from Afghanistan conclude that the DDR program left a power vacuum that was exploited by the Taliban and other tribal militias in the country. Similar observations based on studies looking at Central African Republic and Colombia highlight that the de-mobilized actors later re-grouped and picked up arms, even if for different political motivations than before. The emergence of paramilitaries in once-guerrilla affected areas in Colombia are a testimony that in spite of a localized and nation-led DDR program, the incidents of violence, disappearances of civilians and other human rights violations are an everyday reality (Gill, 2008; Kaplan and Nussio, 2018). For this purpose, it has been recommended that the typology should change to armed non-statutory actors—for inclusion of all actors involved in violent conflicts in peacebuilding measures.

This broadening of definition of armed actors, implies an explicit understanding that peace agreements or cease-fires negotiations should be negotiated with all actors involved, moving away from the conventional idea of a legitimacy of non-state armed actor as a revolutionary and the apparent difference between them and criminal networks. While the sovereign power may not recognize an armed organisation as a legitimate non-state actor, the social ties and the everyday interactions of the armed actors (despite their criminality) with communities and their localized negotiation power—would imply the need to change or transform the discourse of legitimacy to one that is based on a holistic notion of reduction of violence and need for localized solutions.

The 'next generation' DDR is also suspicious of the idea of reintegration and its inherent programmatic as well as conceptual bias of equating it with economic integration. It is assumed that by gainfully employing a violent actor would reduce the chances of them turning to violence again, since most of the recruitment for armed cadres is observed from communities living in poverty. The new emerging literature recognizes the flaw of programs working on 'greed' as a primary motivational factor for mobilization of youth and their participation. The line of thinking traditionally de-legitimizes questions of discrimination, unequal distribution of resources and respectful recognition of cultural identities and alternate ways of living. While increasing employment and employability of individuals (especially in context of armed violence) is a positive move towards stabilizing overall economy and structural investments, there is no causal relation established between increase in jobs to reduction in violence (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004).

Another facet that receives criticism is regarding the quality of voluntary training instructed as a part of increasing employment opportunities for ex-combatants. A valid concern is related to the standardized trainings delivered (such as tailoring, carpentry, mechanics etc.) in already saturated markets. Kilroy (2015) speaks about the overabundance of trained drivers in case of Sierra Leone and Liberia when the country itself didn't have substantial vehicular traffic! Often in reintegration programs, there is very little focus on empowering and providing training in technology intensive business enterprises that would increase the chances and pave opportunities for growth (Munive & Stepputat, 2015).

The United Nations' Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Employment (United Nations, 2009) approaches reintegration as in three programmatic tracks: stabilizing income generation and emergency employment; local economic recovery for employment opportunities and reintegration and sustainable employment creation and decent work. The policy report recognizes the failure of previous reintegration programs world over and the short-sightedness of these employment generation activities. The policy paper looks at inclusion of private sector development programmes that would foster more sustainable ties with larger economic processes.

While economic reintegration may eventually entail formulating macro-economic policies synchronous with the requirement and demands of the private sector—these steps should be paved with caution and require deeper level of analysis especially in scenarios where the communities have themselves been marginalised because of global markets. The

'market' in a conflict-setting or even a post-conflict era, is not very likely to take a long-term view of sustainable development, good incomes, and over-coming marginalisation. The market rarely does so even in stable, wealthy industrialised settings. Allowing a short-term focus on what the private sector thinks it wants (often cheap labour and access to natural resources) is likely to lead to non-sustainable outcomes.

The critique of euro-centric peacebuilding programs following and implementing 'liberal peace' is derived from the scepticism of enforcing ideals and ideas of individual rights especially in societies from the global south- where communitarian or community-centric ideals of governance are practiced alongside liberal institutions (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013). This calls for the agenda of peacebuilding or conceptualization of peace itself and hence DDR programs, to be cognizant of the local context while carefully charting sustainable reintegration. This disconnect from the neo-liberal and market economy would certainly be an important factor in almost all of the Maoist impacted areas in India.

This brings us to another flaw in conceptualizing reintegration. Reintegration is viewed as a return of a combatant into his or her community with the assumption that these individuals were estranged from their own social networks. The programs are designed around keeping the individual as the focus of the programs. In most instances of internal conflict the armed non-state actors operate and conduct their daily activities in localities where they are in a position to exercise their power through their community ties or networks. In some instances, the combatants are often referred to as 'part-time' since they are actively involved in daily activities alongside the non-combatants of their community. The assumption that the non-state armed actor is 'removed' and requires reintegration and reinsertion into their communities, leads to an unrealistic focus on rehabilitation of the individual, ignoring the fact that in some contexts they are in fact an active member of the community.

The focus of reintegration programs on individual-centric economic reintegration denies the ex-combatants their political agency relegating and ignoring their organisational potential. To conceptualize ex-combatants as legitimate agents for political dialogue and as members of civil society expands the involvement of individuals into everyday politics and issues concerning effective governing of local activities (Manning, 2008). This could be considered as a loss to both the community— who loses out on possible leadership and the individual —previously in a position of power and decision making (irrespective of their seniority within the cadres) is enforced with menial and non-political roles.

Reintegration should not just be conceived as ‘mainstreaming of individuals into economic activities.’ To explore the relevance of DDR to the Indian context (and probably elsewhere) it is important to recognize that insurgents may in some cases be very well integrated.

There are of course cases where surrendered cadres were not embedded in communities, and in situations such as Assam discussed in section 2.2 with the demobilised SULFA members, their de-facto untouchable status from local policing or community control, has seen them resort to criminal activities such as bootlegging or joining the land mafia where their muscle strength is used for intimidation and coercion. Reintegration like disarmament itself will need to be linked to the more complex but essential wider political goals and subsequent links with macro policies of sustainable peace and peacebuilding.

3.4 Framework for study of surrender in contemporary Maoist conflict

An exploration of the Indian case of surrender will add to growing body of literature in disarmament initiatives especially in instances where violence or the fighting has not reached a negotiated halt. The significance of this study is its contribution to exploring an ongoing process of disarmament, during conflict, (even though the articulation of the process is different and peculiar to the Indian context) and the transformations it leads to in the conflict and the spaces it creates (or not) for peacebuilding. This is particularly timely, given the renewed focus on COIN research and the clear integration of Indian military doctrine within the wider international (larger western dominated) trends of ‘global fight against terrorism’.

The ‘no-negotiation’ stance of the Indian state with the Maoist leadership contradicts the overtly optimistic literature on new generation of DDR and its acceptance of looking at non-sequential methods for DDR. However, the presence of a policy on surrender hints towards a project of the state engaged at exploring possibilities for a reduction of violence through means other than the traditional military defeat of insurgents as observed in the case of the Khalistan movement in Punjab. The policy, as mentioned above, has been explored and implemented in various internal conflicts in the country including the unrest in Assam, Nagaland, Kashmir and Punjab at different times. It is thus intriguing and requires seeking insights into what motivates the Indian state to persist with a policy on

DDR and what forms of success does the policy entail. The growing acceptance of looking at localized processes of disarmament makes the study topical.

Localised processes of disarmament are traditionally understood through the lens of 'security sector' reforms that are programmatically conceptualized under a broader rubric of peacebuilding practices. Peacebuilding itself is conceptualized as practices inclusive of development projects aiming at employment generation and stabilizing the economy in war torn countries, rule of law, gender mainstreaming, education and allied infrastructure development activities. Peacebuilding, a ramification from UN peacekeeping missions was "presented as politically neutral and ethically altruistic," (Liden and Jacobsen, 2016, p. 2) but in a decade of its praxis, the critique towards these programmes echoed one message—one peace does not fit all. Now termed as the 'first generation' of liberal peacebuilding, it was criticized for its unsuccessful approach to building peace and for introducing a foreign or international peace imaginary dependent on support from international community in form of assistance and humanitarian professionals (Chandler, 2016).

In the study of peace and conflict, research tends to fall under broad categories of actor-centric and community-centric theoretical approaches. These strands of research indicate an existing tension between peace and conflict research. The sub-fields of peace processes, conflict dynamics and post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation derive their epistemological foundations and concepts from the field of international relations wherein the unit of analysis begins with the assumption of the state as an uncontested and legitimate monolith that asserts its power and ideology through institutional structures that exist to further the ends and existence of the state.

This complex and interwoven web of state-building adheres to an agent-based model of thinking, putting the world in multiple models configured in a language such as 'national and international', 'state and citizenship', 'rational and legal', 'institutions and people', creating meta-models for analysis that endeavour "to govern, pacify, make compliant or liberate,"(Richmond 2018, p.221) and promote a problem-solving approach basing it on an assumption of the world "...via state or global governmentality,"(2018, p.221).

This intellectual tradition is guided by the realist school within international relations that provides legitimacy as well as primacy to a state's use and monopoly on violence. And in order to maintain a balance amidst what are conventionally understood as territorially

contesting units (the nation state), universal norms of cosmopolitanism, universal demand for rights and institutions of global justice are considered, as well as promoted, as instruments and entities for resolving, containing and or transforming violence.

The resonance of 'local' across sectors, divisions and larger praxis-based discipline of peace and conflict studies, coincides with the project of decolonizing epistemological foundations, however the call for decolonising may be incommensurable, since our epistemological grounding itself is based on colonial knowledge systems (Tuck and Yang, 2012). The subaltern project and post-colonial studies consistently delve and attempt to unpack and deconstruct the 'local'. The 'local' according to post-colonial theory is understood as the Other. This homogenized Other— considered to be uniformly the same in its otherness across colonies, was at the heart of the colonial rule and hence colonial epistemologies. The linear and oppositional characteristics such as 'medieval-modern', 'feudal-capitalist' attributed to the 'local' contributed to representation of local not as political subjects but subjects waiting to be made political. Subaltern studies have in ways unpacked these biases and have analysed how colonial practices...

“...created hybrid ways of governing, and changed administrative and cultural practices, as well as transforming self-understanding and agency of subjects of these hybrid encounters,” (Liden and Jacobsen, 2016, p. 6).

How does the subaltern literature contribute to the study of local in peacebuilding?

The colonial practices of 'taming' the colonial subject led to instrumentalization of technocratic practices such as demographic enumeration, census or data gathering on topography and natural resources. These practices of governing the body and surveillance tools that mark territorial boundaries, leading to formation of controversial borders that remain as some of the most violently contested sites (Israel-Palestine, India-Pakistan partition, India-Kashmir-Pakistan, Northeast India and China- to name a few). The tactics of governing the colonial subject through technocratic regimes is reasoned and embedded in the logic of exploring solutions that would smoothen out the rough edges and make the ungoverned, governable. The logic that technocracy favours “impartial and disinterested systems over decision-making mechanisms,” (ibid.) would resonate with practitioners operating in the arena of international development and humanitarian action. Peacebuilding, with its well-intentioned moral aim of reducing violence and enabling peaceful dignified existence of societies, despite its internal critical lens and the turn to 'local' requires unpacking.

What does it mean by local and what is the understanding of the local itself? Do we assume to break away from the inadvertent view of 'the local' as 'the other', or does the discipline incorporate the nuanced interpretation of the local as a hybrid of universal ideas (such as human rights, equality/equity) and decolonizing as a way or route to disrupting hegemonic powers in all forms. The post-colonial understanding and discourse on development, as discussed by Liden and Jacobsen (2016), talks about "...strategy of engaging with peacebuilding discourse instead of dismissing it because of its hegemonic features is in accordance with the 'hybridization strategy'... as a response to the fragility of neo-colonial discourses and practices." Discussing the intricacies of conflict governance structures, the authors in this book, based on findings from a comparative research project on cultures of governance in Europe and India, bring attention to work of Ilan Kapoor on 'postcolonial politics of development'.

Two overarching themes in Kapoor's account are central to such a cure. First, addressing the cultural biases, unrecognized motives and fragility of development practices, which creates a flawed space for prescription. Here he employs the writings of Spivak in particular. Underpinning the problem of representing the 'will' of post-colonial societies politically is the problem of representing themselves and their political interests on their own terms. Second, drawing on the work of Bhabha, Kapoor is concerned with the possibilities of the governed for manipulating and altering governance. This resonates with the preoccupation in revisionist peacebuilding theory with the role and potential of local actors in rooting liberal governance. (2016, p. 10)

The polarities that scholars and practitioners find themselves in the axis of international and local, finds a healthy balance by imbuing what is termed as 'communitarian cosmopolitanism'. What this discussion brings to the study of surrender and the larger topic of disarmament is the issue of political representation, specifically of the 'other' or the 'local'. It thus becomes important to constantly remind the governing practices within an international context or within a national context, that the representation of the 'local' is neither homogenous nor constant. By opening the floodgates of representation, just as hegemony, it is continuously unravelling. The eventual turn towards local is not restricted to inclusion of representatives of local communities and/or local cultural value systems, rather the local turn needs to be understood through the lens of the ethnographic nuances of violence, different connotations of peace, representation and the complex web of the everyday.

The need to evoke and reiterate ontological process and deliberations in the discipline of peacebuilding is imperative for this study. The point of inquiry in the research, starts by looking at global discourse on counterinsurgency and where a policy—with characteristics of disarmament—could be located. Disarmament initiatives cannot be

disconnected from larger peacebuilding process. The practice of building peace itself, thus becomes a point of contention. Traversing from positivist technocratic practices, and lending a critical subaltern lens into the discipline, enormously changes the orientation as well as the questions for inquiry. However, in the lived-world these two notions intermingle, interact and intersect. The technocracy inspired or perpetuated through bureaucratic practices and individuals representing the machinery prefer the binaries of local-global, govern-governed. The local—for this study, would then be the Adivasi who lives in these resource-rich, yet developmentally backward areas. And this local, as rationalized by the development discourse, requires assistance in mainstreaming with market and liberal governance institutions.

The construction of the 'other' within a post-colonial state requires a very cautious deliberation. The making of a modern state, is a project that is intrinsically linked to the colonial rule in case of India. The idea of the Indian state itself is embedded in colonial practices of control and governing which have had a significant impact on the ways of governing in post-colonial India.

Hansen and Stepputat in 'States of Imagination' (2001) explore in detail the colonial continuities in varied everyday practices of the postcolonial state. In their later work on state and sovereign power, Hansen and Stepputat attempt to move the discourse ahead with the acknowledgement that,

“...the incompleteness, tentativeness, and fragmented nature of colonial states and the excessive forms of violence they frequently visited on their subject populations have structured postcolonial states in profound ways,” (2006, p. 304).

They further their argument by throwing light towards the shift of sovereignty beyond the rhetorical notion of sovereignty through state or law. The complex interactions in quotidian world in case of postcolonial states has led to formations of informal sovereignties. The case of the Maoists gaining a considerable amount of support and establishing their own '*Jantana Sarkar*' (People's State) or popularly termed as 'liberated zones' by the English language media, indicates a move towards these informal sovereignties.

The challenge then, is to establish the norm and ethics of one sovereign power over an informal sovereign. The postcolonial Indian state, requisites compliance and reiteration of its sovereignty—and hence its use of coercive practices and policies. These practices are traceable to colonial practices of control, the Armed Forces Special Powers Act

(AFSPA) to cite as an example, was first introduced by the British government in 1942 as a response to the 'Quit India Movement'. The legacy and the extrajudicial powers given to the legislation and its abuse is well documented in research emerging from the subcontinent especially in relation to Kashmir Conflict and in the region of Northeast India (Das, 2012).

This legislation, in precolonial and in postcolonial times, was a primary instrument of practice to govern the untameable 'other'. The otherness, then, is an embedded practice, a mode of thinking which is difficult to discern if we are to understand 'other' only through the rationale of the orient. The subaltern in here, is the other within the other. It is akin to peeling on an onion, where layers within layers reveals otherness even though it is understood that the subaltern is not homogenous or constant through time. The anthropological other, conceived as 'a human other' was used as a lens to develop a theory of humankind. However, to develop such a theory of the human kind, can we really consider the objective other as the 'OTHER'? That is, is this other devoid of 'self' or is it 'not-self'? (Sarukkai, 1997). For the course of this study, the understanding of the other, is conceived from the notions of coloniality, colonial continuities in postcolonial states and how the practice of the state itself resonate with instrumentalisation of power through the a binary lens of 'self' and the 'other'.

Who in this context is the other?

Do we understand, through analysis of state-practice, the other to be the indigenous people who are contesting the sovereignty of the state? Or is the other the insurgent, who violently contests the state? Going back to the question raised in the beginning of chapter one— who is an insurgent?, we add another sub-question to it— which identities are projected and perceived by this insurgent? And through the process of othering, what identities does the insurgent assert?

The ideological elites and the leadership within the Maoist movement, as critiqued by Gudavarthy (2014, pp. 50–53), security actors, and bureaucracy, do not live the same material reality as the Adivasi Maoist or 'the foot soldier', or the guerrilla—as they are often referred in common parlance. The commonplace understanding as furthered by

the 'sandwich theory'¹⁶ (D'Souza, 2009) in the case of the Maoist conflict, attempts to look at the Adivasi as a naïve apolitical body, who is manipulated both by the state and the non-state (Maoist).

This simplified notion about the Adivasi disregards and delegitimizes the foot soldier as a political being with agency and language of resistance. The foot soldier's identity fluidly moves between the 'tribal other' and/or the 'insurgent other'. The fluidity of these identities is layered with another complexity, the practices of the state that inadvertently views their body as 'other', that is in the process to become or resemble 'the self'. These complexities of otherness are succinctly explained in an anthology of essays on 'Traitors' by Thiranagama and Kelly (2010). Elaborating on the bond between the state and its citizens, they claim that the bond between state and its citizens is "mediated through hosts of contradictory affiliations to kin and social groups and can be overruled by wider ethical obligations," (2010, p. 2).

The collection of essays while engaging with the idea of loyalty, citizenship and the state, touch upon ideas of treason and how the construction of a traitor—creates the idea of a loyal other. The idea, however is articulated as not traitor as the other, but as the traitor emerging out of sameness. The logic of postcolonial nations, marked the movement away from 'ruler and ruled' to emergence of 'citizens'. The logic of popular sovereignty, creates the idea of a diffused entity of people, to become 'loyal citizens'. The citizen is created - loosely, through various forms of affiliations, and treason or a traitor becomes one such category. A similar complex and multi-dimensional practice of citizenship is understood in the case of the 'surrendered body'. This connects back to the idea of first 'civilizing the tribal' and subsequently, making the tribal compliant through classification of surrender or ex-Maoist and achieving rehabilitation through acts of 'good behaviour.'

The idea of compliance and making of a citizen in case of an intractable conflict such as the Maoist conflict, requires deeming an anthropological lens - an anthropological lens

¹⁶ Alpa Shah explains the sandwich theory by drawing parallels to the situation explained in case of Guatemala, as caught between two armies. Sandwich theory is something akin to this understanding that the people (common/tribal or Dailt) are caught between the violence of the state and that of the Maoists. This theory was contested later by many civil liberties activists who through the medium of a popular online website www.sanhati.com critiques it for ascribing or limiting the agency of the Adivasis who live in the Maoist dominant areas or chose to join the armed mobilisation. Sanhati, the online website, was at the forefront of mobilisation of Dalit and Adivasi activists in India and the critique can be understood through the larger process of the intellectual debates within Indian academia for decolonising from the 'upper caste' (Savarna) knowledge systems.

cognizant of the role security plays in the quotidian realities. And herein comes the language or the act of securitization. Securitization theory provides a useful entry point for bridging between security and anthropology,

“...the way security is approached in securitization theory provides some of the rudiments for a properly anthropological conceptualization: one that is open enough to encompass all the kinds of social phenomena one would wish to understand in terms of ideas of security, and at the same time sharp enough heuristically to delimit security as a distinct field of ethnographic investigation,”(Holbraad and Pedersen A, 2013, p. 10).

Holbraad and Pederson in their anthology of essays on an anthropology of security, build a conceptual argument and framework for relevance and significance, for studying security as an anthropological endeavour. Security according to them, has been an area of anthropological enquiry from the birth of the discipline itself. Bringing in two main strands of understanding security, Malinowskian and Radcliffe-Brownian, Copenhagen based anthropologists, differentiate between the two based on the distinction between the existential fear or angst-ridden psychological need for security, and security as a political category.

...Indeed, drawing on our...contrast between (Malinowskian) ‘un/certainty’, seen as a subjective existential predicament, and (Radcliffe-Brownian) ‘in/security’, seen as an irreducible property of the political arrangements of social collectives, one might say that the Copenhagen School’s emphasis on security as a manner of politicisation allows us to view in/security as a *strong form of un/certainty*. (Holbraad and Pedersen A, 2013, p. 12)

While this definition of security resonates under most circumstances of state-led security interventions in times of internal conflict or civil war—the authors throw in a word of caution about the fundamental pre-supposition that “human lives are structured around a dynamic clash between societal versus individual forces,” (Holbraad and Pedersen A, 2013, p. 13). Terming it as a ‘liberal political cosmology’, they address the concern of political theory about the relationship between the subject and the sovereign, and specifically the relationship between the state and its citizens.

The assumption that the subject or the citizen is in relative autonomy from the power of the sovereign or the state, limits the analysis of interactions of the state and citizenship as if the social relations of the citizen were to remain inert or unaffected unless the two interact or encounter in some spaces or instances. The distinction between state/citizen, society/individual have been a point of critique in anthropology, specifically from the literature emerging on the anthropology of state (Spencer, 2007; Hansen and Stepputat, 2006) which stresses a move away from the notions of a transcendental state as understood in popular discourse.

In an attempt to denaturalize that state (Hanesn and Stepputat, 2001), the practices of the state come into focus. The idea behind denaturalizing the state leads to “...pointing to its essentially political, and therefore unstable, partial and always violent character,” (ibid.). This sets the premise, and links to the movement away from state-dominated discourse which observes the state as an apriori and the acknowledgment of various political processes that co-constitute state-society relations and to escape the dichotomy between state and society.

Considered to be a new turn in the field of peace studies, there is an impetus in theory and in praxis, towards moving away from institutionalism and actor-centric theories towards a sociological understanding and analysis for considering violent conflicts not as a rupture of political processes and democratic institutions (in most instances), but as an exemplar of everyday politics and contestations taking a route where violence is not a “departure from the flow of the political, but rather should be analysed as a heightened and intensified continuation of normal politics,” (Spencer, 2007, p. 120).

The focus of peacebuilding literature is based on conflicts that fall under the rubric of international interventions. Peacebuilding literature introduces a lexicon of words explaining social phenomena that inadvertently depend on ideas of objectivity, and reliance on international actors, with the role of local actors as that of enablers in implementing programmes. The local in most instances, becomes a passive recipient of peace initiatives and policies and the unintended results of such efforts are left for the everyday life of communities to negotiate and reconfigure alongside existing processes.

The use of anthropological approaches faces resistance from scholars of international relations on the grounds of scalability. The most commonly expressed discontent with ethnographic methods is regarding context-specific inferences and research findings which are difficult to generalise and hence could not be utilised in policy guidelines or as recommendations for institutional adaptations at both country level and international level (in case of international interventions led by international agencies and organisations). The nature of ethnographic findings is difficult to employ, because of the “regional and temporal variations” of findings (Milne, 2010, p. 77) and the unease of ethnographers and anthropologists to stitch these findings into a framework of a single grand-narrative.

But theory development, necessary for meaningful insights into the changing nature of citizenship, nationalism and the state, requires deep knowledge. It is through understanding local and regional dynamics that it is possible to enable space for

deliberation and creating a deeper understanding of India's policy of surrender, which can then help to understand similar practices elsewhere. For a nuanced and theoretical contribution to the literature, the rich material from deep ethnographic descriptions is required.

This existing tension between classical notions of peace and conflict research methods and anthropological methods has occupied the scholarly imagination since the inception of the peace and research agenda in international academia. However, to put the tension to rest, this study is an attempt to move away from intervention-based studies, driven primarily by international actors and agencies, to a literal turn into the local.

While locating the international debates on peacebuilding literature, there is growing body of literature looking into anthropological notions of violence, suffering and security (Bjorkdahl and Selimovic, 2018; Goldstein, 2010; Holbraad and Pedersen A, 2013; Nordstrom, 2005; Nordstrom and Martin, 1992). The literature locates the various processes that are involved and initiated through interactions of human agency when represented through different roles and regulations, and through forms of government and its varied structures and divisions. The ways in which the bureaucratic mentality interacts with a policing mentality; the interaction of policing mentality with citizens; and interactions among citizens in everyday life; are all varied, but their cumulative effect speaks of a certain language of governance, security and reformation. It is through these everyday encounters, that processes and institutions find their meaning and rationale for existing notions of governance or as introduced by Foucault's logic of 'governmentality' (Murray Li, 2007).

Spencer (2007, p.109) through a discussion on anthropological works in the South Asian context, elaborates on the argument of blurred boundaries between the state and society. While he reiterates the importance of a critical analysis of the postcolonial state through the Foucauldian lens, he laments the "routinization" of Foucault's work in anthropology and the

"...formulaic reading 'against the grain', of this or that colonial or administrative document, readings which usually demonstrate the disciplinary rationale behind official discourse and the apparently inevitable making of modern bodies and modern subjects... the world of much anthropology in the Foucaultian mould is a very predictable world, a feel-good dystopia, where external power meets local cultural resistance, and the last surviving remnant of Foucault's bracing capacity to shock is drowned in a sea of sentimentality" (Spencer 2007, p.111).

At his eloquent best, Spencer is making an attempt to introduce to the reader the new forms of power and resistance through the interaction of bodies and state apparatus that

emerge. He cites Emma Tarlo's research on the slums in New Delhi during the time of the emergency¹⁷. Tarlo (2003) examines power, and recognises the capacity of "unruly bodies" to respond and to exercise their autonomous decisions and manoeuvres in response to what was intended for these bodies through official documents and policies. These elusive boundaries between the state and society and the ways in which these relations become ambivalent and ambiguous rather than the conventional understanding of a 'unidirectional' flow between power and resistance, is the lens that ethnography and ethnographic inquiry donates to the study of conflict, violence and peace.

The specificity of the topic of the research project, in this instance, requires a movement beyond the rhetoric of 'success' of surrender or disarmament indicated through the quantum of numbers of non-state armed actors within a specified locality. The setting, as discussed in earlier section of the chapter, is peculiar since unlike instances of traditional disarmament processes, there is an absence of a formal peace agreement between the Indian state and the Maoists. The government of India refrains from categorising this armed violence as conflict, since it would mean subscribing the conflict to international scrutiny and monitoring mechanisms as a member of the United Nations and signatory to its stipulations.

This justifies the need for 'turning local' or a 'local turn', since there is an absence of a national project on disarmament or on peacebuilding. The 'coherency' of policy implementation, as observed in international peacebuilding projects is not mimicked in the Indian scenario. The implementation of a surrender and rehabilitation policy is a responsibility of the security architecture that dominates the civic life in spaces where the Maoists are understood to be garnering popular support. Unlike a national project, where state practices would be led with a centralized rationale, the negotiations, in these instances are certainly influenced by national policy, but are to a large extent localized, and led by local elites, state bureaucracies and local leadership from the side of the Maoists. The boundaries between the 'insurgent' and the civilian are blurred and as is the case in civil wars, to establish the distinction between these two categories would be an impossible task.

¹⁷ Emergency is a 21-month period from 1975 to 1977 when the then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi using Article 352 of the Indian constitution, and declared a National Emergency which gave executive, financial and legislative power to the federal/central government in India which in this instance was under the leadership of Indira Gandhi. The emergency period is synonymous with centralised control over media as well as oppression against political opposition in India. For more: https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/indira-gandhi-emergency-june-25-26-1975-after-5-setbacks-1269294-2018-06-25?preview_log=1269294 Accessed on 18.11.2018.

There does, exist a categorical definition or rationality of an armed insurgent. This armed insurgent, in the lexicon of the security apparatus, is the pivot through which the discourse of the success of the state's response on internal conflict is hinged. The common understanding is rooted in the rationale that if the armed actors submit to the writ of the state, there would be a reduction in the number of armed actors. The act of surrender is advertised through use of local daily newspapers, radio channels and through printed pamphlets distributed in the weekly markets in sub-provincial units where there is a likelihood of spreading the news and information through families, friends and other social/village relations. These instances of surrender are akin to celebratory news for the security forces and they hope that not only would this affect the numerical size of the armed movement but would deter new recruitment to the movement as well¹⁸.



Figure 3.1: Photo of a pamphlet distributed in the field. Source: Author

The process of surrender in India, to be understood, should not be viewed in a vacuum of procedural duties and protocols. The process involves different layers of interactions across time and space, and contrary to the procedural duties of popularising the policy of surrender and rehabilitation, it is the everyday interaction of armed actors (both state and non-state) with people and bodies that peruse a thin line between violence and non-violence. These bodies surrendering are emblematic of the 'other'. The process of surrender garners a new meaning, the act becomes a symbolic gesture in signifying the victory of the state. In the act, there is a hidden significance of surrendering the body which now would seek recourse in the eyes of the state and through the aegis of the state. The role of the state, and its representation through institutions and people produces new

¹⁸ <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/red-terror-new-strategy-puts-a-leash-on-maoists/story-a8eaFvV9qGeKdqPPmelFpL.html> accessed: 18.11.2018

and varied meanings. What is the meaning attached to 'surrender'? The emblematic bodies become the site for the state to perform and hence illustrate a new meaning and hence a new role or function for these bodies. Conceptualisation of disarmament, reintegration, rehabilitation- carry subtle differences in their meaning. These subtleties exist, but how often they are understood in policy and what interpretation of rehabilitation is constructed through the policy, posits a significant area of inquiry.

The conceptual understanding of surrender is not detached from the overarching rationalising of security practices instructed by the state. Securitization¹⁹ of the conflict fosters space for the surrendered body and the representation of the surrendered to exist in a state of exception²⁰. Securitization as is understood, derives its significance from the language of security, a 'speech act' that subjectively constructs an environment of 'security' which is perceived as an existential threat to institutions of political power including state and other legitimized non-state international institutions. The object of securitization, whether is a 'real' social threat, isn't a matter of concern for policy planners. Since the security speech "authorizes the speaker to take extraordinary measures in response to an existential threat, to set aside customary rules of the game, because a security threat by its very nature cannot be dealt with through customary means," (Goldstein, 2010, p. 7).

The rubric of securitization, provides a perception of heightened existential threat and this provides a logic for implementation and enactment of rules, where individual and/or community rights can be suspended. The securitized environment provides a legitimate ground to move from 'ordinary' to 'extraordinary' and hence a subsequent rationale for everyday state practices to incorporate languages, rules— technologies of disciplining, that create a state of exception. The intended action unintentionally considers the surrendered individual into 'bare life'. Agamben (1998) expands on 'bare life' as a

¹⁹ Securitization as a term was introduced by the Copenhagen school with contributions from Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde. The first in the series was the seminal paper 'Securitization/Desecuritization' by Ole Wæver in 1993. The Copenhagen school reconceptualized the meaning of security. The most cited definition of security and securitization is: "Security' is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics. Securitization can thus be seen as a more extreme version of politicisation. In theory, any public issue can be located on the spectrum ranging from nonpoliticized (meaning the state does not deal with it and it is not in any other way made an issue of public debate and decision) through politicised (meaning the issue is part of public policy, requiring government decision and resource allocations or, more rarely, some other form of communal governance) to securitised (meaning the issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bound of political procedure).

²⁰Giorgio Agamben, Italian philosopher, through his work on sovereign life, bare life and state of exception traces the role of law and juridico-legal thinking in constituting what could be understood as a 'state of exception' through which law, political norms and order is constituted. The 'bare life', though is on the outside of the political moral and legal realm, the morality of a society overall is based on the fundamentals of this bare life. For the purpose of this study, I use these concepts which would be find more explanation throughout the research.

conceptual term to mark a difference between the political subject and life that is outside of the sphere of the 'political'. He elaborates the concept of bare life as the basis or foundation for morality of the state or community. He propounds that it is with the demarcation of bare life that we constitute society and its moral order. It is through exclusion of bare life in political, moral and ethical life, that a political order or life is included- inclusion in a material realm that precedes all forms of power configurations

Through the course of this research, the focus of the study will be to look at the rationale for instruction and conceptualization of the policy and the subsequent transformations in state-society relations through the implementation of the policy at a local level. If it is explicit that surrender leads to a decrease in violence and participation in the Maoist cadres, then, in what ways are these successes visible? Following the discussion above, it is argued that these successes and failures need to be seen in the local context in which they happen. The national-level discourse is interesting in a different sort of research project, but it can say little about implementation, and what the policy means for the Maoists, for those who do surrender, or for the local community in a conflict-impacted locality. The overarching question driven through this research project can then be articulated as follows:

What spaces for conflict transformation does the Indian State's policy on disarmament (surrender and rehabilitation policy) create in the case of the protracted conflict with the Maoists?"

As articulated by MacGinty and Richmond (2013), the shift from international to local in peacebuilding is to recognize the organic and informal networks and processes that play a significant role in perpetuation of peace. The research question itself acknowledges the presence of organic processes, even though they lack a mention within the policy guidelines that create spaces for conflict transformation and the re-altering of the relationships of the ex-combatants with the community as well as the representatives of the state whose existence they once questioned. The research looks at the individual and the community and the new forms of relationships that are fostered (deliberate and non-deliberate) through the changing representation of the actors involved in a conflict.

The importance of looking at aspects of surrender and rehabilitation with comparisons and similarities from internationally driven DDR programmes seems important. While the research does not incorporate comparative analysis or conventionally comparative case study approach, the learnings on practical aspects of what it entails to 'disarm' are

considered in this study. The knowledge built through praxis in international armed conflicts provides an entry point to look at the veracity of the policy itself and its rationale for implementation in varied contexts—both in lexicon of international intervention and in instances of internal conflicts and/or civil wars.

The case of Nepal, where a DDR programme was implemented in the aftermath of the victory of the Maoist, People's Liberation Army after a violent decade long civil war, or in the case of Northern Ireland, where decommissioning of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) was a pivot to the implementation phase of the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement (Walsh 2013).²¹ The inclusion of international observers in both instances, led to better implementation of disarmament practices that could ensure that the power of the parties to the conflict were not compromised or used for coercion or manipulation in the ongoing peace negotiations. The above instances alongside the example of Afghanistan from South Asian region, indicate that while disarmament can help in cementing overt gains towards the establishment of non-violent practices, it does not ensure a positive development towards peace. The limitations of DDR practices consistently resonate with an ethos of peaceful resolution to conflicts. DDR could be a practice of resolution, however, to embody peaceful practices for everyday resistance, the questions of structural change and conflict transformation require a nuanced understanding of the conflict context and national and international structures that inadvertently play a role in legitimising responsibilities and dominant power structures.

Intrinsically linked to DDR, is the lens of counterinsurgency. COIN as discussed in the first chapter, gives a useful lens to understand state responses to internal conflicts, specifically in the Indian subcontinent. The use of force and legitimate violence in cases of ethno-nationalist conflicts has a historical rationale for preserving the territorial sovereignty of the state. The state due to its own fear of an existential threat, distinguishes between the violent and non-violent subjects or bodies. With a clear objective of military defeat or surrender, the attempt through a COIN lens is to demarcate between combatants and non-

²¹ The Good Friday Agreement, signed between the Irish Government and the Government of the United Kingdom, and most of the major political parties inside Northern Ireland on 10 April 1998 put an end to decades long violence and conflict aiming for reunification of Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The Irish Department of Foreign Affairs describes the agreement as follows: "The Good Friday Agreement gives prominence to the 'principle of consent' which affirms the legitimacy of the aspirations to a unified Ireland while recognising the current wish of the majority in Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom." As a part of the agreement, in 2005 the Independent Decommissioning Body confirmed complete decommissioning of the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

combatants or violent and non-violent actors. These demarcations while helpful in classifications for military combat purposes, are entirely devoid of a sociological lens. COIN approaches (unlike most traditionally Counter Terrorism approaches) sometimes accept that insurgents have local support, nonetheless COIN is fundamentally based upon a premise that it is possible to separate the insurgent from their community, by a mix of military action and 'development'. Military tactics have evolved out of a historical pursuit of identifying an enemy who is considered belligerent and untameable. The underlying strategy implied in most military tactics, aim to defeat the rebelling or warring faction.

The ahistorical and non-sociological lens imbibed through COIN, may lead to a symptomatic relief or a victory, even though such cases are not that numerous, but the seeds of dissent are seldom resolved. The on-going conflicts and conflict trajectories in Afghanistan, Iraq and Israel- Palestine are living examples of how a prioritised COIN approach breeds ground for further dissent and a cyclical return to violence with continued and systemic ramifications for populations, in the forms of forced displacement, conflict-led migration and further marginalization of rights of citizens. A peculiar question that remains unanswered and that resonates throughout the text, refers to the ways of looking at citizens in instances of conflict. In the case of India's 'surrender' policy and practice, should we view it as a part of an international consensus on practices of COIN that are managed through a security framework? Or should we explore other dimensions to the practice and discourse which are locally rooted, wherein the practices may be locally inherited, contextual and flexible and hence responding organically to local needs?

The notion of state as a 'fixed/undeterred and unchanged through time', has its fallacies and structural conflicts such as the Maoist conflict require us to think about ideas of citizenship, nation-building and ideology. This study explores the question of the peacebuilding and rights of dissenting citizens which may seem to be temporally limited to a particular context or constituency of population. The processes of unpicking the included-excluded, the implemented-challenged, the dichotomy of what is left behind and what is not, creates an idea of exceptionalism. Exceptionalism could be understood, as a bare-life, but to assume that bare-life doesn't constitute or is devoid of power is the inherent flaw of many of institutionalized state practices. So, while COIN would provide this study with the rationale of instruction of a policy on disarmament, it limits us to analysing security practices and conflict resolution, to sum it colloquially— 'it is what it is.'

A critical lens, which can both incorporate and question historical practices is imperative for this research. Criticality motivates a researcher to question the status-quo of historical power monoliths such as the state and through the process of criticality, steer the lens and researchers' eye towards nuanced understanding of the multi-directional and constitutive nature of power itself. The 'local turn' that gains emphasis in the latter half of the chapter, provides the research project the language and methodology for observing quotidian practices and interplays of power - power as is institutionalized by the state through bureaucratic practices, policy articulation and interpretation; power as is utilized by the assumed powerless, and the ways in which they articulate their voices in realm of politics and nation-building.

In this play of a shifting loci of power, local actors are often presented in situations and circumstances, where they decide to shape the discourse about 'the other'- especially in instances of insurgents. Locally embedded ethnography helps in investigating these patterns in practice. Through an ethnographic lens, these everyday practices of disarmament, the everydayness of surrendering and what goes on when the body is surrendered- through a thick description- fosters a dialogue between existent notions of power, violence and the new articulations of peace. The desire to understand why a state insists on practices of 'reformation' or 'rehabilitation'; the language itself, is rooted in a Hobbesian idea of sovereign power.

3.5 Conclusion

To conceive the transforming practices of the state, that lead and link to larger processes of peaceful and non-violent practices for resolution of conflicts, requires a deeper knowledge of how different contexts and different representations, view and make sense of political processes, that unfurl once the state issues diktats and policies. This dissertation builds on existing literature drawing from disciplines of anthropology, security studies and political theory to coalesce together a conceptualisation on surrender and where surrender leads to at the local level? What forms of interactions does surrender introduce and how does it transform life?

Chapter four discusses what this conceptual argument means for the methodological approach to the research question. The chapter begins by tracing the historical roots and trajectory of the Maoist conflict and the Indian state's response to the conflict in the past two decades, in order to set the context. The second part of the chapter unpicks the basic

research question and discusses why the form of ethnographic inquiry used is appropriate, and the best choice. It discusses the basis for the selection of the field-site for ethnographic inquiry and introduces its particular context. The chapter then goes on to discuss the particular approach to fieldwork, how it developed in practice and how it frames the empirical chapters which follow.

Chapter 4: Contextualising and Praxis: Researching Everyday Peace in North Bastar, Chhattisgarh

4.1 Introduction

The motivation and inspiration for this doctoral project developed slowly in the years after the completion of my post-graduate degree in disaster management with specialisation in humanitarian emergencies. During my training to become a practitioner with skills for responding to complex emergencies with a focus on civilian protection, at a university in Mumbai, India, the everyday lived realities of people, mothers, young girls, children, and the exposure to extreme incidents of armed violence puzzled me through the course of the two years. I was young and naïve, and the question “what impact exposure to violence has on people?” almost became an obsessive conundrum which I wanted to understand, because “there will be a solution!”

Through the course of the next decade, the more time I shared with communities in conflict areas, the stronger my understanding became of how through constant dialogue, people sought to negotiate or consensually arrive at micro-peace(s). Mc Ginty (2021) observes that in deeply divided societies, the

“...notion of everyday is that it can play an important role in making, maintaining, and possibly changing identities. Through everyday actions and micro-social practices, individuals and communities employ and develop cultural repertoires.” (2021, p. 32)

Through the nature of my work, documenting human rights abuses in northeast India to strengthening community capacities for early warning mechanisms for violence reduction, through praxis, I witnessed the everyday peace at play. What became obvious as a practitioner, was that despite the vast knowledge and experience of international or trained staff²² involved in international development, without the knowledge of the locals, many of these programmes and mandates could not be successfully implemented.

There were powerful experiences throughout my time when working as an international staff member with Moro communities in Mindanao islands, which made me think back to my earlier misunderstanding about lasting exposure to violence fracturing societies in

²² The trained staff includes highly qualified and well-intentioned humanitarian workers deployed as frontline responders to larger complex interventions actualising towards sustainable development goals. I am not undermining the work and the commitment of these individuals; however, I am sharing my own observations based on the limited time I spent employed as an international humanitarian worker.

need of (external) support. The mandates of violence reduction eventually transforming into Galtung-ian notion of peace, are achievable through recognising these everyday micro-peace(s) or micro-social practices, which when linked to larger process, give us a more holistic picture and possible pathways and interconnections between the hyper-local, local and the international (or elite-driven) process working towards (re)building deeply divided societies, which are in many instances, places with prolonged militarisation and proliferation of armed violence.

The “solution” lies within these melange of practices, or as Mc Ginty calls them, circuits of life (2021, p. 26). As explained in detail, every day and circuitry together provides an analytical device which is better suited to understand the myriad

“...implications and imbrication that link apparently unconnected actors. This helps us transcend the tendency to exoticise violent conflict and humanitarian situations as phenomena that happen ‘over there’ and apparently have very little to do with us...” (2021, p. 26).

This analytical lens, intuitively breaks the methodological debate within social science research—“to quant or to qual”. This self-coined phrase, “to quant or to qual” is an attempt to succinctly define the nature of research within the discipline of peace and conflict studies. Borrowing from sociology, anthropology, demographic/population studies, political science and economics, the research agenda within peace and conflict studies, moves between establishing causality and understanding the unintended consequences of prolonged violence. However, no one method or approach is holistic enough to provide the researcher, practitioner, or international leadership, a single path towards finding durable solutions or prescriptions for peace. The use of circuitry, as an analytical lens, helps here, it creates space for complexities and identifying inter-connectedness between larger diplomatic decisions, political economy and individual hopes and aspirations of those involved in enduring violent conflicts.

Previously, during my work in Northeast India (Manipur), I was involved in a project aiming to track the impact of low-intensity violence on people and healthcare. The method utilised was a simplistic model of incident mapping, with the primary aim of documenting civilian casualties. As a fresh post-graduate inspired to be a part of change, the project became a first-hand experience in understanding the issues faced when collating incidents using public sources such as newspaper reports, hospital records and local human rights monitoring reports.

The use of these data sources, while it helped in making a robust and detailed data-set, mapping actors, people, injuries, and recourse by the state, the story behind these incidents and how the data could be used beyond academic analysis, was a constant concern. Organisations such as ‘Every Casualty Counts’²³ that document civilian casualties from across the world have been instrumental in reporting and contributing to international systems for accountability in conflict and war. Similar incident tracking datasets at a larger scale such as ACLED (Armed Conflict Location and Event Data), UCDP (the Uppsala Conflict Data Program) and RIAH (Researching the Impact of Attacks on Healthcare)²⁴ have played a pivotal role in providing evidence and evidence-based advocacy within the international humanitarian system.

However, in the Indian context, the absence of international recognition of armed violence as ‘conflict’, limits the use of international instruments, legislation and protection norms for civilians or non-combatants. The traditional argument by the Indian state focuses on the effectiveness of the Indian judiciary and the domestic rights-based accountability mechanisms. What was observable on the ground, in Manipur, and became clear during my fieldwork in Chhattisgarh; is that evidence collection around civilian casualties and related facets of internal armed violence, takes years to progress through the domestic judicial system, before any verdict implicating the perpetrators is concluded, much less justice achieved.

The instance of ‘Extra Judicial Execution Victim Families Association (EEVFAM) Manipur Vs. Union of India, 2012’ was an important case concerning matters of civilian protection and documenting casualties in India. EEVFAM had documented 1528 extrajudicial executions where the perpetrators were local Manipur police, or personnel of the Indian Army deployed in the state. The court had ordered an independent commission to investigate a select few of the documented cases, and found the instances to be correct, and challenged the State’s argument that those killed were terrorists or militants. The verdict of the Supreme Court, which came out in 2016, besides demanding accountability for the documented cases, raised a pertinent question:

“The writ petition under Article 32 of the Indian Constitution raises important and fundamental questions of human rights violations—not in the context of the accused but in the context of the victims. Do the next of kin of deceased victims have any rights at all, other

²³ <https://everycasualty.org/>

²⁴ While ACLED and UCDP are databases documenting political violence, and aim at providing information to both humanitarian agencies, the UN and academic research, the RIAH project solely focuses on attack on healthcare facilities and healthcare providers.

than receipt of monetary compensation?” (“Extra Judicial Execution Victim Families & Anr. Association (EEVFAM) Versus Union of India & Anr.,” 2016).

The receipt of monetary compensation, is a core dimension of surrender and rehabilitation; but what does surrender, and rehabilitation mean besides the bureaucratic and procedural formalities of monetary compensation, livelihood training(s) and/or providing ad-hoc employment to ex-guerrillas within the security architecture? The attempt to dig deeper into the everyday life of surrendered individuals, their families and the villages, and the consequences of the policy and the ways through which it affects the areas where it is implemented remains unattended and under-researched.



Figure 4.1: (From left to right): A Primary Health Centre (PHC) in one of the villages in the field. A monthly health camp to check for sickle-cell anaemia, a condition that is prevalent among the Adivasis in this part of Bastar. Source: Author

It was with this interest, to move beyond the immediate beneficiaries of this policy and explore how the policy finds its way into the lives of the people, civilians, non-combatants, the ones who are indirectly linked to the conflict, that persuaded me to employ ethnography as a method to foster a deeper understanding of what transformations and changes are observable through the implementation of a policy whose underlying rationale is directed towards reduction and containment of violence, and subsequently seeking to diminish the control of the Maoist party in the region.

To understand the dynamics of control, stronghold, and the ongoing counterinsurgency program in the region of Bastar, Chhattisgarh with the Maoist guerrillas and the CPI (Maoist), it is necessary to historically place this ideological conflict, the specificity of

the region where it finds its popular support base, the people of the region and the contemporaneous significance of the conflict.

4.2 Locating the Maoist movement and its present-day manifestations in India



Figure 4.2: Memorial commemorating the Naxalbari uprising with busts of international and national communist leaders. This is the village of Naxalbari, West Bengal. Source: Ashutosh Bharadwaj

Tracing its roots in the 1940s, the armed communist movement led by the Communist Party of India (CPI), saw its beginning in the erstwhile Hyderabad state in 1939-40 and then in 1943-44. It was an organised mass militant struggle against landlordism and feudalism as a response to prevalent malpractices by the landlords (zamindars) towards the agrarian labour which was mostly comprised of landless Dalits and Adivasis. By 1946 the Nizams of Hyderabad, who were ruling the princely state in pre-independent India, saw a growing movement against the practices of the Nizam government. The “princely state” of Hyderabad which spread across central and peninsular India, had resisted a merger with the Union of India. The Nizam nursed hopes of being an independent state. The Nizam and his private army of Razkars²⁵ failed to prevent the communist movement from gaining strength. By 1948 (September 13), the Indian army had annexed Hyderabad state and the Nizam had to concede

²⁵ The Razkars was the a private army of the Nizam led by Kasim Rizvi sided with the Nizams for an independent Hyderabad state. This was one of prime motivations, that the Razkars, who were known for their “violent militant” ways, retaliated to the armed struggle of the communists.

defeat. It was the Indian army that took to the task of defeating and disarming the movement. By 1951, Hyderabad was merged within the union of India and with subsequent re-organisation of Madras presidency, a new state of Andhra Pradesh was formed (Mohan, 1973). However, the seeds of an agrarian revolution had been sown and resulted in the Naxalbari movement in 1967, twenty years after the Andhra communist movement had been curtailed.

In a small village of Naxalbari in West Bengal, a tribal farmer went to plough his land when a group of landlords attacked him with help of their armed squads. The incident led to a violent clash which resulted in the deaths of nine tribals and one policeman. The act of rebellion was symbolic, since the law enforcement agency itself participated in protecting the landlords, ignoring the tribal youth. The armed reaction in Naxalbari was accorded the symbolism of breaking away from a feudalistic state by the Communist Party of Indian (Marxist) and its state units from West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, and Andhra Pradesh. Though the initial spurt of violence spread into the city of Kolkata, by 1972 the Naxalbari movement had been suppressed and political schisms within the radical left started to appear. While the claims were primarily ideological, some of the fault lines emerged based on the territorial reach and areas of prominence where the different political formations derived their stronghold.

By the early 1980s, the radical left had four main political parties, which were primarily working towards an anti-feudal and agrarian struggle, namely, the Communist Party of India (Marxist- Leninist), Maoist Communist Centre (MCC), Communist Party of India (ML) Liberation and the People's War Group. The CPI (M-L) was formed in 1969 with Charu Mazumdar leading the party. However, the party soon disintegrated into newer formations. The demise of their charismatic leader, Mazumdar in 1972 further weakened the party's quest for an 'armed struggle' and it decided to move towards parliamentary politics.

In 1977 an initiative by a group including key leaders Subrata Dutt, Nagbhusan Patnaik and Vinod Mishra led to formation of CPI (M-L) Liberation suggesting a correction in the party ideology (Mohan 1973). Popularly known as CPI (M-L) Liberation, this newly formed party wanted to continue with armed guerrilla struggle and believed that to garner support there should be more peasant struggles than military armed struggle. This formation of the CPI (M-L) gained mass support in parts of Bihar, though many other factions of the M-L existed as well. Over a period of time, *Liberation's* ideology steered towards support for parliamentary politics. By 1995, the CPI (M-L) had disbanded its

underground activities and had come to be recognized as a parliamentary political party and successfully contested elections in Bihar (specifically in Bhojpur- a region that was a party stronghold) (Bhatia, 2005; Kunnath, 2009).

During the late 1970s, another ideological schism saw the formation of another faction, *CPI (ML) People's War*. Popularly known as People's War Group (PWG), the organization came into existence in 1980 under the leadership of Kondapalli Seetaramiah. PWG established itself as a leading faction by reorganising and collectivising revolutionaries active in the region of North Telangana (in the state of Andhra Pradesh). Though endorsing the revolutionary path set by Charu Mazumdar, PWG combined the activity of armed guerrilla squads with the political mobilization of Adivasi and peasant communities.

These mobilisations were reflected in mass organizations and cultural groups, such as the Radical Students Union, the Radical Youth League, the Jana Natya Mandali – People's Theatre Group, the Viplava Rachayitala Sangham – and Revolutionary Writers' Association (Banerjee, 2009; Haragopal, 2017; Venugopal, 2013). By working across various social groups and districts for a long period of time, these organizations contributed to strengthening and increasing a wider support base for PWG and the Maoist movement in Andhra Pradesh and built solidarity for similar mobilisations in other parts of the country. They played a crucial role in organizing large numbers of people against exploitative agrarian relations and social oppression as well as disseminating revolutionary politics at the village level in the state (Balagopal, 2006; Venugopal, 2013). By the mid-1980s, the PW-led Naxal movement consolidated its historical base in Andhra Pradesh, and it started to expand its outreach in the forest region of Dandakaranya, which has developed into the epicentre of the Maoist insurgency in recent years (Haragopal, 2017; Kennedy and Purushotham, 2012; Venugopal, 2013).

In 1998 a merger between People's War and CPI (ML) Party Unity—one of the two armed communist mobilisations in undivided Bihar, led to a newfound stronghold in parts of Bihar and formation of CPI (ML) People's War. In a statement issued by the party, this merger was characterised as a part of an ongoing effort to unite the communist revolutionary forces to form a unified party,

“...The emergence of the united party- the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) [People's War]- does not mark the completion of the process of unification of the genuine communist revolutionary elements in the various M-L parties in India who are being led astray by both right and left opportunist leadership, to fight

against these deviations and rally under the banner of the United Party. The United Party pledges itself to avenge the death of thousands of martyrs who fell in the course of the ongoing democratic revolution in India paved with blood by these martyrs until their cherished goals are accomplished. This is the era of revolutions.” (“Joint Declaration by Communist Party of India (ML) People’s War and CPI (ML) (Party Unity),” 1998)

By the time of the merger, a new aspect of revolution was codified; the People’s War extended their armed peasant struggle to a struggle for nationality. By inclusion of nationality, it was made clear that while a peasant uprising was a part of the struggle, the struggle included a key focus on the ‘contradiction’ of feudalism and the broader masses. On this question of broader masses, the People’s War defined India as a multi-national country with vast subnational variations and it is for this reason, that all have a right to their nationality and the right to self-determination. Through this, the newly formed People’s War was able to theoretically and strategically expand from an agrarian issue to include Adivasi claims of self-governance or self-determination.

Between the 1960s and 1990s in India, with the period of Emergency from 1975-1977 declared by then prime minister Indira Gandhi, the State’s response to the Naxal movement²⁶ was unified under the union government, even though it was viewed as a state-specific law and order issue. There was increased policing and scaled-up state-centre counter-offensives against the activists and intellectuals of the movement in the states of West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. The movement in West Bengal largely comprised of urban intellectuals and student leadership, as a response to the incidents that occurred in the village of Naxalbari (Mukhopadhyay, 2006). However, in parts of Andhra Pradesh, the presence of a more radical and mobilised People’s War, along with the CPI (ML) Party Unity and the MCC in Bihar, led to formation of guerrilla squads of landless agricultural labourers who were fighting against exploitation by upper caste landlords. The state’s response in these regions led to the imposition of a ban on

²⁶ The nomenclature of Maoist conflict as Naxal, Naxalism and Left-Wing Extremism is reflective of the various changes and transformations of the movement over six decades. The name Naxal and Naxalism came from the village, Naxalbari which sparked the movement. By the turn in 1990s with various mergers of the factions in the radical left movement, Naxalism and Maoism became interchangeable. It was only after 2004 that the Maoism or Naxalism, was formally termed as Left-Wing Extremism by the government of India. The Ministry of Home Affairs listed the CPI (Maoist) as a banned terrorist organisation and in an address to the media, then then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had announced Left-Wing Extremism as a threat to India’s internal security. There is a more detailed explanation of this and the overall history of the Maoist conflict in the Palgrave Encyclopaedia of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2021. The entry co-authored by Denise Ripamonti and Vidushi Kaushik, comprehensively lays out the history of the conflict, the organisational structure of the CPI (Maoist) and their guerrilla army and the state response to the conflict through the years.

communist mobilisation and political parties during the emergency years, and hence most of the members of the movement went underground.

Simultaneously, the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) that was formed along with CPI (M-L) in 1969, remained independent of CPI (M-L) and its subsequent factions. The MCC ideologically supported the Mao-Tse-Tung school of revolutionary politics and believed in armed struggle since its inception. The party believed in Mao's path to revolution: that establishing a powerful people's army, people's militia and establishing a self-sufficient base in the countryside, would lead to a subsequent encircling of urban areas and finally the capturing of cities and establishing a state system of the people themselves.

In the MCC strongholds within Bihar, the response to the counter-violence was carried out by private caste-based militias. These upper-caste private militias, fought to preserve their land privileges, and targeted the Dalits and lower-caste communities who were involved in agricultural activities. The cycle of violence between the naxal rebels and the private militias was responsible for many caste-based massacres in Bihar; ironically the presence of these private militias led to the further consolidation of support for Maoist movement in the State (specifically in Northern Bihar, which later became the state of Jharkhand) (Bhatia, 2005; Kunnath, 2009).

The liberalisation of the Indian economy in 1991, and the post-reform globalisation had marked ramifications for the people in the subcontinent. The opening up of the economy had a direct impact on the Indian industrial sector (which until then was state-driven and state-owned much like the banking sector). The increase in foreign direct investment (FDI) in the industrial sector led to increased demand for resources such as minerals (bauxite, iron ore and coal). This post-liberalisation dream of growth was marked with large-scale internal displacement and acquisition of traditional and agrarian land, especially that belonging to Dalits and Adivasis. The mineral-rich lands of Adivasi communities in central India, became a site for contestation between the Adivasi communities and the state functionaries, who on behalf of the private industries were responsible for facilitating access to land and other resources. This became another fertile ground for the guerrillas to mobilise Dalits and Adivasis against displacement and dispossession and challenged the development discourse of India.

Shah et al. (2017) in their ethnographic study of India's growth trajectory vis-à-vis the marginalised, shows the failure of the neoliberal reform programme in achieving sustainable and equitable growth. The vast gap in socio-economic conditions among the

Dalits and Adivasis compared to the urban pockets of the upper-caste populace is a living testament to the multi-dimensional abject poverty that has persisted in India for decades. The current attention given to the mineral-rich Adivasi territories in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh by the Indian state for economic purposes has not improved the living conditions of these communities. They continue to remain excluded from India's economic growth and are entrapped in new forms of exploitation. The presence of Maoist rebels and guerrilla zones in these areas since the 1980s has, in the context of these struggles over land and resources, strengthened Adivasis' struggles for land and forest rights.

This consolidation of support for the Maoist movement among the marginalised, played a pivotal role in the strengthening of the organisations which led to the merger of MCC and People's War on September 21, 2004 into the Communist Party of India (Maoist). The Maoist mobilisation was not simply a wave of localised and diffused movement against oppression and economic marginalisation; the merger led to a more centralised political organisation and to the establishment of 'revolutionary' or 'liberated' zones with their own 'people's government' (Jantana Sarkar). In a joint press statement, the two leaders from respective parties, Ganpathy (PWG) and Kishan (MCC) announced the following:

"The immediate aim and the programme of the Maoist party is to carry on and complete the already ongoing and advancing New Democratic Revolution in India as a part of the world proletarian revolution by overthrowing the semi-colonial, semi-feudal system under the neo-colonial form of indirect rule, exploitation and control.... This revolution will be carried out and completed through armed agrarian revolutionary war, i.e. protracted people's war with the armed seizure of power remaining as its central and principal task, encircling the cities from the countryside and thereby finally capturing them. Hence the countryside as well as the Protracted People's War will remain as the 'centre of gravity' of the party's work while urban work will be complimentary to it." ("Party Constitution, Central Committee, CPI (Maoist)," 2004)

The formation of CPI (Maoist) included a centralised command or the Central Committee (CC), and the governing structure was further divided by creating State Committees or Special Zonal Committees which are responsible for managing the devolved regional committees under which came the zonal committees and who were responsible for the localised area committees. Along with this political structure, they instituted a Central Military Commission (CMC) which is responsible for maintenance and providing strategic directions to the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA).

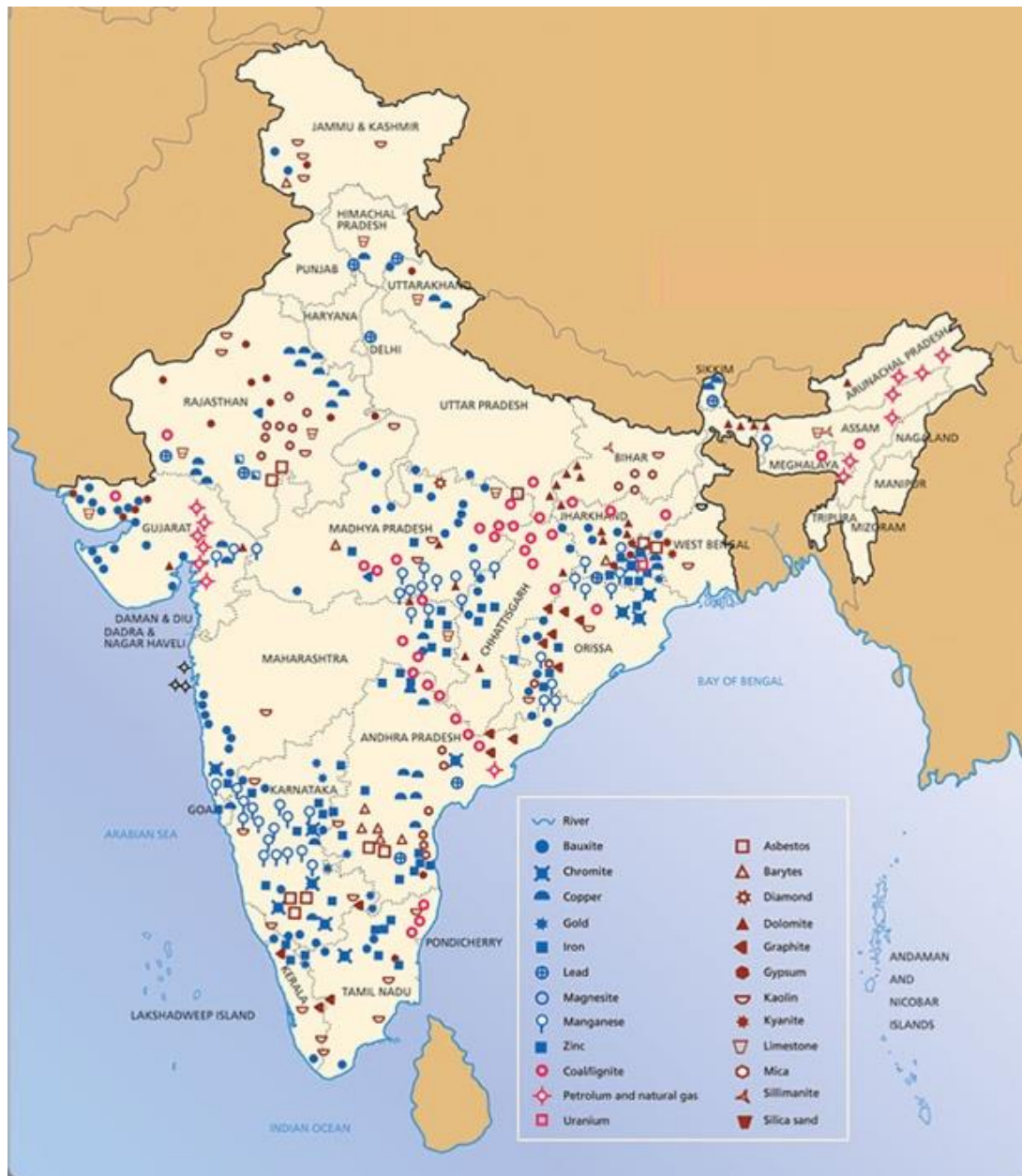


Figure 4.3: India's mineral map. Source: [Maps of India](#)

Μαοιστοί Ινδογενής Χονφύτ Μαο

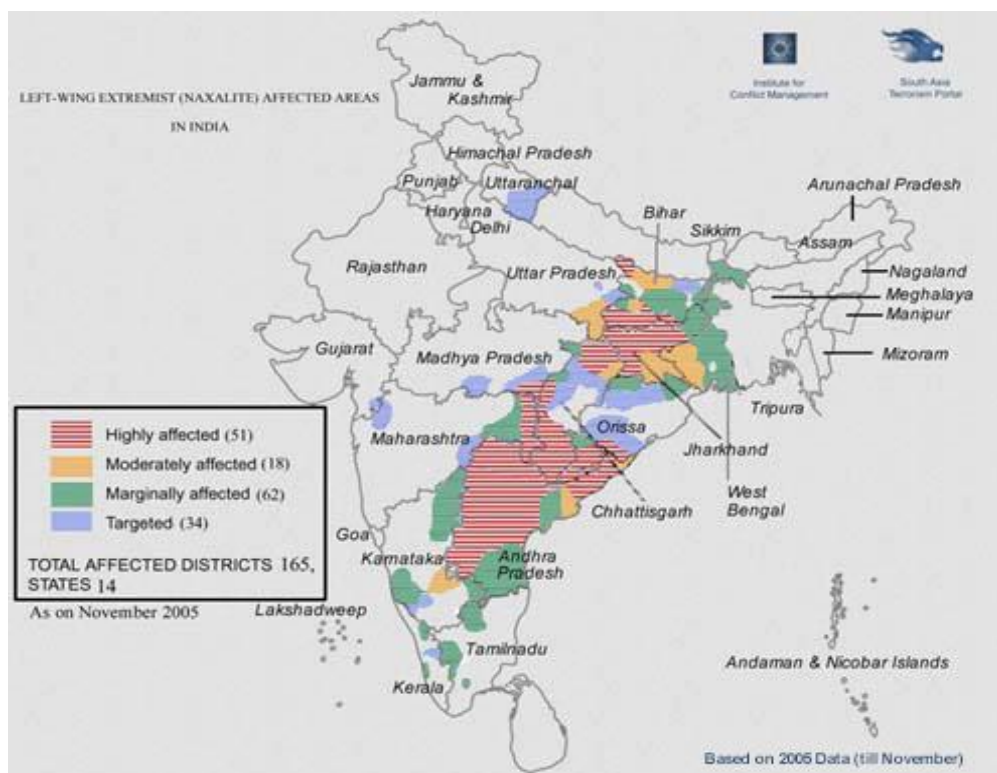


Figure 4.4 Map depicting the popularity of the Maoist movement in India in 2005. Source: www.satp.org

The PLGA is the backbone for party's armed actions and "...to follow the ideological leadership of the proletariat and serving the struggles of the people and the building of revolutionary base areas" (CPI (Maoist), 2004, p. 100). Similar to its political wing, the armed wing, comprises of the platoons, companies and special action teams. These are followed by the local guerrilla squads, special squads and last is the base force or people's militia which is designed for self-defence at the village level, in areas where the Maoist party has a stronghold and has established its Jantana Sarkar²⁷. While the special action or platoons move around between different zones, the people's militias serve as the backbone for recruitment into the secondary and the main forces. The PLGA's strength as of 2014 was estimated to be 8,500 cadre of men and women

²⁷ Janata Sarkar is the Gondi word for Revolutionary People's Committee-RPC. In other parts of India it is referred as RPC, however in Dandakaranya—where the Maoist stronghold is, it is referred as Janata Sarkar in the local language spoken by the Adivasi community.

approximately (Rijiju, 2014). Besides the armed cadre, the Maoist network comprised of overground and underground workers actively working on mobilising the marginalised in peri and urban centres across India.

This consolidation and formation of a guerrilla faction was driven by the demands of a neo-liberal growth model, and its resource requirements, and its consequent impacts such as large-scale displacement, especially in the mineral rich states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and parts of Maharashtra. These mineral rich areas coincided with the main Adivasi populace regions who have historically been different in their socio-cultural practices and life from mainstream or mainland caste Hindus or population from other religious identities. The Adivasi lifeworld often considered as 'backward' by India's elites, due to its reliance on nature and sustenance, and its rejection of the notion of capital accumulation.

Territorially, the Adivasi population or tribes as they were referred through the colonial and post-colonial administration, in central India are spread across the valleys between the Narmada river in the west of India and the river Godavari—the second longest river in India which originates in the western state of Maharashtra and drains east into the Bay of Bengal. The Narmada, is the fifth longest river in India, and originates in the central state of Madhya Pradesh (Madhya literally means middle in Hindi) and drains into the Arabian sea. Creating some of the most fertile and mineral rich areas in the country, the Adivasi population between these two rivers are considered the original people of land—as the word itself suggests, 'Adi' which means earliest in Hindi and 'vasi' means inhabitant. The main Adivasi groups comprise of Bhils, Oraon, Gond, Munda, Santhal, Dongria-Kondh, Kondh, Maria and Bison-Horn Maria reside between the states of Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh²⁸, Jharkhand, Orissa and parts of Andhra Pradesh which was carved into a separate state of Telangana in 2014.

The spatio-geographical and political history of the Adivasis becomes extremely important in understanding the mobilisation of Adivasi population especially the

²⁸ The state of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand were formed in the year 2000 and were carved out of the state of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar respectively. This was a part of re-organisation of states post-independence. While there was a cohesive movement for a separate state for the Adivasis residing in Northern Bihar—Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), in case of Chhattisgarh, the state was carved out of Madhya Pradesh for administrative and electoral reasons, since Madhya Pradesh before the split was the largest (in terms of size) state in India.

Gonds or the Koyas in Dandakranya²⁹ region and their involvement in the radical left politics. Verghese (2015) traces the history of pre-independence and colonial origins of ‘tribal revolts’ specifically in the region of Bastar or Dandakranya. Colonial rule, in case of Bastar took direct control over the forest and inadvertent displacement of Adivasis and dispossession of their land

“... colonial rule marked the first time in Indian history that a government claimed direct proprietary rights over forests. The British state became the conservator of forests when it passed the Indian Forest Act of 1878. Hundreds of thousands of acres of forest lands that Adivasis had used unfettered for centuries were kept in reserve, a practice that did not change for the rest of the colonial period. With the British control of forests came the concomitant rise of moneylenders, traders, and immigrants, and the influx of these new intermediaries led to widespread displacement of Adivasi land displacement,” (2015, p. 1623).

This dynamic of forests as a property of the government continued in the post-independence India, where forest land continued to be under the monopoly of the State. The post-colonial Indian state considered the Adivasis or forest dwelling communities, rooted in the legacy of colonial anthropology, as primitive and untouched by the process of modernity. Hence, the logic of Adivasi autonomy or to view their lifeworld in tandem with nature was understood as a project for reform—to bring them into the fold of modernity and make them ‘modern’. Simultaneously, the rules of governing the forest and the resources from it, further marginalised the Adivasis as they were compelled to negotiate with the state for accessing and using the resources that they traditionally revered and held as their own. The discriminatory practices towards the Adivasis from the colonial to post-colonial eras, contributed to the mobilisation of many from the community into the Maoist guerrillas against the state’s practices, especially when it concerned the forest reserve guards. It is noteworthy that especially since the late 1990s due to state repression in undivided Andhra Pradesh,

²⁹ Dandakaranya forest or area spreads across Bastar region in southern Chhattisgarh and borders with the neighbouring state of Orissa. One of the densest forest covers of Central India, Dandakaranya is considered the land of the Adivasis. According to recent scholarship, the contestation about Dandakaranya as a part of the Hindu imagination can be attributed to the resettlement of refugees from East Pakistan (present day Bangladesh) in 1956 by the government of India. Dube (2023) expands on the absence of Adivasis from partition history and attributes this to the larger nation-building project vis-à-vis the rehabilitation of partition refugees (primarily Bengali speaking Muslim and Hindu population from Bangladesh) and the reliance of the post-colonial India state on colonial era scientific forestry to consider Dandakaranya as a ‘backward’ region only useful for its forest-based resources. Dube propounds that the post-colonial Indian state behaved in a settler colonial way by disregarding the rights and the homeland of the Adivasis, enabled by their thinking of Adivasis as backward with no autonomy.

the committed Maoist cadre involved in armed action, took refuge in the forests of Dandakaranya moving further inwards into the Bastar region of southern Chhattisgarh.

Presenting a participant account of gradual immersion of left revolutionaries from Andhra with the lives of the Adivasis, the book 'Three Decades of Dandakaranya'(Chetna, 2017) recounts the initial roadblocks these revolutionaries faced in familiarising themselves with the Adivasi languages and culture. The book, an account from the perspective of the revolutionaries, recounts the strategic decision of the People's War in 1990s to expand their struggle into this region with "... holding pen in one hand and gun in the other, these armed cultural soldiers contributed their mind in both fields," (2017, p. 9). The mobilisation or as it is termed the cultural movement in Dandakaranya involved writing songs, dances and plays to build the cultural movement which aimed at conscientizing Adivasis on Marxism-Leninism-Maoism political ideologies. Through the years since then, the formation of the Chetna Natya Manch (Women's Dance Troupe) which travelled from village to village in the forests, engaged the Adivasis into a dialogue with the revolutionaries. Over the course of my fieldwork, when travelling into the villages away from the state highway, the older generation, would reminisce about the early years, when it was with the help of the dadalog that they could courageously talk back to the forest officers when they would encounter them in their intimidating ways.

This was affirmed with me during my informal visits and lunch with Varun* and his wife Smriti*. Varun* who is a surrendered guerrilla and the former spokesperson for the Maoist party, spent most of his revolutionary life in the Dandakaranya forests. His surrender was a widely reported incident across national dailies. The surrender of the Maoist party's then spokesperson implied that a senior leader and a loyalist to the movement had decided to leave—it was viewed as a victory by the security establishment and the government overall. Varun was followed by his then partner and now wife, Smirti*—an Adivasi guerrilla from Dandakaranya.

When I was introduced to them, it had been close to three years since their surrender and they had moved to Delhi, where they were happy with living a quiet life with a thin veil of anonymity. Varun* who had moved to the forests of Dandakaranya in Bastar from the coastal region of Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, confided during a lunch time conversation, that when he and his group of comrades had moved into Bastar, they were not acquainted with the Adivasi ways and it took the years and years of living

with them and earning their trust through participating in communal activities such as sowing seeds, and helping village elderlies in case of ill-health. Varun* confided to me,

“...even though we didn’t know much about their life, we did take a certain form of privileged position because of the knowledge we as revolutionaries came with. Our ideological leanings, many of us came from relatively more advanced communities with traditional knowledge of settled agriculture, paddy farming and access to modern education.”³⁰

Many of these revolutionaries, embedded themselves within the Adivasi communities as a part of the CPI (M-L)’s campaign of “go to the village” specifically directed towards students union activists, in rural Andhra Pradesh specifically from 1980s onwards — in his case, Varun had joined the movement through the networks and association with the Radical Students Union (RSU) active in the Telangana region of undivided Andhra Pradesh (Srinivasulu, 2017). Despite the fact that many of these activists and guerrillas belonged to Dalit communities, the ways and methods of Adivasi lifeworld were under-represented within the movement. This of course, signifies the importance of space and the context, the same ideological movement and its mobilisation strategies required tailoring based on the sub-national and regional specificities grounded in local cultural and material practices. Smriti* during these conversations would give credit to the early revolutionaries for empowering and strengthening the voices of Adivasi women residing in Abhujmaad. Ironically, one of the biggest critiques about the Maoist movement especially since the merger of the party, was the absence of women in the Central Committee³¹ of the CPI (Maoist). Apart from Anuradha Gandhi, a member of the Central Committee, who wrote on the question of feminism in the Maoist movement in India³², there are no women in the main decision making body of the party. While there is representation of women across the lower rungs, and some female guerrillas

³⁰ Conversations with Varun and Smriti between 2021 and 2022 in New Delhi.

³¹ The central committee (CC), is the highest body in what is defined as ‘democratic centralism’ for organisational structure of the Maoist party. The Central Committee is responsible for organising the party congress held every five years. It is through these congress, that the organised radical left, aims to revise and chart new strategies and tactics towards their ultimate aim of establishing a peoples’ republic.

³² Gandhi was one of the founding members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) and actively worked on the issues of Caste, Dalit and women’s role in revolutionary politics. She worked in the forests of Dandakaranya especially on the question of Adivasi women and their role in the Maoist movement, Gandhi was critical of the party and the inherent patriarchal predisposition of the guerrillas and party leadership.

are leading zonal and state committees³³, the senior leadership after Gandhi's demise is bereft of any female representation.

These ideological contradictions of a fundamental nature (the question of women and the internal patriarchy of the Maoist movement) coupled with contemporary challenges such as intensification of militarisation, concerted urbanisation, road constructions, and most importantly, the rapid deforestation, pose a threat to Maoist or radical left politics. While the troubles and injustices of inequality and representation remain unaddressed, the new challenges of climate change and the ecological damage due to militarisation and pervasive violence, remains unattended or if addressed, there is scepticism about the nature and depth of these deliberations and the consequent changes in ideology and praxis.

However, from being regarded as the gravest threat to India's internal security spreading across 110 districts across five states in 2004-2005, the movement through consistent counterinsurgency tactics, is officially now restricted to 45 districts across five states (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2023). While this could indicate the success of the COIN strategy, it would be fair to view this interpretation with scepticism. As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, the recording incidents of casualties and the number of armed attacks vis-à-vis perpetrators, would be a shallow reading of the spread of an ideology. Mere containment of violence does not mean that the structural issues that led to manifestations through armed violence, have been resolved or addressed. This definitely indicates that the armed movement is weaker in comparison to its initial year after consolidation and formation of CPI (Maoist). However, whether this could be said about the ideology, would be difficult to assess. The literature on the everyday reality of life in conflict-affected areas is, to date, very limited, making it difficult to draw conclusions about the current political situation. However, the reportage from the forests of Bastar, since July 2024, indicates an increased number of armed attacks between the security forces and the Maoists, with troubling news regarding recruitment and deaths of child soldiers (Subramaniam, 2024).

³³ In the interviews with surrendered guerrillas, often they would mention Narmada Akka or Nirmalla Akka who was the divisional head of the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC)—one of the committees that was established by the Maoist party, for focussed mobilisation and consolidating the area. DKSZC is where some of the most senior members from the Central Committee worked and lived in the forests overseeing the workings of what they termed as 'liberated zones' where they were successful in running Jantana Sarkar (people's government).

Figure 4.5, shows a conflict map from year 2020, which in comparison to Figure 2.2 in chapter 2, contrasts to the decrease in the geographical spread of the Maoist movement. The red and orange coloured districts which marks the most

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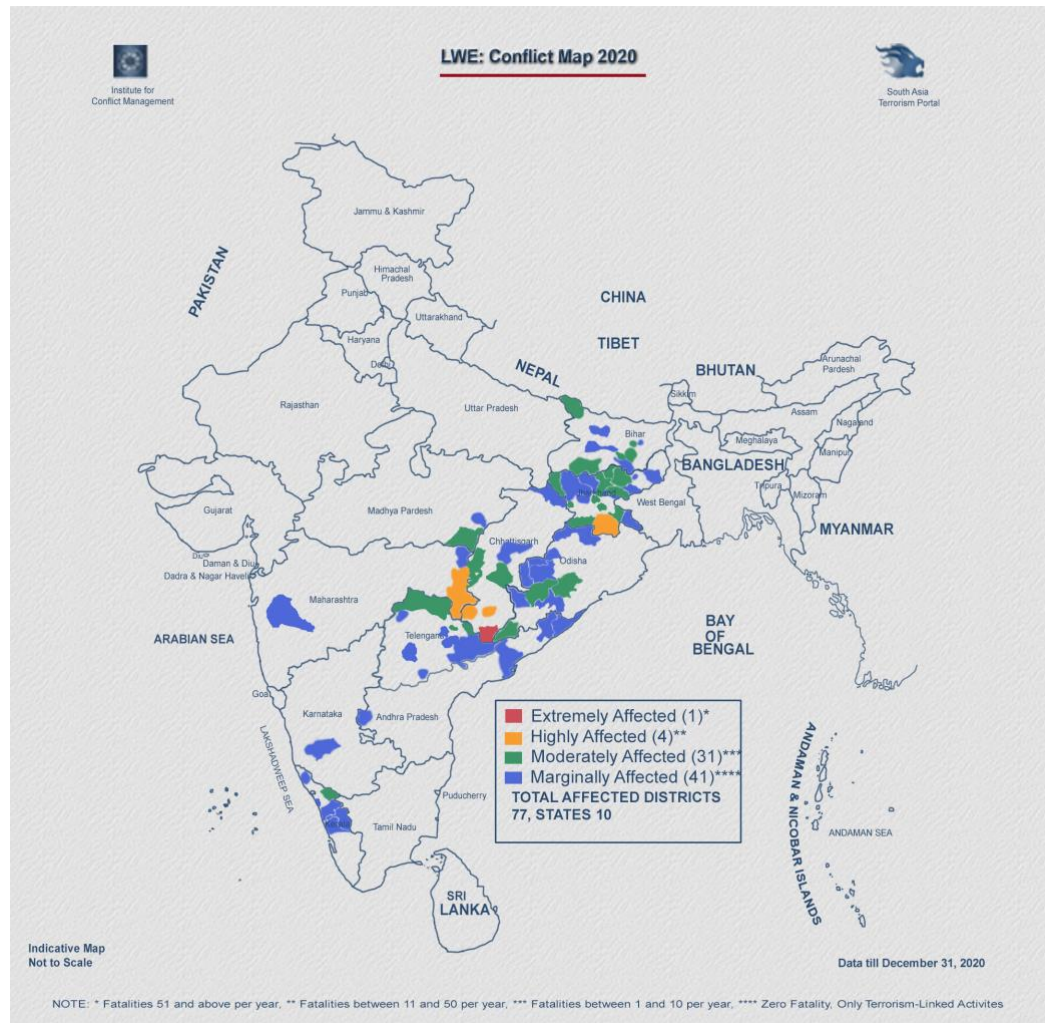


Figure 4.5: Districts with LWE presence in 2020. Source: www.satp.org

The Maoist movement has been cognisant of the involvement of child soldiers, and this was discussed in some of the interviews with the ex-guerrillas; in most of those instances the area commanders would either involve them in non-combat related activities and/or make them join schools where they would be tutored on Marxist-Leninist politics. A report published by the Human Rights Watch (Human Rights Watch (Organization), 2008) records the involvement of youth under the age of 18 years. Because of their exposure to militarised responses, these children circumstantially find

protection for themselves, by aligning with actors, regardless of their ideological inclinations. One of the recommendations in the report highlights the lack of mechanisms of accountability, such as the Geneva Convention and its additional protocols, and the need for system-checks to protect the civilian population.

This provides us with a firm ground and rationale for utilising and incorporating lived experiences, through participant observation and by sharing of space and everyday realities of communities living through precarious and ubiquitous violence. Out of the present 45 districts one of the main districts which is deemed central to the contemporary resilience of the Maoist movement, is Narayanpur in North Bastar, Chhattisgarh.



Figure 4.6: Scene from a Sunday market in Narayanpur. Source: Author, August 2019

4.3 Locating and historicising the ‘field’

In the introduction to the anthology ‘Fieldwork Under Fire’ (Nordstrom and Robben, 1995), the editors talk about the everyday violence and the notion of violence, and reflect that everyone regardless of their nationalities, geographical or cultural specificities are affected by direct violence. Expanding the notion of violent conflict beyond the daily number of casualties caused by armed violence and defining it with “greater anthropological sensibilities to include pressing conflicts in many people’s lives—riots, gang warfare, tribal genocide, and forms of terror warfare such as rape and torture—then we find that the number of people directly affected by violence extends into the hundreds of millions,” (1995, p. 2).

The notion that violence is not outside of human nature and human culture, and that violence “is a dimension of people’s existence, not something external to society and culture that ‘happens’ to people,” (ibid.)—intuitively introduces the lens of looking at the everyday nuances of violence and the ways in which humans make sense, act and react (to or with it). It becomes important to realise, that the nuanced everyday of violence is not a perpetuating scale of mass attacks, ambushes or other forms of extremities, since violence is not a form of human extremity, to study how both victims and perpetrators of violence are caught in this cycle which is beyond their control. Violence, and its far-reaching consequences on all aspects of human interaction (beyond the anthropocene), indicates, that violence is culturally constructed “...like creativity and altruism... As with all cultural products, it is in essence only a potential—one that gives shape and context to specific people within the context of particular histories,” (1995, p. 3).

The pervasive violence that grips people’s lives, the sense of crisis that continues through different manifestations such as displacement, losing loved ones, leaving an old life behind or resisting coercion from state and non-state actors, and claim-making for their welfare and entitlements—the everyday life for them is often mired with decisions, uncertainty and a state of perpetual “immediacy of action”.

To understand these everyday struggles, challenges and creative ways in which the people and communities cope and respond, ethnographic fieldwork and interpretive analysis becomes an intuitively obvious method for a researcher. For reasons stated through the chapter, to understand the multiple layers, the researcher, themselves need to immerse, observe and experience the everyday. In the same introduction, in ‘field work under fire’ the editors iterate the importance of fieldwork and the circumstances under which fieldwork is conducted. They acknowledge and understand the haphazard nature of fieldwork, the political stakes which are involved and the ethics of ensuring that the interlocuter and the researcher while being present in the ‘eye of the storm’ maintain and manage their safety. For the editors, “... these tensions weave their way through the whole of the anthropological endeavour—colouring the lives and perspectives of the researchers and those they study alike,” (1995, p. 3)

The principle of ‘Do No Harm’ which is the cornerstone of humanitarian work, exemplifies the need for a reflexive approach of the researcher which critically assesses their actions in the field and the active role which a researcher (or an aid worker) plays in precarious and volatile spaces. While this principle was familiar to me through my

previous engagements, the notion of the researcher as an active participant (in a different way than that of a practitioner) is contrary to the traditional anthropological view of the researcher as just an observer, and it played an important role in how I approached the field and the months I spent living there.

However, to limit the ethics of fieldwork to just this phrase would be erroneous. As Pérez (2024) in her address at the American Anthropological Association's annual meeting in Toronto, 2023 argues for the need for reimagining ethics in the practice of anthropological research. Reminding the anthropologist community about the problematic and embedded colonial past of the discipline, the address within the shadow of the pandemic, reminds the researchers to rethink the notion of harm and harm for who? Through the concluding remarks Pérez, presents an agenda for anthropology and anthropologists to think through the lens of 'ethic of care', with four key pointers: attentiveness, responsibility, competence and responsiveness.

She further expands on these aspects reminding us that attentiveness as "seeking out needs of others... to suspend our own ambitions, plans and concerns...and be attentive to others and their world." Responsibility for her, is more than obligation or accountability and introduces reflexivity in praxis as "... recognising our impact and accept that impact as something we initiated or created. Being attentive allows us to know/see and respond accordingly to the outcomes of our actions." This ethic of responsibility and responsiveness redefines the humanitarian norm of 'do no harm' — it acknowledges the active role of the ethnographer/anthropologist/humanitarian worker and the responsibility to respond to change in dynamics because of their presence and their actions on the field. Lastly, she reminds us "... care, compassion, vulnerability, humility, respect, honour; those characteristics that Western capitalist philosophies of progress views as weak may be the true foundation for disrupting colonial and imperialist structures that we seek in an anthropology of 21st century," (2024, pp. 6–7).

The text resonated with me and was a good reminder of my responsibility as a researcher. The notion of response in my field site requires me to be cognisant of the field even when I am not in the field. So, while I may have left the field, but the field does not cease to exist and at the same time, field itself has gone through some (un)intended transformations because of my own personal intervention in the field. The ripples of these interventions are scale agnostic, i.e. my everyday interactions with people, daily conversations which could lead to certain new conversations and hence

regardless of the kind or scale of my intervention, it could potentially change the dynamics in everyday life. So, my no harm, could have potential harm or it could have the potential to contribute to positive change. These ethics of culturally specific responsibility towards your field and interlocuters, puts the focus on the researcher/ethnographer and consequently, a researchers position vis-à-vis the field and how they place themselves through layers of identity (political, ideological, religious, racial, gender- to name a few) are as important as the analytical framework or the objectives and aims of a research study or doctoral thesis.

Through the years of working on and in conflict spaces, my ideological positioning became an important facet of my identity as a researcher. The ideological space of looking at 'people centric politics' and 'people centric protection' while on most occasions was an asset, in a context such as the LWE areas, it would often, be confused as 'naxal vichardhaara' (naxal thinking). At different points of time, I have been put in positions where the motives of why an 'upper caste foreign university enrolled woman' would be researching the Maoists was a ripe enough reason to be suspicious of my study.

I would, in many ways, conform to the idea of a network of urban elite left-liberal activists who are traditionally known as the urban base for gaining popular support for Maoist politics. At the same time, my upper caste identity would ensure that each time I introduced my research and own self, the Adivasi woman or man, in the politest of ways, would treat me with a certain kind of marked servility. It was not as though they would bow their head or hold their hands, but it was in the gestures such as offering me a chair or in some cases, the lone piece of furniture- the bed to sit. For them, who are at all times, comfortably sitting on the ground either in a squat (popularised by social media as the Asian squat, also known as 'malasana' / 'garland pose' in yoga) or on a bamboo floor mat. The simple gesture of sitting down with them, drinking the same water and eating with them would become an important and symbolic gesture, to form an acquaintance with the hope for friendships.

What then constituted as the field and as my interlocuters? As a geographical area, based on my limited fieldwork during my MPhil. dissertation, I was familiar with Bastar region, with a better understanding of Jagdalpur- the biggest and the historical capital of the Kakatiya's' who ruled the princely state of Bastar between 1332 until 1947 (Gregory, 2013). It was the rule of the Kakatiya clan, that the Adivasis of Bastar would serve or pay homage to, especially during the festival of Dusshera—a fifteen day long

ritual which has been described and analysed in Nandini Sundar's book (Sundar, 2007). Sundar debunks the notion that the tribes of central India were 'remote' or culturally and socially isolated. Through her description of the Dusshera festival, she highlights the nature of power struggles between the different tribal populations and the Kings that ruled the princely state of Bastar. This is important to note, since the rhetoric of describing the Adivasis joining the Maoist movement is often, in public discourse simplified by regarding them as a naïve population devoid of the industrialised development of the post-colonial state and hence prone to manipulation and coercion.

Gregory in tracing the uniqueness of the state of Chhattisgarh, attributes it as a "...crossroads of north/south India into Indo-Aryan and Dravidian speaking linguistic regions and an east/west division into wet-rice and dry grain producing farming regions..." (Gregory, 2013, p. 47). The overall history of the State and then Bastar region, is pivotal in understanding the multiple layers of identities and the contestations that come with it.

Carved out of the state of Madhya Pradesh in 2000, the state is geographically divided between the plains of Raipur- which serves as the capital- in the north and the Bastar plateau in the south. The reasons for carving a separate state out of Madhya Pradesh according to Tillin (2013) was an electoral strategy, floated as early as 1948 in order to distribute voting constituencies that were concentrated within the state of Madhya Pradesh. Unlike Jharkhand or Telangana³⁴, where the demand for separate state was derived because of popular social movements, Chhattisgarh, for Tillin is a state that was regionally reorganised, but the territories defined do not entirely or culturally represent a cohesive identity, as is the trend for most sub-national organisations in India. This is most visible between the socio-economic and cultural diversity which is apparent when one moves from the north to the south of Chhattisgarh.

Gregory, correctly describes the plain of Raipur as the 'rice bowl of India' as also serving as the site for heavy industry, such as the Bhilai Steel Power Plant, BALCAO aluminium plant, and the National Thermal Power Cooperation, whose plants in Korba and

³⁴ The demand for a separate Telangana (out of Andhra Pradesh) and Jharkhand (out of Bihar) were rooted in issues of social justice and identity. The Telangana movement and demand for it to be governed different than the upper caste and affluent community of rest of Andhra Pradesh dates to colonial India when it was Hyderabad residency. In the instance of Jharkhand, the demand for separate statehood emerged since North Bihar- a mineral rich region with predominantly a tribal population. The demand for Jharkhand, was mobilised through the formation of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha—a movement demanding rights for the Adivasi communities especially in the mineral rich region of North Bihar. The movement had a broad appeal to the Adivasi dominated region.

Bilaspur supply electricity across India. In a stark contrast to the industrialised plains' of the state, the Bastar plateau begins approximately 130 kms, south of the capital. On the often-travelled route via the bus, between Raipur-Jagdalpur-Narayanpur, the beginning of plateau is marked by the sharp climb upwards at Keshkal Ghati- where the turns are sharp and where often the bus drivers were tested on how smoothly they would drive ahead.

The hilly and forested Bastar plateau, as mentioned earlier, is rich in forest and mineral resources, with fertile ground which requires seasonal rains. Anthropologists have marked how the negotiations between the communities and the many kings from the Deccan, reflects not on the subjugation of the Koyas, rather indicates their (Koya's) political acumen for creating sovereign spaces. The reliance on nature and the forest produce of Adivasi life, had transformed into rituals with a focus on offering prayers as the seasons would change, with hope for better yield or rain. This led to practices such as the Dusshera festival, where different days of the fifteen day celebration would involve different Adivasi clans coming with their offerings to the king and collectively praying to all the Gods and Goddesses that each of the tribes and king consider sacred. Hence the notion of remoteness remained grounded within anthropology and the study of tribes in India—since the comparison with the industrialised pockets of the country, would further the logic of industrialisation as the path towards growth, development and empowerment. The role of rituals, practices and customs and its relationship in socio-economic life of the Adivasis was largely analysed as pre-modern and hence the logic for making them 'modern'.

This is an important aspect to note and establishes the links between the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial continuities, especially as the relationship between the state and natural resources changed. From collective community ownership, the move towards private and/or state ownership of land and its produce, brought about a fundamental change in the economic-political ties between Adivasis and the non-Adivasis (and their ways of governance and rule). Archana Prasad in her body of work emphasises the connections between the change in economic relations vis-a-vis, natural resources and the Adivasis with the growing thrust for industrialisation leading to a fertile ground for Maoist politics and the guerrillas to get a stronghold (Prasad, 2010).



Photo 1: Map locating Dalli-Rajhara and Bhilai Steel Plant (Source: Jonathan Parry, 2020)

Tillin (2013) goes into the details of tracing the political history and trajectory of Chhattisgarh state formation; the clear division between the plains and the plateau; the industrialised and the forested regions, never led to a cohesive uniform 'Chhattisgarhi' identity. However, regionally, there have been variance in the way political organisation and collectivisation took shape. One such collectivisation was the Chhattisgarh Mines Sharmik Sangh (CMSS) and its political wing the Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha (CMM). The CMSS which was established in 1977 as a union for contractual labour working in the Dalli-Rajhara iron ore mines which would feed the Bhilai Steel Power Plant. The movement and collectivisation derived a lot of momentum and strength under the leadership of Shankar Guha Niyogi. The movement ensured minimum wage levels and minimum working standards. Ilina Sen's

biographical account about her and her husband's involvement in the CMSS (Sen, 2014) traces the Gandhian nature of Niyogi's movement and the impact it had on ensuring positive living conditions for the contractual workers who were predominantly Adivasi informal labour. It was through this engagement that the CMM became a political movement which akin to the Jharkhand movement focussed on demanding smaller states which could then be represented by the peasantry and the working class of the region who were in direct competition (especially when it concerned skilled jobs within the mines and the steel power plant) with upper castes and classes. Tillin confirms that, CMM never took the political turn of the JMM and, the focus of the movement was to provide support for the peasant and the working class to balance the "interests of the Chhattisgarhi bourgeois and petty bourgeois" (Tillin, 2013, p. 125).

So while the CMM created some discussion about a separate Chhattisgarhi identity, the actual formation of the state in late 2000s cannot be attributed to it. What is noteworthy, is the nature of political engagement and the conflict lines that one can observe historically. The growing thrust of industrialisation and the expanding industrial class in the region and its influence on decision making that developed at pace during the initial state-led industrialisation is now manifested in the present day politics of the state—where mining interests and the interests of the industries, take primacy over demands of the working class and the peasantry. The growth of peri-urban areas while the vast neighbouring forests shrink and the forest dwelling communities are displaced and pushed into the margins of these new urban spaces, contributes to the alienation of the Adivasi community at large.

However, this doesn't explain the increasing tide of voting for the mainstream parties such as the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) or the Indian National Congress (INC). Tariq Thachil (2014) pursued this puzzle to understand why would political parties such as the BJP—which are regarded as a party of the elite—gain popularity among the more disadvantaged sections of the society. Basing it on the variation and context at local and state-level, Thachil concluded that BJP's ground mobilisation that has characterises of a social movement and poor developmental performances of the states vis-à-vis the disadvantaged groups has led to their rise.

This phenomenon if one can find a correlation was anecdotally evident as many people lauded the BJP government in Chhattisgarh³⁵ for delivering food, specially rice, at cheap and affordable prices and the overall successful delivery ensuring food security through the state driven social security services such as the Public Distribution System (PDS) (Joshi et al., 2016). Between my travels in 2015 and 2016, community mobilisers or social workers associated with the national People's Health Movement (PHM) would mention "ek rupiah chawal" (one rupee rice) and its success among the people who lauded the government for making food grains cheaper and accessible. The reference was to the provision of one kilogram of rice for one rupee across the state and its contribution to increasing the BJP's popularity in the state.

This political history of the state, provides us with a context for how the state has performed when it concerns the presence of social movements, the overall dominance of the political elite class and the trajectory of industrialisation of Chhattisgarh. Two incidents, which are noteworthy, concern Shankar Guha Niyogi—the founder of the CMSS; and Dr. Binayak Sen—a doctor who had joined Niyogi and CMSS to work with the migrant and underprivileged communities in providing timely and increasing their access to health care.

The CMSS played a role in ensuring alternatives to traditional trade unionism. Niyogi's three decade long engagement among the workers, led him to transform the labour movement and holistically address the social inequalities with humane values. He contributed to reducing the exploitation of workers and peasants; to improving the inclusion of women into the mainstream and improving their rights; and saw the implementation of a health movement for workers which contributed to the subsequent people's health movement in Chhattisgarh over the years; working with community to curtail alcoholism and gambling; linking ecological ruin, occupational hazards, displacement and linking these issues with marginalisation of non-contractual labour (Chew, 1991; Dogra, 1991). It is well acknowledged by people writing on Chhattisgarh, that Niyogi posed a threat to industrialists and the industry lobby and he was shot dead by hired goons in 1991. In 1997, five local industrialists were sentenced to imprisonment for life, for the murder and assassination, however due to insufficient

³⁵ Raman Singh, a prominent BJP leader in Madhya Pradesh was the first elected Chief Minister of the newly formed Chhattisgarh. He was elected in the year 2003 and under his leadership, the BJP continued to rule the state for successive two terms. In totality, Raman Singh was the chief minister for 15 years (2003-2018) losing his winning spree in 2018 to Congress with Bhupesh Baghel as the CM. However, the BJP came into power in the recent state elections held in 2023.

evidence, the acquittal of the industrialists was upheld by the Supreme Court in a judgement in 2005 (Tillin, 2013).



Figure 4.7: A statue of Niyogi in Dalli at a cross-section. Below it says, "Red Salute to your martyrdom". Source: Author, 2021

Dr Binayak Sen, joined the Dalli Rajhara workers' movement in the 1980s, alongside his wife, Illina Sen, to contribute to the labour movement, specifically on aspects of providing accessible healthcare to women and the men working as contractual workers in the mines. Sen, who was a trained doctor and a part of the larger civil liberties movement—People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL)—was motivated to contribute to the growing people's movement for primary health care and community medicine. Illina Sen recounts the time when the paths between Niyogi and Binayak Sen crossed in the aftermath of the CMSS losing one of their female leaders due to the denial of

hospital/medical facilities during childbirth (this is in 1980). The resolve of the union members to build a hospital facility coincided with Sen's vision and "seemed like a godsent opportunity," (Sen, 2014, p. 742). This began a decades long association of the couple with Niyogi and the workers' movement in Dalli-Rajhara. Binayak Sen along with the mine workers from Dalli Rajhara, CMSS built the Shaheed (Martyr's) hospital which with its 100 bed facility, provided the much needed healthcare to the population in and around Dalli-Rajhara. The Shaheed hospital continues to cater to the workers and the marginalised population within the 150 km radius of the hospital.

Through the course of Binayak Sen's engagement in Chhattisgarh, he moved away from the hospital and the couple founded an NGO Rupantar based out of the capital Raipur. Rupantar's programmatic work on primary health served as a blue-print for introduction of Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA)—voluntary health workers trained in providing primary and preventive healthcare³⁶. Similarly, Illina Sen's work on women's representation and empowerment led to her involvement in state-policy working groups (Kennedy and King, 2011). Binayak Sen, continued his commitment towards people especially working for protecting the rights of the marginalised, and was the general secretary of the Chhattisgarh chapter of the PUCL—when in May 2007 he was arrested by the state police under the charges of serving as a courier for the Maoist party and was branded as the naxal insurgent.

Over the next four years, Sen was held under the charges of sedition by the Chhattisgarh High Court and in 2010, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. It was through concerted efforts of civil society in India and globally, with letters written by Nobel laureates to the Indian government that his sentence was contested in the highest court, the Supreme Court of India. Eventually, in 2011, the sentence for life imprisonment was suspended by the Supreme Court and Binayak Sen was a free man. However, the years of harassment, solitary confinement and his treatment by the state and the state police officials, left a mark on the Sens, which Illina Sen recounts and shared with the public at large through her book. For many, especially for masses at large, who were not aware of social activists/grassroot workers such as Sens or

³⁶ The initial experiment involved Binayak Sen training these voluntary health workers on preventive healthcare, the results were visible in reducing the burden of mortality by 80 percent in instances of malaria. The belt of central India is endemic to strains for falciparum and vivax malaria virus which though is preventable but is one of the main causes for death among the Adivasis. During my fieldwork in 2019, the UNICEF head for Chhattisgarh, who was on a field visit to Bastar, observed that the malarial cases were on a rise and that the prevalence of malaria in the region, was comparable to be declared as an epidemic.

Niyogi—the middle class savarna India—the book, was an introduction and a peak into the lives they led. Binayak Sen’s trial and arrest and its coverage in the local media and then national media, was perhaps the first in a series of subsequent media trials where the narrative is controlled and motivated to further a particular ideology or cause³⁷.

Jonathan Parry, in a very personal account about his life in the field as an anthropologist discusses two interconnected themes: the accountability of an anthropologist towards their interlocuters and the ‘reluctant’ activism that gradually comes into the role of the anthropologist in circumstances where the state takes a critical view of the interlocuters, or the themes concerning and connected to their own research. While writing about his research assistant Ajay T.G. who too, in the wake of Sen’s arrest, was arrested by the Chhattisgarh state on charges of being a naxal conspirator (Parry, 2015), he traces the arrest of his assistant or collaborator, and the lack of evidence that the police could provide to implicate him as a naxal.

These incidents are noteworthy, because they provide the reader with an idea of how intricately concerns on social justice, health, rights of workers, mining, land use and change in these relations marginalise the Adivasis. At the same time, it throws light on the processes utilised through state institutions to legitimise the penalising of citizens, and the setting of examples through public signalling for concerted engagement on social justice and the ramifications of it. The notion of a good citizen yet again surfaces, as explained in the subsequent chapters. As Sundar (2011b) puts it, laws in a post-colonial state, that inherits laws from the colonia era, are designed for subjecthood. While she looks at progressive laws such as the PESA kanoon³⁸ and the constituent making of subjects into citizens through their claim making; in the context of the discussion above, the laws on sedition and national security laws of the country, lead

³⁷ The most recent instances of this can be seen in incarceration of public intellectuals who came to be termed as BK-16 and how the State systematically arrested and a media trial deemed a select group of prominent civil liberties activists and practitioners as Maoists. Alpa Shah’s book ‘The Incarcerations: BK-16 and the search for democracy in India’ sequentially narrates the series of arrests between 2018 and 2020 and the mediatized trial of these human rights defenders as ‘urban naxal’ and a threat to India’s national security. See: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/article/2024/jun/02/the-incarcerations-bk-16-and-the-search-for-democracy-in-india-by-alpa-shah-review>

³⁸ In Narayanpur and other districts of Bastar region, come under Schedule V of the Indian constitution- which gives more power to the gram sabha (the village level electorate) for autonomously deciding on the development activities, financial planning and activities related to industrialising as well. Known as Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA Act)- gives the power to the people through gram sabha to approve and plan for development related activities. Implementation of PESA in these parts is poor and many Adivasis are unaware of the powers of the gram sabha.

to a conflict between the state and select citizens demanding and championing concerns of justice and equity.

Two inter-linked themes become the centre of focus through the discussions above. The first one, implores us to understand the historical nature of the conflict and its repercussions on the space that becomes the host for the conflict. I use the word space, since it holistically captures the lived experiences of communities, their home, the forests and the ecosystem that comes with it. The second theme, concerns the notion of contestations of different modes of social organisations and governing and the interactions they evolve or shape into, through the dimensions of time and space. By providing a picture of the two and the making of citizens with their claims on resources and welfare (services such as access to healthcare, safety or wages), my aim is to inform the reader of the different waves of violent and non-violent movements that have shaped the present times.

4.4 The 'field' and researching an intractable conflict



Figure 4.8: Political Map of Chhattisgarh. The districts in red, comprise Bastar Division. Source: [Wikipedia](#)

Within the context of the Maoist movement gaining strength over the forests of Dandakaranya, and the simultaneous developments concerning the formation of a new state and the machinery that comes for its governing, the Bastar region went through many changes. At the time of the formation of Chhattisgarh, Bastar division comprised of Bastar, Dantewada and Kanker districts, in 2007, the districts of Bijapur and Narayanpur were carved out of Bastar district—which covered a large part of the region/division. In 2012, the region was further divided to form two more districts, Sukma and Kondagaon. The city of Jagdalpur, due to its historical importance as the capital, continues to be one of the largest cities in the region and serves as the district capital for Bastar district. Narayanpur and Kondagaon districts fall in the north of the Bastar division while Dantewada, Sukma and Bijapur are colloquially referred as south Bastar districts.

Narayanpur, which is one of the northernmost, districts, shares its borders with the state of Maharashtra and the districts of Bijapur, Kanker and Kondagaon. Divided into two sub-districts, Orchha and Narayanpur it boasts the robust and dense forests called as Maad by the locals and Abhujmaad by non-Adivasi population. The word 'Abhuj' in hindi translates to 'impenetrable' and when added as a prefix to 'maad' (the traditional name for the forest) explicitly sends the message of an impenetrable forest. To trace the exact time or origin of the word and its popular usage would be difficult, however, ironically, it is this forest, that serves as the present day stronghold and houses the 'capital' of the Maoist guerrillas. The area of Kutul which lies deep in the forests, is known to have been the retirement home for the ageing ideologues of the Maoist party.

Regardless of this knowledge, my main considerations for selecting Narayanpur as 'field' was based on the records of surrenders that the district had recorded between 2017 and 2019. The table below shows the updated (until March 2024) data on surrenders in the district and the number of surrenders recorded in the state of Chhattisgarh. The data which is recorded through incident tracking, indicates the concentration of increased number of surrenders in Narayanpur specifically between 2016 and 2018, with maximum recording of 221 surrenders in 2016. In comparison to the state wide recording of 1232 surrenders for the year 2016 . A closer look at the data shows that these surrenders were mainly recorded in the districts of Sukma, Bijapur and Narayanpur. Sukma, could have been another possible selection for ethnographic work, however, for reasons mentioned above, Narayanpur for its relative ease of access to the interior forests was a tactical choice.

Table 4-1 A cumulative table of surrenders (2012-2025) for district of Narayanpur and overall for the state of Chhattisgarh, The data is collected using incident tracking by the Institute of Conflict Management, New Delhi. The data is available at www.stap.org

Year	No. of Incidents	Surrenders (Narayanpur)	Surrenders (Chhattisgarh)
2012	6	1	18
2013	12	9	32
2014	78	91	393
2015	39	8	282
2016	62	221	1232
2017	19	218	327
2018	28	158	358
2019	42	4	231
2020	38	2	238
2021	56	13	328
2022	44	n/a	184
2023	46	2	201
2024	57	2	332
2025	55	98	633

Another reason for consideration for Narayanpur, was because of the relative ‘peace’ of the district headquarters which Narayanpur city offered as opposed to the districts of Sukma or Bijapur (which too had access points into the maad forests), however, the latter two districts were access points for many of the searching and counterinsurgency operations for the security forces. A journalist friend, who had been covering the conflict, helped in confirming Narayanpur as the best field site; according to him, if I were to meet Adivasis living deep in forests, Narayanpur provided easier ways to access, with less security checkpoints and hence lesser exposure to surveillance or suspicions by the security forces. This choice therefore offered both greater safety and security for me as a researcher, but also provided good access to potential research sites and participants.



Figure 4.9: Photo of the Ram Krishna Mission's primary school in an interior village. Source: Author

Bastar division, and the districts have a high presence of security personnel, with different central security forces, and state police and their counterinsurgency special forces deployed across the area. With different paramilitary forces serving different sections of the region, Narayanpur was under the jurisdiction of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) battalions. Formed to guard the borders between India and Tibet, over the years, with the increase in the militarisation of region, the ITBP was additionally deployed in heart of India.

Through the course of my fieldwork, I interviewed twenty people which involved surrendered DRG personnel, security personnel, policy and district level officials. Along with it, through '(deep) hangout' there were informal conversations and experiences shared, which foreground the empirical analysis. Deep hangout is an ethnographic method which acknowledges the informal nature of conversations, observations and experiencing the everyday life as the researcher embeds oneself in a social-cultural space or the 'field' (Clifford Geertz, 1998). Though my time in the field was limited due to the pandemic, the time spent in the field, between 2019 and 2021, and the continued touch with some of my interlocutors in the field, I would like to qualify the method of observations as 'hangout'. Many of these hangouts were organic through what we understand as the process of snowball sampling in positivist methodological approaches. People I met introduced me to new people and this led to more time spent getting to know each other as people and over sustained conversations and familiarisation, more conversations and discussions followed. This aspect of empirical data collection is explicit in the chapters that follow, namely, chapter five and six.

Demographically, the district has a total population of 1, 40, 206 and is home to the Adivasis belonging from Madia, Gond, Muria, Dhruva, Bhatra and Halba sub-groups. With Hindi as the administrative language, conversing with research participants was possible without an interpreter, especially in the city and the neighbouring villages; however, the further one would travel away from the city, Gondi or Halbi were more likely to be the only languages of communication.

My knowledge of Gondi, was sparse, despite my initial attempts to learn the language with the help of the Praveenji*³⁹—an Adivasi social worker, who was one of the first people I became acquainted with in the initial days of my stay in Narayanpur. I therefore used interpreters when necessary.

The journey from Dublin to Narayanpur via New Delhi was traversed in phases. In January and February 2019, I had spent time gaining access to the bureaucrats attached to and working in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), which is responsible for policy on India's internal and national security. Housed in the north block in Lutyens Delhi, I was not new to the corridors of the MHA, however, compared to my previous interviews with senior bureaucrats including the then Security Advisor in 2015; the overall approach and willingness to speak with researchers was more welcoming and receptive. Between 2018 and 2019, gaining access to a Joint Secretary (JS)⁴⁰ was difficult. After waiting in the reception lobby of the MHA for days, I managed to gain access to Directors across LWE, Finance, Internal Security and Intelligence bureau (which falls under the counterinsurgency and counter radicalisation division). These meetings were not the most pleasant, and in some instances, my motivation for the research and selection of the topic was viewed with suspicion. It was repeatedly suggested that rather conducting interviews in the capital, I should move to the field.

Some meetings were memorable because of the receptiveness of the officials representing the MHA or paramilitary officers. My identity as an upper caste female researcher, single and in her mid-30s, did become an opening line of questioning much before my roles as a researcher or my research question, was deemed important. Some

³⁹ I talk about Praveenji and introduce him in the next chapter, while detailing Narayanpur and its people.

⁴⁰ A Joint Secretary is responsible for the functioning of a particular wing of a Ministry. Each Ministry is divided into multiple wings or divisions. In case of MHA: LWE, Internal Security, Counter Terrorism and Counter Radicalisation, Finance Division, Centre-State Division etc. In many cases, these divisions don't work in watertight compartments and discussions and decisions are done in consultation with other divisions.

of the officials, were more curious about the motivation for the research, insinuating if I was a Maoist or an 'anti-national'. One of the directors' under the 'intelligence bureau'⁴¹ made a remark about "slapping the anti-national students" across universities nationwide. The same director, refused permission to record the interview, or even to access my laptop for the duration of the interview. What followed was a very short interview with him, since the questions, according to the Director-Intelligence were "more related to financing of the scheme..." The overall experience left me wondering if I pay closer attention to the field, would it be tougher to gain trust—my credentials of TISS and a foreign university for PhD had already categorised me as a "left-leaning-Maoist sympathiser" academic in their minds.

In August 2019, I travelled from New Delhi to Raipur where I had established contact with UNICEF staff in the state capital. UNICEF had partner organisations based in Kondagaon, who were working on implementing a maternal health program in Narayanpur district to increase institutional deliveries among Adivasi women, with a focus on Narayanpur as it houses communities that are regarded as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. I was introduced to the organisation Saathi and its founders and further introduced to the program manager and other field staff working across the district. The staff at Saathi was warm and welcoming, and during the initial month of the field, the field office in Narayanpur became my office space.

⁴¹ The intelligence bureau (IB), is one of the divisions of the MHA serving within the policing system, which helps in information gathering especially on matters of internal conflict, armed actors across the country and on crime-narcotics nexus. According to Saikat Datta (2023) the IB much like other institutions has a colonial legacy which has given the IB an unparalleled carte-blanche on methods of information and data gathering and "...it has emerged as the preeminent agency for internal security and enormous influence even in non-security-related policies with minimal accountability and oversight," (2023, p. 305). I can complement this with anecdotal conversation (off the record) with an IB official during my MPhil. field work in 2016. The gentlemen, who was posted with the IB in Bastar division, accepted use of surveillance technologies as tapping phone lines, to keep a check on people across a wide spectrum, who may have ties with the armed actors. This included civil rights activists, local journalists but not just limited within the state boundaries, but across the nation. In 2019, many activists across the country, were approached by Citizen Lab—a research centre at the University of Toronto—working at the intersection of internet-communication-human rights-global security. The activists were informed that their phones or computers were attacked by a spyware (NSO created Pegasus) and their privacy breached. A report published by the lab in collaboration with Amnesty International (Amnesty International and Citizen Lab, 2020), documents the names of activists who have been under arrest on charges of sedition where the same people whose phone was compromised with Pegasus, which was purchased by the Indian government. This shows the complicity of the IB and the important role the officers posted in this division play on internal security and domestic politics.



Figure 4.10: Weekly meetings at Saathi office. Source: Author

My initial days, were spent speaking to the field workers and the project coordinator about their interventions and the areas or villages they covered in their field visits. Each morning and every Friday, all of the field staff from across the two blocks would collect and share information on their activities conducted over the week and their insights from the work. These team update meetings, where I would sit listening to them, helped me understand and comprehend the nature of the field. Names of villages, distances, where the primary healthcare centres are situated, a lot of conversations about maternal healthcare and related village development plans—while they did not concern my area of research, provided me with a holistic view of the district. These meetings and my presence in the office, gave me the space to speak to the field staff and by week two, I would travel with some of them, on their two wheeler, to different villages or health care centres and interact with the women and locals who would visit for consultations.

While acclimatising with the contours of the field, I was documenting the reported cases of surrender and rehabilitation specifically recorded in narayanpur, through the repository of cases reported by the South Asian Terrorism Portal (SATP)⁴². This included the year of surrender, the names of surrendered guerrillas, their native villages, age and gender. My initial notion was to record (See Appendix V and VI) these

⁴² SATP, is a think-tank based out of New Delhi. The portal has been recording incidents of violent attacks, surrenders, fatalities etc on the Maoist conflict. The website acts as a repository, like ACLED on areas of violent conflict concerning South Asia. The website records the newspaper reports along with the simple data sheets around various aspects but mostly around armed actors involved in violent armed conflict. Information on the nature of recorded data can be accessed here: <https://www.satp.org/datasheet-terrorist-attack/surrender/india-maoistinsurgency-chhattisgarh-narayanpur>

names, and then explore the possibility of tracing these individuals or their families, if possible.

The activity of recording this information, allowed me detect certain patterns, such as mass surrenders. There were reports of mass surrenders where an entire village had surrendered! These incredulous pieces of recorded events, when I would share with Praveenji* or other staff from Saathi, would illicit a laugh or a mild sardonic smile—to them, it was obvious that the chances of these surrenders being genuine instances was questionable! Over a period of time, field staff would share their stories of their encounters with area committee members from the party (they would just refer to them as dadalog) during their formative years when setting up their program on maternal health and health care access. Through these stories and sharing of experiences, many reflective, I could manage to create a bond, where my identity as a female studying in an international university was gradually stripped. I was not viewed as the ‘well read’ ‘highly educated’ female, rather, it was them, who had the wisdom of experience and knowledge of ground realities. At the risk of painting a rosy picture, I do believe that we were able to form a bond of friendship, where we understood each other’s strengths and where the research and cooperation could be beneficial to all of us. In this spirit, I helped the staff with their documentation work, sometimes I would spend my day, taking notes, helping them with their fieldnotes, and in one instance, I worked with the founders of Saathi to write a grant application seeking funding for their mobile ambulance program.

Praveenji*, despite his role as a program coordinator, was my access and window into Narayanpur. A popular person, who previously worked as a reporter for All India Radio, he was respected by most in Narayanpur city including the district administration. As I began to think about the best way to approach the beginning of the process of conducting interviews, we were both in agreement that I should start by introducing my research to the district administration, specifically the SP (Superintendent of Police), District Collector (DC) and the officers concerning tribal welfare and other allied departments. This was important, since in a securitised setting such as Narayanpur, everyone knew everyone and an outsider and their reasons to be ‘here’ would be raise eyebrows. My first round of introductions, were with the SP and his staff including the personnel in charge of the DRG (District Reserve Guards) which enlisted many surrendered guerrillas, and who were part of the counterinsurgency operations. These meetings were smooth and much to my surprise, the nature of my

research was not met with suspicion. However, I was cautioned to keep my research 'apolitical'.

To gain access for interviews with surrendered guerrillas, was not as straight forward. Many times, despite a formal introduction and a nod of approval, the officers who were in charge of the DRG were reluctant to schedule meetings. It was never a straight 'no' but most calls or visits to the DRG office were followed by requests for re-scheduling or I was told, that they all are busy with 'gast'⁴³ and would not be available for a 'couple of days'.

Researching in conflict zones, challenges a researcher to seek ways for gaining access and trust of people, for authentic conversations. Like any other field, planned itineraries or scheduling visits will inadvertently be cancelled or would not always lead to an in-depth interview. Fieldwork takes time to shape and it is about our own immersion in the everyday activities of the field, that provide us with chance and serendipitous meetings and conversations, which materialise into longer conversations and sharing of experiences. One of my first interviews with a female surrendered guerrilla would be one such serendipitous instance. As I would walk from my rented accommodation from one part of Narayanpur city to Saathi office, I would often stop over at the office of the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU), and meet with Sarita, a 30 year old lady who previously worked with Saathi and was now heading the child protection unit—which was responsible for providing safety and protection to children against maltreatment. We would usually meet in her office, which was on the main road and we would chat over a cup of tea. She was intrigued with my research, and I was intrigued with the cases and the children she would rescue. There was mutual admiration and as two single women, we both sought each other's company, even if it was for an hour. Sarita, introduced me to Divya* who was sitting in her office, visiting Sarita. Divya* whose story I share in the next chapter, opened up to me, because of Sarita's introduction, it was because of Divya and Sarita's trust in each other, that Divya could find the courage and the faith to speak to me.

⁴³'Gast' a word that's discussed in the next empirical chapter, loosely translates to 'searching operations' where security personnel move from village to village, with the motive of sending a message across to local Maoist cadres of their presence. These activities, are a part of 'Area Domination Exercise' by the security forces, as an act of showing their strength and as a symbolic act to show territorial claim over the villages or the forests; since access to many villages was difficult as they were Maoist strongholds or considered as liberated zones by the Maoists.

The field, for me, was not a place of work or a place of research, it had to become my home, of the many homes, I have shared and lived, for it to open up to the world of stories and shared moments. The field, was not always friendly, there were days, when it was a struggle, an internal struggle of time ticking away, with no interviews or conversations to write or reflect in my field diary. It was interspersed with days, where I would wait for hours to speak to one of the district officials, through these hours of wait, I made friends, across ages, caste and experiences. It was not a site of conflict, on most days, the distance from my rented accommodation to bike ride with Saathi field staff, I would be greeted by the chai-walah (tea-seller) who had a small shop right before the district hospital. And many such small landmarks, where my face became momentarily familiar. They all knew, and would often ask me about my return to 'foreign' or to 'home', we knew, that I am here but I do not belong here; but regardless of the transient nature of my time there, some of them, entrusted me, with their stories over a meal or a cup of tea and in a few instances, over glasses of salphi/sulfi⁴⁴.

There were difficult moments, when my positionality and political convictions, were questioned by security personnel mid-course of an interview. I was questioned if I too was a "naxali". Similar to the suspicions of the officials at the MHA in New Delhi, my previous academic associations, my own identity as a left-leaning liberal female, had instinctively fed into the mediated construction of an 'urban naxal'⁴⁵ which warranted their suspicion towards me. Such constant negotiations between different representatives, was a part of being in the field. While this impacted with how much ease could I gain access, in some ways, it pushed me to think of alternative ways to gaining trust or alternative channels for speaking to state representatives. What was instrumental here was patience and showing up at different offices, as requested by

⁴⁴ Salphi/Sulfi is one of the local alcoholic brews that are naturally extracted out of the palm-like trees that are native to Bastar. In Adivasi communities, Salphi, is popular in the summer months because of its cooling effect. They claim that it has properties which helps in digestion and metabolism. With a sweet taste, Salphi, is mildly inebriating just like cider.

⁴⁵ The term urban naxal was popularized during the 2016 student protests at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), in New Delhi. It is a politically contested term, which refers to the intelligentsia, such as academics, media and NGO and civil society collectives who support the Maoist ideology and are critical of the state. The term, with its loose definition on what constitutes as supporters of Maoist ideology has been instrumental in arrests of student activists and prominent civil liberties activists. The term itself, if we refer to the Maoist party documents, is a neologism on party's strategy of creating a base of urban networks which provide ideological support to the Maoist principles of a people's war in India. Critics argue that this term, has been weaponized to suppress dissent. Alpa Shah's most recent book, 'The Incarcerations: BK-16 and the search for democracy in India' documents the use of the term to arrest prominent lawyers and activists working with the marginalized Adivasis and industrial workers across India. The book lays out how a media led campaign and trial on 'urban naxal' provided the ripe ground for arresting and wrongfully detaining these activists on grounds of sedition (Shah, 2024).

them, to show some kind of 'loyalty' to following and respecting bureaucracy and bureaucratic procedures.

Being in the field came with unexpected challenges in other forms as well. After spending a week in one of the interior villages, my interlocuter and I— both of us fell sick because of malaria. On our journey back from the village, my interlocuter was complaining of mild fever, and two days after I was in Narayanpur, he was diagnosed with the ubiquitous strain of Vivax and Falciparum strain of Malaria. I was diagnosed two weeks after I returned to Narayanpur and made my journey back to New Delhi. This was last week of February 2020. The intended plan for my field work was to leave for Dublin for preliminary reflection and analysis, and to return to Bastar for a second round in summer/autumn of 2020. Once I arrived in New Delhi, I was diagnosed with the same viral combination which left me invalid for over a month. I was hospitalised and despite following the World Health Organisation (WHO) certified protocol of malaria-medication, I was unwell and the parasite persisted in my system. This period of extreme ill-health, came with its own experience of how we inhabit different India. The doctors, at the nursing home, where I was hospitalised, struggled with providing me the correct medication despite following the WHO guidelines. My fever persisted and repeated blood tests confirmed the parasite in my system, impacting my blood cell count. Some local doctors including the Chief Medical Officer of Narayanpur, with whom I made the staff converse, were of the opinion, that this strain of malaria would require direct dosage of quinine instead of the WHO dosage of hydroxychloroquine. The experts at the nursing home weren't convinced by the 'rural doctors'. At the end, we had to admit into another hospital, when my haemoglobin was 3 with urgent requirement of blood and intravenous dosage of quinine.

The entire experience of malaria and the medical dissonance across regions and sub-national spaces in India, was a stark reminder of our vast diversity and the multitudes of different worlds we inhabit. It made me reflect on the countless lives that are lost due to medical negligence or arrogance, but also the 'civilised-uncivilised' narrative prevalent in urban professionals or skilled experts towards their peri-urban or rural professional peers in India. One of my interlocuters/friend, Varun* visited me during my hospitalisation, and he shared his experience of Malaria, during his time in the forests. He too was insistent, that rather than the WHO dose of hydroxychloroquine, direct quinine would be effective. He was a trained paramedic as a part of his guerrilla training and was quite confident of his own experiences. All of this, set against the

backdrop of rising number of SARS COVID-19 strain across the world. After a month long stay in the hospital, I moved into my family home in New Delhi on 20th March, coinciding with the date that India went on a national lockdown as a part of the pandemic response.

While the world stood still, I had months ahead for recovery and to think of possible ways of continuing engagement with my field, as it became more and more real that travel (fieldwork) is indefinitely impacted. There is much to write about the nature of protests and violence that followed in Narayanpur and other parts of Bastar (which will be discussed in chapter six), one of the ways of finding continuities between the field and I, was relying on Instagram, X (formerly known as twitter), and WhatsApp groups. I was able to revisit and do a second round of fieldwork in November and December 2022. I was fortunate that I could travel again, regardless of the limited time and this time with a steady dose of malaria prophylactic ensuring I don't relapse.

4.5 Conclusion

In the following empirical chapter(s)—five, six and seven—I attempt to introduce the reader to some people, who I met through associations and spending time talking to people involved in different economic activities and serving different functions in the larger social life of Narayanpur municipality⁴⁶. Some of the people, who were at first just strangers, later were the ones who opened their home for me and others, and hosted us. From security officials, officers working in the district administration, NGO staff, local politicians—working at panchayat level, health workers, farmers—they all adorned different hats and came from very different political leanings or predilections.

Some were Adivasis, while some were natives from other non-Adivasi parts of the state and outsiders, whose families have settled in these parts, seeking employment. There are no protagonists, but some people like Praveen*⁴⁷ played an important role in helping me find my way around the town and the villages and for initial rounds of

⁴⁶ I refer to the municipality and not Narayanpur district, since that would be misleading the reader. As I describe in chapter four, the district of Narayanpur is divided into two subdivisions/blocks and district headquarters—with offices and official residences. For most outsiders, who aren't native to the area, usually settle in the area close to the district headquarters. The courts, schools and other amenities are accessible in these parts in comparison to the blocks and villages which are spread across the hills and forests.

⁴⁷ For most of the thesis, I have changed the names to protect and respect the privacy of the people who have shared their lives and world with me. Barring providing a brief geographical description and mention of the landmarks, I have used narrative and text to provide a picture of the life and the places—conversations.

introductions. The first few weeks were spent travelling with him across field sites, where the organisation was running community clinics. These initial days of introductions, acted as an ice-breaker. The township was small, and most people would eventually recognise each other by faces, even if our names were not known.

Speaking to them, over a stretch of days, either by chance or by design, gave all of us space to reflect, or sometimes resume conversations after finishing the day's activities/tasks. These continued conversations, led them to introduce me to people who they considered might enrich discussions, or help them validate their point. And this varied across topics such as Maoist violence, status of the security forces, farming land, forest land, land records, their Adivasi culture... it was endless.

At times, my two-room home, became a part-time guest-house for people seeking temporary accommodation or for journalists/researchers staying overnight. The word 'रेन-बासेरा'— which translates to 'night-shelter'—best describes my home in Narayanpur. In some way, the home became a safe-space for people especially the ex-Maoists to come and speak about their experiences. The moral dilemma of turning against people with who you shared life once—was a lived reality for most. This collective acceptance of a certain kind of fate and why they resist (or not), these existential conversations required quiet spaces for contemplation—it also provided many spaces to come and see another world. One of the ex-Maoists, 24-years-old, missed working on the computer, so when he saw my computer, he just wanted to sit and browse!

This very personal account, in this chapter, is intentional, since what I share through my empirical chapters to follow, are shared lived experiences of individuals, people and communities, which helped me shape and understand the nuances of living with prolonged low-intensity armed violence, resisting the discourse of a homogenous Adivasi lifeworld and the many contradictions that emerge out of it.

Chapter 5: Surrender and the complexity of ‘good behaviour’

5.1 Introduction

An analysis of official documents provides some insight into the outcomes for the majority of surrendered individuals and their involvement in daily policing activities and in counterinsurgency operations. The current legal framework vis-à-vis Maoist conflict, including the Chhattisgarh Auxiliary Armed Force Act 2011, Unlawful Activities Prevention (Act) 1967 etc. along with the wording of the surrender and rehabilitation policies highlight the contradictions inherent in the policy design and the interaction of the policy within spaces of conflict itself. This chapter seeks to move beyond that legal and policy analysis and through field observations and conversations with surrendered cadres, security personnel and development workers, it attempts to present a snap-shot of everyday life in a district which is considered to be the ‘gateway’ to the liberated zones of the CPI-Maoist and their “Jantana Sarkar”⁴⁸. The chapter explores how the policy of surrender serves the purpose of counterinsurgency project, and how the idea of rehabilitation in the policy is framed by the colonial continuity of implementing a ‘civilising project’ that consciously ignores Adivasi political agency.

5.2 Shift from violence to non-violence

The website of the Chhattisgarh police, in their circulars sub-section provides their most updated orders on surrender in areas termed as ‘Left Wing Extremism Affected districts’⁴⁹. The language of the order, based on 2001 guidelines, updated in 2015, refers

⁴⁸ Jantana Sarkar is the Gondi (the local language spoken by the Adivasis in Bastar) word for Revolutionary People’s Committee-RPC. In other parts of India, it is referred as RPC, however, in DKZSC, the Maoist party decided to give it a local name. Every village council has its own RPC and each RPC has its own constitution. Gondi is a proto-Dravidian language spoken across central India (also referred to as Central Provinces during the colonial era) through the states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana and its neighbouring borders with Karnataka and parts of Orissa as well. The language is spoken roughly by 30 lakh Gonds- a linguistic and cultural identity associated with the Adivasis of this region. The Gondi language is closer to South Indian languages (Dravidian) of Telegu, Tamil and Kannada. The natives of these lands, the Adivasis refer to themselves as ‘Koitur’- which translates to ‘people’. The Gondi linguistic identity that is now gaining momentum for preservation of the language and cultural practices which have been passed on through oral tradition. For more information: <https://caravanmagazine.in/culture/gond-gondi-koitur-dictionary-Adivasi>

⁴⁹ See: <https://www.cgpolice.gov.in/sites/default/files/surrender-policy-2015.pdf> (accessed on 8.07.2020). When the website was last accessed in 2024, the same circular was available on the website without any recent amendments or changes in the policy guidelines.

to the reintegration of people and/or families affected by naxal violence and surrendered individuals into the 'mukhyadhara' (mainstream)⁵⁰. The 16 page document elaborates on the procedural obligations and the rehabilitation package to be provided to people falling under the two categories (families affected by naxal violence and the surrendered guerrillas). While the order lists out various points of differences between the two categories they are still largely treated as sub-sets of a common group 'affected by naxal violence.'

This lexicon of 'naxal peedit' or 'naxal affected' has become a part of people's conversations and analysis of the field. It became apparent, each time when I would attempt to introduce themes related to and about my own doctoral project, the casual response of those I spoke to would understand my own research to be with people affected by naxal violence. At first, I was quite particular to try and keep the conversation focused only on 'aatmasamarpit' (surrendered) and not 'naxal peedit'— but as days passed, it became clear that the local population did not engage with this distinction, and I did let that terminology become a part of the conversation as well.

My primary local contact who provided research support throughout the project, Praveen*, himself explained why the terminology makes sense. According to him, these individuals, regardless of whether they have simply moved from villages or Madh (a colloquial way to refer to the Abhujmaad or Dandakaranya forest) or are 'surrendered' people, have been affected by violence. The idea of police violence, is only acknowledged once the term is further interrogated, however, even then, the point is emphatically made, that the violence is due to the naxal ideology or because of the fear of violence by 'dada log'. This terminology of 'naxal or Maoist affected' is a consequence of implementation of the state order for over a decade.

⁵⁰The conceptualisation of 'mainstream' is contentious and is linked to a larger conversation on what is considered mainstream? The mainstream itself needs to be viewed with criticality, as it indicates that the surrendered cadre would be introduced into a new socio-political life that was devoid to them. In this instance, there is an idea of 'primitivism' that is attached to create a contrast to the mainstream. The mainstream becomes a process in which the individuals needed to be 're-engineered' into adjusting to a 'modern life'. Such thoughts resonate in the field as well. At various points in different conversations, the idea of television in villages inside forests, open-air movie screenings etc are cited as examples of 'mainstream or 'modern life'. A similar process of 'mainstreaming' is followed in other spaces, where Adivasi children are educated with the attempt to 'civilise' them. This is an important aspect of the policy and overall institutional attitude towards Adivasis native to this district and other parts of Central and Eastern India.

The order itself, goes into details of defining/ describing who qualifies under these orders. It includes families who were coerced to leave their homes because of the impending backlash or targeted attack by the naxal/Maoists and informers who may be harmed by the naxals. The order moves to define the category of surrendered naxal and details modalities of their rehabilitation and the procedures involved in ascribing them this category through the established 'district screening committee' who would then relay the names and the money distributed to them to a state-level screening committee. The order includes an option to recruit the surrendered naxals into the district police or the intelligence bureau based on their proficiency and the willingness (of the surrendered naxal) to commit to the administration or the policing in activities to reduce naxal violence. Among the 15 points raised under this sub-heading, most of them, pertain to providing residences to all surrendered individuals based on their desire to go back and stay in their villages, or in case of those not being a viable secure option, providing them with land or housing in other secure spaces. Another order details the option of providing options of self-employment. The order is categorical in its decision that in the case of a couple surrendering, they would together be considered as one unit and either one of them would be offered the rehabilitation scheme. In instances of educated individuals, the order states that they could be included in the education department, based on their qualifications and if needed, relevant education would be provided.

The local implementation of these guidelines, as discussed below, highlights the mismatch between the order and the realities of life of the people it intends to cater to. For most people surrendering, their educational qualifications do not meet the official standards expected to pursue an alternative career in skilled-based employment. Conversationally, an officer in the district administration of Narayanpur gave an explanation of organising skills-based training to people affected by naxal violence. The official in a very elusive manner concluded to me, that these trainings are organised for the "entire village", but that not many people enrol or pursue this as a route to a vocation! When I asked about what kind of trainings and positions which the individuals were offered, he was quick to add to me, that I should go and speak with the police, since they are ones doing the rehabilitation, "...we give them compensation of 10,000 INR as an initial amount. The rest of it, be it money or jobs and other modalities are all handled by the police. "

Across Bastar region, most surrendered individuals are effectively absorbed by the state police as District Reserve Guards (DRG), or in some instances into other parts of the state

or district police in local police stations. The daily life of a surrendered individual can be encapsulated in the following order: morning exercises and roll call and subsequent deployment of companies in various duties pertaining to local policing activities, or for patrolling in the villages- and evening roll calls. On days, when there are no expected patrols, the individuals were busy with bureaucratic procedures of filing identity cards, paper for land records etc. In many instances, individuals are assigned duties in shifts in local police stations, especially in instances when newly surrendered individuals are recruited or kept under observation and police scrutiny.

The order, when detailing the various possibilities of rehabilitation either with the police, or if they desire to work as Class IV or Class III officers⁵¹ in the district administration, mentions that these duties would be allowed after the individual is observed and proven to be of 'good behaviour' for a period of six months, with that decision being made by the district screening committee. The guidelines, towards the end, mention two crucial points. The first one concerns instances of criminal charges against the individual- where the guidelines mention that it will be pursued on a case-by case basis and is only a consideration and not imperative that all individuals are provided legal immunity against criminal proceedings. Secondly, in cases where individuals are found to have maintained contacts with their naxal counterparts, all the amenities granted will be confiscated.

The nature of and the sheer level of detail on the descriptive modalities of surrendered and naxal-affected people and their rehabilitation, in such official documents, makes the act of surrender itself mundane. It hints towards an everyday reality of surrender that would in most instances, indicate the ubiquity of surrenders and informers in an on-going conflict. What the order does, is provide legitimacy to the act of surrender and at the same time, indicate a sense of concern in providing the individuals with actions that, from the moment they surrender, involve them in a daily routine - an engagement with 'mainstream'. So while rehabilitation is not enshrined in the state charter, the order and guidelines provide a semi-legal framework for accommodating individuals who up until their surrender were considered criminals or outlaws.

The idea of criminality when it comes to people involved with the Maoist movement, is a view established by the official narrative of the Indian State, arguably another facet of

⁵¹ Class IV or Class 111 officers refers to a bureaucratic terminology which refers to the non-technical and non-gazetted officers working either in a clerical position (Grade IV) or as peons/labourers hired as contractual staff to support the senior gazetted officers.

colonial continuity. Sundar, while tracing the history of the famous Bhumkal rebellion of 1910 in Bastar, observes that the British insistence on introducing 'rule of law' to what they perceived to be an uncivilised lot, became a pet project of the colonial rule in India. Sundar concludes in relation to the Bhumkal rebellion,

“... in many cases, the context of the rebellion makes the primness of the law appear ridiculous—when the whole countryside is up in the arms it seems odd to try people for 'being members of an unlawful assembly'. Yet to have all acts, including the surrounding of the rebels at Alnar, and the burning of their villages duly authorised and footnoted by law, was of the essence in British self-understanding. The other side of reducing insurgent politics to crime was exalting colonial crime to law...” (Sundar, 2007, p. 147)

The Communist Party of India (Maoist) is a banned organisation for over five decades. A significant number of related popular organisations (referred to as frontal organisations in government documents) such as the Dandakaranya Advaisi Kisam Mazdoor Sangathan (DAKMS), Chentna Natya Manch (CNM), Krantikari Adivasi Mahila Sangathan (KAMS), People's Liberation Front of India, Krantikari Adivasi Balak Sangh, and Jantana Sarkar, among others, are classified as Maoist under the umbrella of CPI (Maoist) and are also banned under the state specific laws such as the Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act (2005). This means that the definition of a Maoist or Naxalite from the state's perspective, can be quite broad. The act itself has been analysed and critiqued by human rights organisations, for its blanket repression of free speech and the arbitrary nature of labelling people, organisations and actions as 'unlawful'. To cite from the law itself, Section 2(e)(vi) when defining what constitutes 'unlawful', deems a person or an organisation unlawful by an act “... of encouraging or preaching disobedience to established law and its institutions.”⁵² Section 8(2) of the same act expands the definition, by stating that “... whoever not being a member of an unlawful organisation, in any manner contributes or receives or solicits any contribution or aid for such organisation or harbours any member of such, [may] be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years and shall be also liable to fine.”⁵³

In contexts such as in the Maoist conflict with the Indian State, differentiating between combatants and non-combatants is contextual and difficult. The broad definition of naxal used by the state has been strongly criticised by activists and humanitarian workers, in particular those working with civilians in rural areas, as a loose interpretation of the term-naxal led to persecution of many civilians. Similarly The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA)—which was amended in July 2019—criminalises

⁵² See: https://cpic.files.wordpress.com/2007/07/cspsa_english.pdf (accessed on 8.07.2020)

⁵³ Ibid.

“unlawful” activities, defines terrorism as a crime, and in its most recent amendment, gives investigation agencies the power to arrest individuals whereas previously, the law was restricted to organisations. The change reflects the growing trend of the Indian State towards criminalising organisations, individuals and activities, that may inherently contest the State at a political level, and framing such activism as criminal. While it is natural that a State would act to obliterate any form of existential threat, the wide nature of the dissent criminalised by India is more unusual in a democracy, and it reduces dissent and criticality into an overarching blanket of illegality/illegitimacy. This criminalisation of dissent, reduces political questions, pertaining to fundamental sociological foundations of a society into binaries of ‘legal-illegal’, ‘permissible-forbidden’. The language of legality, obfuscates everyday realities into hypothetical scenarios, moving the individuals and their lives into a theatre awaiting for a nod that classifies them and their lives within the nominal legal and moral framework subscribed by the State as represented by their immediate bosses and seniors within the policing administration.

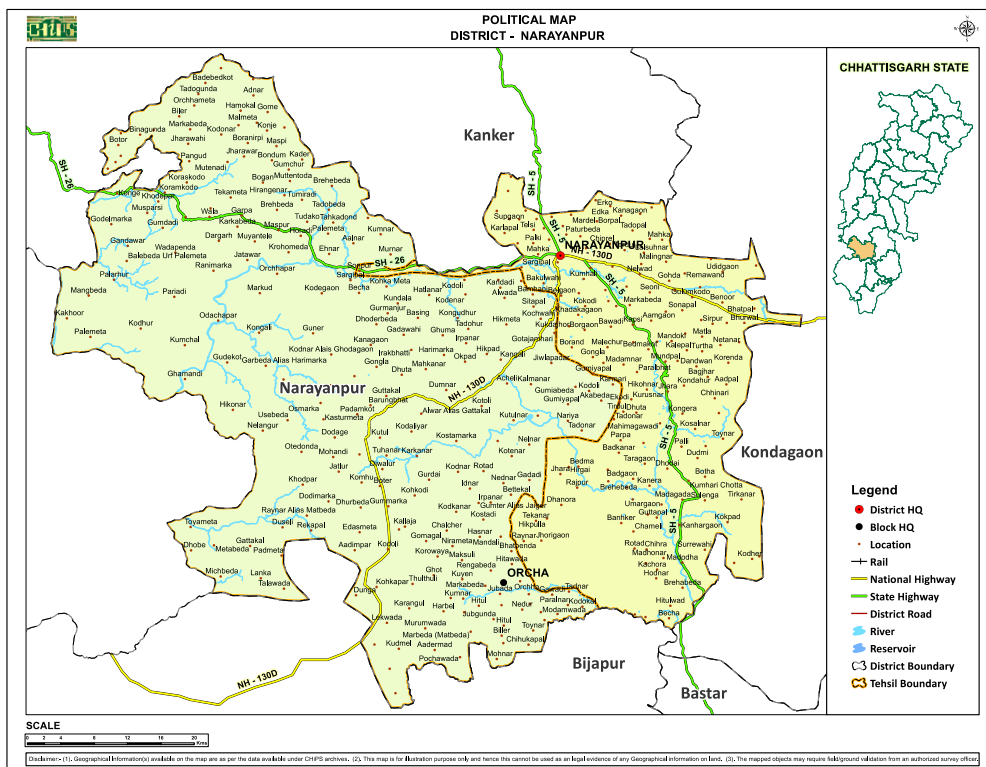


Figure 5.1: Map of Narayanpur district. Source: Chhattisgarh state website

In the case of Chhattisgarh, as in many similar districts, the underlying logic of security and then development as a precondition for the state’s symbolic and practical existence is commonly understood in these towns. The establishment of police stations and other

security architecture, has been a long focus of the State in establishing and signalling its sovereign right over areas, where other symbolic representations of the state, for example through public services and civilian administration, are sparse and restricted. The colloquial understanding is, that first comes a police station followed by a road and then comes the administration with development- this sequential understanding of securitised development, is conventional wisdom in these parts. What is noticeable, when you travel in the hilly terrain from one tehsil (region) to another, are the big established police and paramilitary camps on the main road leading from Narayanpur zilla (district) to Orchha block (a district consists of many blocks). This main road, has four marked check-points before you cross Amdai-ghati and into Orchha block- known as the main administrative unit for Abujmarh forest. The ever burgeoning police and paramilitary force in Bastar, is also evident in policy and legislation, such as the Chhattisgarh Auxiliary Armed Forces Act, 2011 (CAAF Act- 2011).

As I spoke with people throughout my period of fieldwork, the memory of the changes observed in the town of Narayanpur and its blocks, anecdotally describe a time, when Narayanpur was a police district- an administrative boundary serving as a marker and to simplify policing. The memories evoked are of a small township serving as a conduit to move from Chhote Dongre to Antagarh in neighbouring district of Kanker in North Bastar to Basrur in modern day Dantewada, South Bastar. Narayanpur, part of undivided Bastar up until it was carved out of North Bastar in 2007, was considered to be on the precipice of Abhujmarh forest. The recently transferred reader in the police department, Shoriji*, on our first meeting at a tea shop, reminiscently spoke about a time, when the only police station was at Chhote Dongre where he was posted and people needed a permit to travel into the forest. The district in its present day form came much later.

The CAAF Act 2011 was introduced in the state legislative assembly in the shadow of a Supreme Court Judgement that directed the state police to disband Special Police Officers (SPOs) in Bastar, as the force was deemed to be unconstitutional in 2011 by the Supreme Court (Venkatesan, 2011). The state responded, with some reform to deal with the judgement, but accommodated the same SPOs within the new regime, even though they were involved in the spread of violence during the Salwa Judum, thus legitimising their existence in the policing architecture (Subramaniam, 2015). This history of SPOs in Bastar gained prominence with the formation of Salwa Judum in 2005. Salwa Judum (understood as “purification hunt” in Gondi) (Miklian, 2009; Sundar, 2006) started in Dantewada in 2005 with political support from the then local Congress (National

Congress Party-NCP) leader Mahendra Karma, with backing from the then Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) government in power in the state. The campaign was launched in Dantewada in order to combat the Maoist popularity in the region. In 2005, in un-divided Bastar, the campaign was projected as a spontaneous people's response against Maoist violence. But the violence, once it spread, affected villagers who were forced to vacate their homes, and were evicted into camps, as the report by the Campaign for Peace and Justice in Chhattisgarh (CPJC) says,

“The Salwa Judum has been responsible for a huge amount of violence in the districts, which includes killing civilians, burning and looting their houses, and raping women. Rather than stopping Maoist violence, it has actually led to an increase in retaliatory killings by Naxalites.”(Guha et al., 2006, p. 27).

The Judum forces were accused by the independent citizens' initiative, of destroying village properties, burning of homes, killing innocent villagers and sexual assaults and the rape of women. The horrors of Salwa Judum have been documented across media stories and fact-finding missions, and each of the accounts tell a sordid story of snowballing of violence whose victims for the most part were unarmed civilians /villagers. The fundamental premise of Salwa Judum was to uproot villages that had supported Maoist dalams in order to reduce popular support. One of the biggest allegations about the Judum was that it was a state-sponsored arming of untrained civilians/villagers as a response to the ground support and formation of mass organisations by the CPI (Maoist).

While the use of force and sexual assault on villagers and the retaliatory violence, is over a decade back in the history of the region, the memories and repercussions of Judum are still fresh and visible in the field. One of the most striking continuities observed is in the change in nomenclature of SPOs especially after the judgement passed in the supreme court- rendering these civilian militias as unconstitutional. The passing of the CAAF Act, legitimised the presence of SPOs in the state by providing them with a new name, District Reserve Guard (DRG) and a new identity. The DRGs in the districts specifically labelled as impacted by Left Wing Extremism 'LWE' derive their legitimacy through the act.

The CPJC report, observed three typologies of active members within the Salwa Judum and one of those categories were the 'surrendered sangham members'. While during the Salwa Judum, the number of surrenders were few, the idea of surrender as a policy, germinated from the Judum experiment. This analysis is verified by the accounts of people, who spoke to me, and who have been involved in the police architecture for over two decades. Sukhram*, one of the main leaders of the DRG in Narayanpur, recalled how

the Salwa Judum did enter into these parts but it didn't spread and "...neither did we go out in rallies, the way they did in those areas. We decided to use surrendered people in this fight against the Maoists."⁵⁴ Mr. Ahmed*, a retired IPS officer who served as the SP in Bastar since the early 1990s, over a conversation on the phone, quipped "DRG is nothing but a different name for Salwa Judum. I know it because I was one of the people who was involved in the court case too. I spent a lot of my time in the Supreme Court thanks to the petition filed,"⁵⁵ he recalled, with a bit of annoyance in his voice.

If we stitch these ends together, it illustrates the ways in which legitimate means and law-making are used to criminalise political conflicts, and rationalise militarisation as a response in such conflicts. At the same time, the benevolence of the state in accommodating and rehabilitating the surrendered cadres, into the police architecture, leaves the conditions of rehabilitation beyond scrutiny, and keeps the process itself opaque and ambiguous. The evident absence of a third party monitoring mechanism for these processes, itself indicates a possibility of impunity and abuse of power. The consistent witch-hunting⁵⁶ of civil society and human rights organisations by the Chhattisgarh administration in Bastar has led to an absence of organisations pursuing civil and political rights. While development and health-based organisations such as UNICEF (in Narayanpur), Saathi (a partner organisation with UNICEF working on maternal health in Narayanpur), Ramakrishna Mission (RKM in Narayanpur works in education), PRADAN (a development organisation working in Dantewada) etc. work in these areas, they work with a prerequisite understanding of working 'apolitically'⁵⁷.

⁵⁴ Interview with Sukhram* (November 2019).

⁵⁵ Interview with Mr. Ahmed* over phone (November 2019).

⁵⁶ The cases of Binayak Sen, Soni Sori, Jagdalpur Legal Aid, Arrest of civil and political rights lawyer, Sudha Bhardwaj in the Bhima Koregaon Case, intimidation of human rights activist, Bela Bhatia, Malini Subramaniam, arrest of local journalist Kamal Shukla are just few names and incidents where the Chhattisgarh State police have been responsible in either intimidation or arresting them under UAPA-2019.

⁵⁷ When speaking to Bhupesh Tiwari one of the founders of Saathi organisation, he explicitly mentions that to avoid confrontation with the state, by working on health and such development related themes, are safest to work in. "We stay away from issues related to naxal and till now, we haven't faced any issues. We also work mostly with the state." (Kondagaon, December 2019)



Figure 5.2: Program staff of Saathi with their motor-bike ambulance. This ambulance is improvised so that they could reach the interior villages in case of emergency and as transportation for pregnant women to the nearest health centre. Source: Author

The idea that work on health, water, sanitation and education does not have to take a 'political' turn is not uncommon in these parts. The power exerted through checks in forms of access and militarisation, creates a space for securitization where any claim-making act is viewed as resistance. Such development organisations work as quasi-state institutions, carefully treading a line of 'permissible' activities and restricting their humanitarian work as 'service providers'. The absence of civil society in processes such as 'surrender and rehabilitation', despite the widespread use of NGOs in DDR work internationally, is indicative of how civil society is restricted in its emancipatory function and 'civility' is ignored and deliberately silenced (Waghmore and Gorringer, 2019).

Waghmore and Gorringer, define civility as

"... a key measure of success of democracy because it involves treating others as, at least equal in dignity, never as inferior of dignity...Civility is a state in which people are presumed to be trustworthy, and when studied as an activity, civility proves to be one of the ways in which citizenship is experienced, negotiated, contested and reformulated in social, political and economic life. Civility however is not a state to be achieved, but a dynamic political process, involving change in the social, political and moral behaviour of both the dominant and marginal groups.... It also encompasses change in political institutions and social systems to generate the mutual sympathy or fraternity that is essential for public life." (Waghmore and Gorringer, 2019, p. 304).

These blurred boundaries of security and development lead to expansion of security into everyday activities. From policing 'good behaviour' to civil engagement, the deepening engagement of the state in securitised societies occurs through compliance and submission. The language of 'good behaviour', and the 'permissible' in classic Foucauldian analysis, is the governing of bodies of previously considered outlaws and

civilising them. The colonial civilising project is continued by the postcolonial State through its counterinsurgency project. The civilising project takes different forms such as education- the schools are adjacent to police camps or are run by missionary organisations such as RKM; or Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) run saraswati shishu mandir (primary and secondary schools). Each of these organisations, through enforcing discipline in the students life, reinforce ideas of purity, primitiveness and intentionally and subtly push the Adivasi community towards more organised Brahminical practices or in other words become more 'hindu'. Conversations around preserving the Adivasi culture, but sanitising it through civilising acts of banning consumption of local brew/ alcohol, modesty in clothing especially for women, introduction of Hindu deities and festivals into educational/school calendars, focus on hindi-language based teaching etc. A myriad of quotidian practices, enforce notions of inferiority and need to 'modernise' among the Adivasi youth. In the case of surrender, the body of the 'Adivasi- insurgent' should civilise and adhere to notions of good as defined exclusively by the security state- an active party to this conflict.

5.3 Disentangling the contradictions

The shifting of axis of violence, though remains unattended. The ubiquity of violence leads to its normalisation and such is the case with surrenders. What we observe is an open acknowledgement of the need for local inputs in the form of soldiers, informers and knowledge of terrain and language. Narayanpur, a relatively small district with a total population of 1.40 lakh is predominantly a rural district. Comprising of two blocks, Narayapur and Orchha- the district headquarters is situated in a cross-section of two main road-networks. The state-highway connecting Narayanpur to Kondagaon on one side and Antagarh, Kanker on another. The other proposed road in the making, would connect Narayanpur-Sonpur-Maroda in the neighbouring district of Gadchiroli. The latter, a state highway project intends to connect the district with its neighbouring state, Maharashtra. Situated in this cross-section, the town of Narayanpur serves the administrative centre with offices, housing for employees working in district administration, serving in the state police, families of paramilitaries posted, traders, and families who have over the years settled in the township. On the edge of the township lies the sprawling campus of Ram Krishna Mission (RKM). Established here in 1985, the RKM is a missionary organisation, which runs a huge operation, running schools and health centres for the madia Adivasi community in Abhujmaad forests. The civilising project continues through activities of both state and non-governmental charity organisations,

such as RKM. The problematic stance of 'civilising' the tribal, takes a ubiquitous turn in the narrative of development that is pushed by State and other development and charity organisations. RKM has autonomy over its operations even though a significant amount of funding is directly received from the Chhattisgarh government.

Over the years, the township has grown to accommodate migration from neighbouring parts of the district, an erstwhile Tehsil. In this process of urbanisation, on the other end of the town, you find a slowly expanding area which is known as Shanti Nagar. The name, symbolising 'peace' (Shanti is hindi word for peace) inhabits a ghetto settlements of kaccha (mud or asbestos roofed) houses, where families from Abhujmaad forests have settled. Praveen* a native of Antagarh who currently works with a local NGO as a project coordinator, explained to me the history of the settlement,

“ Initially, villagers from inside madh came here, who were asked to leave because of their choice to embrace Christianity. The naxals asked them to move out, and many of them came and settled on the outskirts of the then Narayanpur town. Over a period of time, people who ran from inside (referring to the dense forests in Orchha block) would come and settle in this locality (mohallah).”⁵⁸

At present, Shanti Nagar is a sprawling colony with kaccha houses reminiscent of a ghetto similar to the favelas in Brazil. I am informed that Shanti Nagar grew over a period of eight or nine years. Many families left the forest, when the Maoists would be suspicious of a family members' movement in the city or being an informer.

Another narrative dates the beginning of Shanti Nagar to 2002 when a landlord family from Sonpur was in direct conflict with the 'Party'⁵⁹. The Party had received complaints against the exploitative ways of the landed family. The Party had confronted the landlords family and distributed their land among the 'madia' community in Sonpur. Some of the members (about two or three) escaped from the village and joined the police in Narayanpur. The police had rehabilitated these members by providing land in present day Shanti Nagar. From 2011, this locality has served as home for many of the surrendered individuals and couples. Shanti Nagar or 'Mukhbir'⁶⁰ colony (as referred by the Party) is an haven/refuge for families, individuals who have had to leave their traditional homes back in the forest- the reasons are manifold.

⁵⁸ Chat with Praveen*, Narayanpur (September 2019).

⁵⁹ Party is a colloquial way of referring to the CPI (Maoist) in the field and a common nomenclature used by most people across Bastar.

⁶⁰ The term 'mukhbir colony (informer colony) was mentioned to the researcher by local journalist and national journalist who have been covering the conflict since 2012 and made frequent visits to the forests of Narayanpur.



Figure 5.3: By lanes of Shanti Nagar. Source: Author

Some common issues that led to them leaving their homes inside the forest relate to them opting to stand for local Panchayat elections⁶¹ and the fear of a backlash from the local guerrilla leadership, who saw all local government as a conduit for police and/or administration and legitimisation. Individuals who are suspected of maintaining ties with the police are expected to leave the forest. In such instances, many of them live under the fear of facing a backlash or left after receiving a judgement in a 'jantana adalat'⁶². As mentioned above, surrendered individuals or couples are rehabilitated in this locality. There are also some families, who have over a period of time migrated entirely to Shanti Nagar in search of livelihoods or for living with the 'bread-earner'. This localised displacement is intertwined with the social fabric of the district itself. With many of them

⁶¹ Panchayat is the lowest devolved institution for democratic participation at the village level. In Narayanpur and other districts of Bastar region, come under Schedule V of the Indian constitution- which gives more power to the gram sabha (the village level electorate) for autonomously deciding on the development activities, financial planning and activities related to industrialising as well. Known as Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA Act)- gives the power to the people through gram sabha to approve and plan for development related activities. Implementation of PESA in these parts is poor and many Adivasis are unaware of the powers of the gram sabha.

⁶² Jantana Adalat or People's court, is part of the Maoists alternate governance structures. Following the ideological vision of a people's government, the people's courts are village or area committee level courts where issues related to misconduct, internal contradictions and disagreements are settled. These people's courts are constantly under critique through media reports that question the arbitrary nature of decisions and verdicts passed.

serving or commissioned in the policing architecture, at the lowest and local, even informal level, as 'gopniay sainiks (GS)', 'arakshaks' or 'sahayak arakshaks'⁶³. And many others involved in daily wage work, some working as home guards and other aligned class IV work within the state administrative architecture.

What differentiates Shanti Nagar from other parts, is the visibly temporary nature of the houses along with its scale. During one of my visits to the locality, while speaking to an old batch of surrendered cadre, now promoted to the designation of 'thana in-charge' Lakshman*, mentioned that a part of the settlement, would be vacated and the land will be acquired by the railway company - for the construction of a railway line. The proposed railway line, would be a cargo line, for the transportation of goods from the proposed mining site in Rowghat⁶⁴ which borders the district of Narayanpur and Antagarh in Kanker. About 100 houses and acres of farming land is under consultation for acquisition. Lakshman* and his wife, along with others in the colony, are waiting for an allotment of new land. He is confident that though the railway line project has been stalled over the past decade, it will be finished with renewed speed in the coming five years. In September 2019, an IED blast by the naxals targeting an oil tanker at the site of the railway line was reported. But the sense around the district is uncompromising. Lakshman* like others, is confident that the project will see its fruition in the coming five years.

⁶³ Gopniay Sainik's (GS) literal translation in English would be 'secret soldier'. A GS is someone who is on the payroll of the police but isn't officially recruited through the centralised selection processes within the federal structure of India. Similarly, a Sahayak Arakshak (SA) would mean a 'helper soldier' and arakshak is a recruited police personnel. A surrendered person is offered the position of GS with a stipend varying from 6,000 to 8,000 INR. They are then promoted (based on performance) to a SA and then eventually as an Arakshak. Until they are promoted to the position of Arakshak, the personnel do not receive any formal training or induction into the state police forces. These promotions are arbitrary and based on 'good behaviour' which usually entails the quality of information provided about their knowledge of the terrain or on the knowledge of the party, its leaders and various activities planned. Promotions are granted based on their performance during the searching operations and ambushes planned against the CPI-Maoist. In our conversations, many of the surrendered personnel would causally mention that their seniors would urge them to arrest 'Maoists' or kill them in encounters. The understanding is that such 'performances' would be considered for promotions and providing them job security.

⁶⁴ The Raoghat mining project would link to with the Bhilai Steel Plant in Chhattisgarh. Bhilai Steel Plant is considered as one of the main industrial projects in Independent India. The Steel plant was set up in 1955 and was the first plant to produce steel rails. The plant derives its raw material from neighbouring Dalli-Rajhira iron ore mines. As the mineral depoists in Dalli-Rajhira deplete, Raoghat is planned to be the next mining site for iron ore deposits. For the same purpose, a 235 km railway line construction project is underway to connect Raoghat with Jagdalpur and Bhilai towns in the state. For more see: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-many-roads-to-development-in-chhattisgarh/article26878534.ece>.

The impermanence of the colony, is symbolic of the impermanence of the surrendered cadre and the families who have left the familiarity of the forest. The small quarter-like houses are different from a usual madia house or a koitur home in these parts, being devoid of the sprawling shade of a tamarind tree, or the typical backyard with an open kitchen and washing area that opens into the kitchen garden humbly growing lentils, papaya, gourds, aubergines and likes. The Adivasi life in the city, becomes more dependent on market-led transactions which would be usually limited to the purchase of oil and salt, when they resided in the forest. The impermanence comes from actively seeking work, for monetary compensation that leads their already hard-working bodies to a kind of work, that commands more with little return. A conversation with a madia woman waiting on the road one morning as I was walking across Narayanpur town, made this explicit: She and three other women were waiting for the shutters of the photo-copy shop to open. I asked them what were they waiting for, she was puzzled that the shop was shut. They had come to make their Aadhaar card⁶⁵ but the shop was shut for the day, we gathered from the notice pasted on the door. Through the course of our chat, she briefly commented, "... here we have to rely on money for everything. Even to get wood for cooking, we have to purchase it. Back in the village, we didn't need money for any of this. My husband works as a coolie at the construction sites and I tend to housework. It's not enough, the money we make."

For the surrendered cadre, days follow a different rhythm. Each day in the morning, they have to assemble at the police line grounds for their 'gananaa' (daily drills). This counting and collection of all the cadres is a routine activity that expects them to be at the ground in the early morning between 07:00 am till 09:00 am. What then happens, depends on the plans for the day, decided by their DRG commander, SP and other senior officials within the police hierarchy. In case of a planned operation, these commanders are divided into companies and are asked to stay on stand-by for possible patrols into the forest. There are routine 'gast'/surveillance/searching operations that DRG commandos along with Special Task Force (STF) are expected to do, the number of these excursions into the forests vary, but are usually decided on a monthly basis. On days such as important festivals like Dussehra, annual melas across the district, municipal and

⁶⁵ Aadhaar Card is a twelve digit unique identity number based on the residents biometrics and demographic data. Similar to the social security numbers in some western nations, the Aadhaar card is issued and managed by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) which is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. The card is now mandatory for most official paperwork in India, and to avail any of the social welfare benefits, the residents of India are mandated to be in possession of this unique ID.

panchayat elections, national holidays and other district administration sponsored events, they along with their commissioned police colleagues are involved in managing crowds and overseeing security.



Figure 5.4: Official inauguration of the DRG Narayanpur police station in October, 2019. Source: Author

On other days, the cadres have the flexibility of going back to their rooms/quarters or tending to other works, but they are always on call. Often, when I was spending a day with some of the cadres in their homes, they would receive calls from their seniors, checking they were on stand-by, or collecting them to lend support to the searching party that has been on the rounds. The surrender policy, offers a compensation which promises land for surrendered cadres to rehabilitate. In most instances, in Narayanpur, the surrendered cadres I spoke to, have not been provided with any land, and most of them continue living in Shanti Nagar and similar such colonies, paying a monthly rental which takes a substantial proportion of their monthly salaries. The promised one time money under the policy that is kept as a 'fixed deposit' to be granted to the surrendered individual after three years of monitoring good behaviour, is an elusive claim. On enquiring, to most of the interviewees, this amount has not been received by any of them.

The circumstances under which they joined the DRG vary, but broadly, it is through the network of surrendered cadres, who had spread information about the policy by the use of pamphlets during search operations,. By using networks of kin and songs etc, the

surrender and rehabilitation policy is popularised. In some instances, these cadres were apprehended during searching operations, and after staying under confinement in local police lock-ups for months, the option of surrendering and engaging in alternative livelihoods becomes a more lucrative choice, in comparison to serving jail time. During my interactions with female surrendered cadre, they would often mention that they had night duty, since new cadres were in the lock-up. For them, it was by virtue of their local relations, kinship ties, shared guerrilla pasts - the night shift would serve as a space for them to share stories about their own life experiences since they surrendered. Relating to each other, most of these accounts as told to me, were preceded by a confusing smile, a smile conveying a reality of coming to terms with the realities of now. The reality that not everything was perfect as a guerrilla, and the imperfections continue as they enter into a life in the mainstream. The hope that stays, is for a better future, increased income, possible education, and land of their own- these aspirations resonate with most of them.

For their dream to come true, as mentioned before, the integration with mainstream life and reliance on money becomes a pivot for all. Through the course of all my interviews and time spent in the field, I identified batches of surrendered cadres who follow different lines of seniority. A few, who surrendered before 2012-13, have, based on their performance, received promotions which have included them into the formal police force- 'aarakshak', or in some instances, 'thana-in charge'. In case of Lakshman*, Keshav*, Nishant* and Sukhram*, through the course of their engagement with the police, they are now the senior police personnel who have reaped the benefits of 'good behaviour' and have now been instituted within the formal policing structures. The journey from GS to an arakshak depends on the idea of performance. This performance is assessed in the quality of information, or in finding out ways to 'win the hearts and minds' of the villagers and the large support base, the Maoists garner within these parts. Abhujmaadh/Dandkaranya, is still an unexplored territory with a sparse presence of the state and its institutions. The nation-building project, the internal acquisition of territory, within the territory of an independent India- is yet to see its fruition in these parts of central India.

Motivations to leave the movement varied. Keshav* left the forest in 2013. He wasn't alone. It was him and six others who left the Party and went home. The primary motive for Keshav* his friends to leave was their discontent with the Party and certain of its practices, which they saw as incongruent with the Party philosophy of 'Party of the people' and for their collective fight against oppression for the people...

“...in 2012 December, there was an all member meeting organised by the party. This happens once in three years. The meetings is a platform for assessment of the work done and whether the resistance is going on the right path. During this meeting, some of us raised questions about unequal practices of some of the party leaders (specially at the area committee level and below) and their involvement in intimidating villagers, accusations of villagers being informers, instances of villagers leaving the forest and settling in Narayanpur and other areas. We also pointed out, how gunmen end up becoming coolies. It was in contradiction to the same principles that the party stood or stands for. These objections led to a debate and lot of accusations thrown at us. One of the leaders, told us that the tribal from Bastar still lacks political engagement and that there is a lot more to do at the front of awakening a political consciousness among the Bastar Adivasis. We didn't like that thinking, they wanted to relegate us to doing all the bull-work while they (the leadership from Andhra)⁶⁶ continue to maintain their power in the leadership. It was after that meeting, that we all were a bit disillusioned. In the first months of 2013, I left for my village while another comrade went to Narayanpur town, since he had some distant relatives of his staying there.”⁶⁷

Though Keshav* wasn't inclined to join the surrender program, his comrade-Nishant*, cajoled him into surrendering to the police. Keshav*recounts that at first when he received the letter from Nishant* to surrender, he wasn't sure. In the evening in his village, the courier, in his stupor of alcohol, spoke about the letter at length wherein the message did not remain a secret just between those two- but became public knowledge...

“... the letter from Nishant* became public knowledge and then I wasn't confident about my safety in the village. That is when I with another comrade came to Narayanpur to surrender. We didn't have much knowledge about the policy. We met with Nishant* and he took us to his contact at the SIB (state intelligence bureau) who were taking us to Raipur to formally surrender. However, the SP intervened and we were literally stopped from our bus heading to Raipur. The SP kept us the police guest house for a month. We were treated well and provided with food and clothes. The then SP was kind to us, he would come and talk to us and check if we were fine. Then later on, they asked if we would work with the police as a GS. He said if we do good work, he would promote us. Initially, I use to work for 5,000 INR per month and use to share a house with another family. Then in about a year, I was promoted to an arakshak, my salary increased to 18,000 INR. I gained this because I was a part of one or two incidents, that reaped me these rewards... The SP was open and he use to discuss the matters with us. He wanted to get people in his favour. All these road projects and the police camps, they all have come because of the DRG. Now there aren't many incidents as earlier. We got our people from the villages to give us information. They work as informers for us. And we pay them some money. Their families don't know about it. Nobody knows. We all have our informer networks...”⁶⁸

Similar thoughts resonate across surrendered cadre sharing their activities and the processes involved with life within the DRG. While Keshav* has performed well and is proud of his house and a settled life (he has remarried, and is undergoing training in

⁶⁶ Andhra Pradesh- a state in India was one of the historical sites for the communist rebellion against the

⁶⁷ Interview with Keshav* (September 2019)

⁶⁸ Ibid.

policing in the training facility in Jagdalpur), waves of disappointment simmer with others who have recently surrendered and joined the DRG.

Working as GS, Divya* is a 22 year girl who had joined the movement during the celebration of International Woman's Day on 8th March in early 2000s. She was arrested along with two of her comrades and had earlier served a sentence of about four years in Jagdalpur jail. To her, surrender had never been considered as an option. But in the circumstances when she was arrested and the subsequent months locked-up in the local police station, led to a change. A pragmatic decision was made when she had to choose between the possibility of losing her life, or spending more time in jail, or surrendering. She is one of a small number of female DRGs who are involved in searching operations when required and on other days, to do guard duties for various state-events and in instances of new cases of surrenders or arrests. After formally surrendering in 2016, Divya* lived for years with different families of distant relatives who were working in the police...

"... I had to succumb to the pressure. And I joined the DRG. Now I go on searching operations. At first, the then SP would question me that why don't I give any information about naxals. He would say that if I don't give information that would lead to an encounter, then we might use you in the encounter itself. In Jan 2017, I was on an operation, one of the leaders (female) she was shot in that encounter. The others from the party ran away. It was then that they gained some confidence in me. Though I hadn't killed but I was involved in this operation. They said they would make me an arakshak. After this incident they made me a GS. Later, the party found out that I was involved in that operation. I just know, and I am confident, that I have nothing to fear about my life. The naxalis also know, I was a dedicated worker throughout. And they as well as the villagers know about under the circumstances I joined the DRG. I am doing my duty. I don't want to be involved in any encounters and don't want to scare, intimidate and kill innocent lives. And that is what I will try to maintain. Now, I want to focus on building a life here, I have enrolled in open school to give exams and pass high-school. They had started a school for surrendered people, it ran for a month and since then it has been discontinued. The policy promises land as a package. But many of us who have surrendered haven't received any such compensation. It is difficult for all of us to come together as a collective voice and demand for what has been stated. As a woman, most of our officers are not empathetic to women DRG. They expect us to perform equally as to the men especially during the searching operations. I have tried to explain this to my seniors, that then men after they are back from their operations are free. Us female DRGs, we are expected to come and do duty in the office once we are back from the forest. We have to serve tea, water and other obligations are also our responsibility. And then we go back and do our household chores. The burden is relatively more on us, also because we (female DRG) are less in number. There are more men in the DRG. For these men, once they are back from searching operations, they are free to roam about. We have to manage homes, duties and other things..."⁶⁹

The dissatisfaction and precarity is common to most DRGs, with the assurance of financial security entirely contingent on performance in anti-naxal operations. The contradiction is not invisible to the senior officials. There is a realisation among the on-ground officials

⁶⁹ Interview with Divya* (September 2019)

responsible for the overall management of the DRG. They understand the contradictions between the policy and its implementation, but reiterate that surrenders, and their lives post-surrender, help in demystifying police and police brutality...

“... Earlier the operations were conducted through a security point of view and establishing the rule of law. But it doesn't end there. This is an ideological fight and surrenders help us in showing a different life and structures of police. We understand that arrests itself won't make a change. There is a need to create trust and foster ties in the community. So that there is a gradual understanding about democratic institutions. The Chhattisgarh policy, doesn't just provide cash to the surrendered, they provide land and job- a sustained support is provided. But the difficulties arise from not finding housing or providing proper training. Ethically, it isn't ideal to accommodate all of them in the police. Most of times they join the police because police is the one that goes inside (in the forest) and we are a symbol of law and order. We can't leave them in ambiguity, especially after they take such a leap of faith. We recruit them as non-permanent staff (GS) because this is what most of them are good at and this comes naturally to them and we don't have another option. The district administration itself is clueless about what jobs to offer. We tried to make a township during my tenure in Bijapur (neighbouring district in Bastar) but the land proposed was very far from the main township. This could've potentially become another risk and it was abandoned. We are trying for a similar idea of identifying land and resettling the surrendered...”⁷⁰

This sense of normalcy on the issue of surrender hints towards a chronic issue of the 'civilizational gaze' of the bureaucratic mind towards the tribal, and especially an outlawed tribal. The project of surrender, along with myriad of security-development schemes clubbed under 'assistance for LWE' states, is a slow method of mainstreaming the tribal into market-driven economics and livelihoods. This mainstreaming project, especially in case of the ex-Maoists, is restricted to the security architecture and continued militarisation. In May 2018, the Central Reserved Police Force (CRPF) the main paramilitary organisation involved in the anti-naxal operations, commissioned 'Bastariya Battalion'⁷¹. The logic behind commissioning the battalion was based on two primary objectives: a) providing employment to tribal youth; b) of giving the counterinsurgency operations a local face. The Press Information Bureau of India's brief words to mark the commissioning of the battalion were:

“The 'Bastariya Battalion' that came into existence on 1st April 2017, has been created to enhance local representation in CRPF's combat lay-out in the Bastar area besides providing the 'Bastariya' youths a full-proof platform for employment. Accordingly, its recruitment process too carried some unique features. While the physical standards of height and weight were relaxed to give a fair chance to the local aspirants, CRPF also walked yet another extra mile to provide pre-educational and physical training to the local youths through Civic Action Programmes so as to maximize their ability and eligibility for induction into the special formation. Armed with about a year's rigorous training and so many years of geo-spatial experience of their own soil, these combat-ready jawans of CRPF are all poised to switch from their training ground to the battle ground in Bastar.”⁷²

⁷⁰ Interview with SP-Narayanpur (October 2019)

⁷¹ <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=179423>

⁷² Ibid.

The raising of such a battalion is reminiscent of commissioning of Rashtriya Rifles- a wing of central paramilitary forces to counter the conflict in Kashmir in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir⁷³. Considered as an solution since such initiatives create job creation especially from youth that belong to inaccessible villages in remote areas of Bastar recruiting 800 people including men and women...

“...unlike the SPOs in Chhattisgarh, after an initial period of deployment in Bastar, eventually these recruits (and the battalion) will be transferred to other places. After they serve their term. Based on these success of the battalion, in order to create more jobs, maybe in future we can think of raising another such force. To assess success would be about the kind of job satisfaction the recruits derive. These tribals”, (not in a derogatory way) are slightly casual about government jobs, slightly undisciplined, slightly more home-sick (than normal people) and not they think for the day and not long-term. Keeping them with the forces and if they don't desert their jobs and believe in the constitution, and wiling move to other postings, then we have managed to recruit a successful cadet. We have done similar thing in Kashmir and recruited ex-militants and something similar was done in the North-East and it is considered to be a good decision. If these boys and girls are satisfied, then they become our brand ambassadors. When they go home on leave, there would be a talk in the village and this would help in erasing the misgivings about the CRPF and how it is perceived deep down in the villages of Bastar as an enemy force. And maybe clear some doubts. Something on those lines, lets' see how it happens..”⁷⁴

Throughout the discussions during fieldwork on the policy and its real-life implementation, the questions of loyalty, civilising and mainstreaming echo through the narratives. While the officers and actors from civil society are cognisant of incentivising violence, they find it difficult to seek viable alternatives in a context of conflict that has become normal for everyone. The idea of loyalty itself within the project of nation building, takes primacy, and in this context the onus of proving their loyalty is entirely on the surrendered individual, regardless of their circumstances or motivations to opt for retirement out of a guerrilla life.

The insights through everyday interactions show a life of living under a normal of militarisation and policing. The process of rehabilitation is considered in isolation from the larger issues of socio-political assertion of Adivasi youth and Adivasi polity itself. Hebbbar (2018) in her thoughtful essay on tribal politics and contemporaneity, enunciates the fact that the tribal/Adivasi in this counterinsurgency/insurgency axis has become a “casualty of what Giroux (2009) calls the politics of disposability” (Hebbbar, 2018, p. 79). She further points out that the disposability is rendered in two interconnected ways - through ‘denial of coevalness’ (Fabian, 1983) and Adivasi as victims of insurgency and

⁷³ In August 2019, the current Indian government abrogated the Article 370 of the Indian constitution to amend the status of Jammu and Kashmir as a federal state.

⁷⁴ Interview with Suleiman* ex CRPF IG-Bastar who was serving in Kashmir at the time of the interview (Feb 2019).

counterinsurgency. Adivasis' engagement in the discourse is that of a non-participant. A passive recipient whose engagement with contemporary is considered to be an anomaly, and hence needs to be mainstreamed through the homogenising effects of economic growth.

The idea of rehabilitation signifies a pre-conceived understanding of 'reform' and 'correction'. The mechanisms of the policy, are enshrined in the larger ambit of constructing a citizen- who is loyal to the objectives of the State. And loyalty is co-constituted through modernizing the Adivasi. In the same collection of essays, Prof. Savyasaachi in his introduction unpacks the history of rehabilitation in India. Encountered first during the early post-Independent India's development vision of making dams - rehabilitation and resettlement was a promise. A promise of resettlement, a promise of a non-violent life, a promise with ambiguity of what and how, and a promise that is continuously/habitually deferred. It is an intractable promise. And the tangible form of this promise exists in the shape of a monetised economy- a promise made through a currency note/money. Savyasachi considers this promise in the shape of a currency note as de-politicised,

".... This generates a disjunction between the word and the thing and creates conditions for the proliferation of lies, perjury, suspicion, distrust, and deceit. These words circulate in this network and gradually are internalised in the collective conscience and consciousness of society to become integrated with the language of the everyday life." (Savyasaachi, 2018, p. 7).

This promise, in the context of Narayanpur and the surrendered, is a promise of a non-violent mainstream life. The contradiction is apparent for everyone to see. It is an unnuanced practice through which, a new citizen is cultivated, who is subservient and it is only through denial of criticality, that the individual be provided with a stamp of approval. Good behaviour requires homogenising with the mainstream and in this mainstreaming, the process involves erasing of experiences, of lives led and erasure of people as agents for transformatory politics.

Between my first trip to Bastar in 2015 for my MPhil dissertation and 2019, when I spent a longer time in the area for this doctoral project, the expanse and strength of DRG across the states had increased. While earlier, they were mostly working as GS in collaboration with the state police and the deployed paramilitary, now they are carving out a separate force within the police- and the DRG is a testimony to this. In the eyes of the state, the DRG serves a tactical and strategic purpose, of impacting the Maoist movement and their support base. The surrendered guerrillas who are confirmed within the DRG are the ones

who have proved their merit by providing relevant intelligence, aiding the security forces in making incursions into the forested and interior villages. Their wherewithal in charting routes through villages where they once travelled as Maoists, as guerrillas or as area commander(s)—managing everyday village development activities— was the biggest advantage, and which has been gainfully used by the security forces. Keshav* and his friends, who surrendered around the same time as him, mentioned that during their initial days, there were conversations regarding the motivations that led to villagers joining the movement,

“... the earlier SP, the one from Maharashtra, he was very kind. He gave us a lot of space to talk. He was curious to understand from our point of view, to what measures the prashan (administration or government) could take to deter people from joining the movement. We told him, that we need ‘vikas’ (development). In these areas, there is no exposure to the outside world. People didn’t have mobile connections, no television, nobody has any idea about what goes around in the outside world. It is important, I feel, these things would help in knowing about where the world has moved and that we in our villages are stuck in time. There are no jobs, no opportunities...”

These conversations, which I had with the surrendered guerrillas, hint at the intentions of government actors or representatives to bridge and cultivate an understanding of the motivations, hopes and aspirations of the Adivasi villager. However, there is a tension between the clear attempts of a few state officials to understand the Adivasi surrendered, with a much wider sense, among those I spoke to, of intense public grievances about the practical impacts of the policy in intensifying violence in the forests, and in structured poverty in the towns. There is a certain irony that despite a declared intention to understand, most of the civil liberty movements which are representative of evolutionary social movements, are viewed as contentious, or even threatening, in the eyes of the Indian state, as they are critical, contrarian and are contesting dominant social structures and identities. The ubiquitous intermingling of class and caste through institutions of governance, widens the linguistic and cultural gap between communities stratified through caste and its entrenched practices in everyday life. Poyam (2020) records both—the clamp down on civil liberties and other social movements within Chhattisgarh and the neighbouring states of Telangana, and the consequences of the militarised or a military-first counterinsurgency program, where the foot soldiers, as paramilitary or as DRG belong to either the Adivasi or lower caste communities/identities. A poignant take, from an Adivasi journalist hailing from Chhattisgarh, Poyam, when I met him in Raipur, the capital of Chhattisgarh, reiterated this facet.

Rumela Sen (2021), in her analysis of what she terms as ‘rebel retirement’ acknowledges the presence of exit networks through which many of the rebels find a sustainable way to

move out from violent to non-violent life without threats to their lives. She theorises through comparative study between the state of undivided Andhra Pradesh⁷⁵ and Jharkhand, that the presence of informal exit networks, especially harmonious informal networks weaved through multiple stakeholders, who can build different alliances to ensure a safe exit. One of her concluding observations

“...rebels contemplating retirement are more anxious about their lives than their livelihoods. Rebels, I interviewed in the field, in North and South India, and subsequently in Nepal, consistently reported that monetary incentives do not shape their experiences after retirement or their decision before retirement. Yet the policy focus is overwhelmingly on economic reintegration. More crucially, former combatants are also keenly aware that while they risk their lives to disarm, the state would lose nothing if it failed to protect disarmed rebels...” (Sen, 2021, p. 144)

Theorizing and lived experiences of retired rebels or surrendered guerrillas, regardless of the nomenclature, coherently points to the short-sightedness of policy guidelines and the practical responses for disarmament and reintegration of violent actors. These lacunae in the policy exacerbate the social realities and conditions for many of these men and women, especially due to their caste and Adivasi identity. While this form of caste-based or racial discrimination has been researched in areas of urbanisation, corporate employment and education, the space of security studies has ignored this critical inquiry. Nowhere in my fieldwork, did I see any sign of state action which genuinely sought to understand the Adivasi position as such – rather than the narrower objective of understanding surrender. The lived reality of the surrender policy, as I observed it, was primarily driven by narrow policing and security objectives. If there was another step among the local state officials it was only focused on livelihoods – based on an unproven, and probably inaccurate assumption, that economic factors were important in persuading people to surrender. The local implementation of the policy never took one step further to ask why Adivasi joined the Maoist guerrilla movement in the first place. It never even asked that question, much less designed a programme to make militant mobilisation less likely and surrender more likely, by at least vocalising a desire to deal with root causes.

⁷⁵ Andhra Pradesh, as mentioned in the Methodology chapter, was centre for Maoist politics from 1940s onwards. While one part of the movement gained its momentum from the village of Naxalbari in northern West Bengal in the East of India, Southern India saw the movement consolidate in Andhra Pradesh. The village of Srikakulam in present day Andhra Pradesh (another state of Telangana was carved out of Andhra Pradesh in 2014. The Telangana movement and demand for a separate state was embedded in the larger communist politics of the region.) was the epicentre for communist politics. In fact, the formation of Communist Party of India (Maoist) in 2004 was based on the merger of the Peoples’ War Group (PWG) which was dominant in Andhra Pradesh and present-day Telangana and other communist parties in Eastern India.

5.4 Conclusion

As I move ahead in understanding these unintended everyday aspects of disarmament, the subsequent chapter, will highlight the lived realities of communities and the repercussions the policy has on them. The circuitous nature of life and the various ways through they connect becomes evident through these field observations. Chapter six, attempts to trace a thread between the surrendered individuals who voluntarily or involuntarily join the DRG and the turn it leads to their lives and the larger Adivasi community and villages where they once engaged as revolutionary guerrillas. Chapter six, at first traces two events, that took place in field. One a peace marathon and another a commemorative gathering of a popular Adivasi leader Gunda Dhur. The chapter, also introduces new interlocuters who through use of protests and Adivasi civil society collectives have been vocally resisting against Indian state's securitised development. The chapter brings out the connection between surrendered individuals and how they become agents of this securitised development narrative and practice.

Chapter 6: Civilian/Insurgent: Living through Revolution

"It is Salen's wish, that I visit his village once, for with the news of my arrival, electricity, water, roads would also come. But what am I to do? For me to come there, I need an occasion.

Unless there is rain, even Salen does not plant his crop, does he? I, too, need to prepare, my own fields there, where I may plant my strategies, reap the fruits of my politics, where hopes and dreams I may harvest. The seeds of progress I shall sow, in Salen's village for sure, only, I need an occasion.

I shall come down to see, Salen's village nestled in the hills. For from the seat in Delhi, his backyard appears rather blurry. I shall have the jungle cleared, for it comes in the way, of my reaching there straight away.

I shall free his hands, of ploughs and weapons, and then on his fields plant my own factories, my own arms. I shall celebrate both, his freedom and his martyrdom— all I need is the right occasion, "I need an 'occasion'" - Jacinta Kerketta, 2018.⁷⁶

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores two events which happened in parallel, and both of which I observed and discussed at length with those who organised and attended them. On the

⁷⁶ The poem has been borrowed from an award winning Adivasi poet, Jacinta Kerketta. Kerketta who belongs to the Oraon Adivasi community of West Singhbhum district in the state of Jharkhand- north of Chhattisgarh. The poem is from her collection of poems titled 'Jado ki Zameen/Land of the roots'. This particular poem, brings about the irony of promises by elected leaders and the need for an 'occasion' for the leader to come and visit the Adivasi who voted them in power. Common across the Adivasi areas of Central India, the inaccessibility of the forest dweller- is both romanticised and problematised. While the promises convey a hope of progress (of clean water, education, electricity and roads) for that progress to reach, the forest will have to go. I felt that the poem speaks and connects with the incidents that are described in the chapter ahead. The need for an 'occasion' for making these lands, visitable- speaks to the peace marathon organised in the district. While the promise of electricity, water and roads resonates with the protestors in interior villages as they question the nature of security/development projects- waiting for visitation from decision makers.

one hand is the Bhumkal divas⁷⁷ celebration in Narayanpur, inside the forest, which attracted a large number of Adivasi villagers. The commemoration celebrations coincided with a Peace Marathon organised by the Narayanpur administration— to showcase the district as being peaceful and as moving away from the public perception as that of a naxal affected area. Observing both events and interviewing people about them, allowed me to contrast two competing narratives and to explore issues of Adivasi agency and of legitimisation and de-legitimisation. The two events also allow an analysis of an active counter-insurgency program and, the dominant role of the police— even in an event such as a marathon, the complex realities of the area arise when ex-Maoists are involved in daily administrative and COIN operations. The chapter explores the idea of citizens who meander between opposing forces and who interact with both the state and the insurgents in order to negotiate matters concerning everyday life. From the state, they negotiate for development funds, access to quality education and healthcare. Another important aspect of State-Adivasi relationship comes from using panchayat elections and the aspiration of using the governance mechanism for gainful employment and for development catering to the demands of the Adivasi communities. The insurgent leadership comes to the aid of the same Adivasi population when it comes to matters of access to and rights over natural resources. Community members and leaders seek support for mobilising and educating themselves on the constitutional guarantees provided to the Adivasis. Longer conversations with some of the interlocutors display an emerging argument, that the fight for significant social and political change in the contemporary period is more about an assertion of constitutional promises, which have not been delivered by the Indian state, as opposed the “complete take-down of state institutions” as is often quoted from the Maoist manifesto and initial party documentation. It more and more requires us to question the mainstream conflation of Adivasi politics, which simply subsumes them under, or as, Maoist politics.

This displays a kind of memetic rivalry (Girard) or what Sundar in case of Chhattisgarh calls ‘memetic sovereignty’ (2014). As the name suggests, both the state and the Maoists mimic each other in using similar strategies and methods to ‘win hearts and minds’ or to strengthening their legitimacy. However, while one becomes a constant oppressor, the other (the insurgent) due to its nature of guerrilla warfare, leaves fluid or what Hansen (2008) mentions as ‘informal sovereigns’ emerge. In this instance, it is reliance on non-

⁷⁷ A more detailed explanation about Bhumkal Divas and its historical significance will follow in the subsequent section of this chapter. While there is no literal translation of the word, it loosely can be translated as the day to celebrate assertion on the(ir) land.

violent methods (protests, commemorative days, meetings during festivals) by the Adivasis at large, that then become indicative of their agency and assertion for contestation of autonomy and claims on the resources, particularly the forest—which holds a sacred space in their lifeworld.

6.2 Ambivalence in Adivasi lifeworld for accountability and assertion

One of the regular features of Adivasi and Maoist agitation is the organisation of large-scale protests, often lasting for weeks, or even months, and to which people travel from significant distances. This chapter begins with an account of one such protest, based on participant observations and conversations that took place over a span of four days in the interior villages that overlapped the borders of Narayanpur and Kondagaon districts. This example is purposively selected because of the larger linkages these stories have with the processes of surrender and the individuals who surrender. Similar protests and agitations were organised across different districts of Bastar over the second half of 2020 and 2021. An analysis of this protest camp illustrates the grey zones in areas of protracted violence. At the time of finalising this chapter, protests in Silger, Sukma⁷⁸ had entered their sixth month, another protest in Bechahal/Bechaghat, Bijapur had crossed 50 days. The villagers in this case were protesting the construction of a bridge which they fear will extend militarisation further in the forests.⁷⁹

Adivasis across district and bureaucratic boundaries, by congregating in these mass protest camps, at sites of the construction of dams, mines, military barracks, and related infrastructure also attract significant state attention, notwithstanding their remote locations. They are a zone of social conflict, where Adivasi villagers, Maoist supporters, police, and state paramilitaries, including surrendered Maoists are all in proximity, representing the different dimensions of the ongoing political conflict. The call of ‘jal, jungle, jameen’⁸⁰ is now joined with ‘Mava Naate, Mava Raaj’ (my land, my rule)⁸¹ —

⁷⁸ See: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/seven-months-and-counting-the-longest-silger-stir-retains-its-verve-101640541821991.html> accessed on 10.01.2022.

⁷⁹ See: <https://janchowk.com/statewise/chhattisgarh-50-days-of-tribal-movement-in-bechaghat-autocratic-government-is-not-communicating-with-tribals/> accessed on 31.01.2022.

⁸⁰ The call for ‘jal, jungle, jameen’ (water, forest, land) was first called in the 1940 by Gond Adivasi Komaram Bhim in Adilabad in present day state of Telangana and was part of undivided Andhra Pradesh earlier. The call translating to ‘water, forest and land’ was first made by him as a response to the Nizam rule in pre-independent India, claiming that the rights of the Adivasis over their resources and their livelihood. A more detailed account of this struggle can be found in Bhanga Bhukya’s book ‘The roots of periphery: a history of the Gonds in the Deccan’, 2017.

⁸¹ See: <https://janchowk.com/zaruri-khabar/big-gathering-happened-at-pesa-anniversary/> accessed on 10.01.2022.

reviving the demand for autonomy and the right to a future—of their (Adivasis) own imagination. The analysis below, based on personal observation, shows the contrasting and competitive notions of agency which arise in the practice of “winning hearts and minds” and in the resistance of Adivasis against the same praxis to claim their entitlements. The (ex) guerrilla also plays an integral role— that of a conspirator on the one hand and of a confidant on the other.

The interactions during the protests illustrate and compel us to think about the notion of agency itself, and the ways in which Adivasi agency, manoeuvres through the dominant structures of the state and the non-state. It shows, that while the Adivasi is externally considered as an integral part of both radical left politics and of counterinsurgent action, the Adivasis themselves, instead of existing only in a fixed-space, live and operate ambivalently through both these spaces. The relevance of both state institutions and insurgent action is succinctly understood by Adivasis and it defines their political action, especially when it concerns holding the State accountable. However, similar accountability towards the insurgent movement while it is often not explicit is also visible, and as the last section of the chapter will illustrate, the decision to leave a movement becomes an act of accountability itself.

Similarly, the distinctions made between combatant and non-combatant- is inextricably linked to justification and legitimisation / de-legitimisation of State practices, Maoist rebellion and Adivasi protest. Life after surrender, is often little different from those who still support armed rebellion, in the sense that it also furthers the securitised development narrative — securing territory, and area domination followed by presence of district administration. Life before surrender, through violence and collective action, shapes the political imagination of the Adivasis themselves. The Adivasi, then is both— inside as ‘one of them’ and on the outside as the ‘other’.

The everyday experience of the protest camps and the state’s reaction to them shows how ideas of legitimacy, the existential and moral rationale for an armed revolution and political life- are all rife with ambiguity, especially in a context, where neither the state nor the Maoists have been successful in providing the Adivasi lifeworld, the promised emancipation. The development logic, as popularised by the 2008 planning commission report on LWE⁸², while it lists out the nuances and requisite transformation in governance

⁸² Planning commission report of the experts group on ‘Development Challenges in Extremist Affected Areas’, 2008.

and governing mentality— limits its understanding towards political action. The practice of politics, itself, in these areas, is a contestation between dominant narratives co-opting Adivasi history, religion, language, land, forest—the lifeworld and, the evolving political consciousness of Adivasis in contemporary Bastar.

6.3 “I-Witness”: Commemorating Adivasi assertion and contemporary Adivasi dissent

The month of February is marked across Bastar with commemorations of the Bhumkal rebellion of 1910. The Bhumkal rebellion of 1910 was one of the many tribal revolts documented in colonial India. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there was a major rise in tribal/Adivasi revolts throughout British India. The colonial policies of commanding and controlling forest lands and increased taxation led to widespread discontent. Before the Bhumkal revolt in 1910, colonial India had witnessed revolts such as Santhal rebellion in 1873 and the Birsa revolt in 1895. Ranajit Guha (1999) documented 110 different colonial-era peasant revolts. An analysis of the Bhumkal rebellion in Bastar as narrated and documented by Sundar (1997) traces the origins of the rebellion to one of the key leaders of the revolt, Gunda Dhur. Legend has it that it was under the leadership of Gunda Dhur, that the Adivasis of Bastar revolted against the king of Jagdalpur due to the indirect taxation and forest conservation laws implemented by the king on behalf of the British government. While Bastar was never under direct colonial rule, the region was indirectly taxed, and the Adivasi of Bastar revolted against these new legislations. These colonial legislations continued in postcolonial India and the strong presence of Maoist or Naxalite movement is credited to presence of these legal continuities as well. Mukherjee (2018), Verghese (2015) and Kennedy & King (2013) in their work establish the links between colonial indirect rule and taxation on the one hand, and resistance towards state or centralised rule by Adivasi population and the rise of Maoist insurgency in post-independence India. Mukherjee indicates path dependency in institutions of post-colonial India (2018, p. 2245) and the continuity of these path dependencies persisted beyond the 1980s well into early 2000s where Bastar was treated as “administrative backwaters” with a bounty of natural resources meant for extractive purposes. In many ways, the colonial encounter never left Bastar.

In the spirit of remembering and keeping the torch of the rebellion alive, there are various people’s events organised across the region. The primary motive of these events is to keep up the collective memory of the struggles of Adivasis against colonial and post-colonial

practices and rule which collectively contributed to pushing the Adivasis into the margins, especially when it comes to matters related to wages for forest produce, forest and land ownership, development projects, displacement, and dispossession. One such celebration was organised in the Chhote Dongar area that borders the Narayanpur, Kondagaon and Dantewada districts in the region. I was first informed about the planned celebrations in the beginning of 2020- as villagers gathered in the area to voice their disagreement against the recent establishment of three police camps without any consent from the gram panchayat. The villagers set up a stone imbibing the practice of pathalagi⁸³- to reclaim village land as their own and to hold the administration accountable for encroachment of land for policing and unilateral development purposes.

I travelled to the protest site in the first week of February 2020. The contrast between life in Narayanpur city vis-à-vis this site located at a tri-junction of three districts and deeper into the forest, was stark. While the district administration along with local journalists and politicians were gathering numbers to participate in 'Abhujmad Peace Marathon 2020', Adivasis from far off villages such as Jaatlur, Lanka, Garpa- set deep in the forests of Abhujmaad- were walking for as long as three days on foot. The Adivasi travellers hiked to the site with their vessels, a bamboo stick was used to tie up their vessels and for carrying them, along with the omnipresent bag found in bazars across Bastar, and other essentials to camp and join the celebrations and protest on this historical day. While one event was organised to introduce the outside world to the "beauty of forest" the other was a mobilisation in spirit of claiming the rights to the forest.

6.3.1 Running for peace: Abhujmaad marathon and the promise of normalcy

In parallel to the protest celebrations deep in the forest, between the months of November 2019 and February 2020, the entire township of Narayanpur was involved in gearing up for the 'Peace Marathon 2020'. Almost all the influential people of the township, including journalists, the police force, district administration and its officials, local organisations,

⁸³ A traditional practice of placing a stone at the tomb of a dead person. This practice was then used by bureaucrat B.D Sharma and an IPS officer, Bandi Oraon to place the provisions of Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act PESA in 1996- which provide autonomy to Adivasi areas and their customary claim over 'jal, jungle, jameen' (water, forest, land). Pathalgadi was first observed in Khunti district of neighbouring state of Jharkhand in 2017. The act itself can be rendered as reclaiming of space: traditional land and resources- by the Adivasi communities who are threatened by legislations making access to land for commercial purposes-smoother. As a response by the then BJP government in Jharkhand, 10,000 In case of Khunti, under Raghbir Das' ministership, 10,000 villagers in the province were charged on grounds of sedition. The cases were later revoked with swearing in of a new JMM lead government under Heman Soren. For a more detailed discussion on pathalgadi see Xaxa 2019.

political leaders, and the shopkeeper community were involved in prepping the place for a half marathon which was designed as “showing the real beauty of Abhujmad.”

In a meeting with the then Superintendent of Police Manish Gupta*, he explained to me the logistics and the thinking behind this event:

“Things have changed a lot and Narayanpur is not what it used to be till a few years ago. About till seven years ago, the police and people would be weary of going further than the straight road that goes towards Orchha or Sonpur. There were incidents of attacks and IEDs. Today, we have managed to secure so much of this area. We’ve opened new police camps just so that these areas can be secured and then we can build better infrastructure. People who are from outside, think of Narayanpur as a naxal peedit (naxal affected) area. They think this place is dangerous, but it is not so. We want people to come and see the beauty of this place. The Abhujmaad forest and the natural beauty this place has. The marathon is a way to help in dismissing these misconceptions.”

A twenty-one-kilometre stretch, the half marathon, with the tag line “Run for Abhujmad, Run for Peace” was scheduled for 8th Feb 2020. The lead-up to the day, involved coordination between district administration, the state police, local journalists, political leaders across party lines and town-wide canvassing by organising mural/wall painting drives for secondary and higher secondary school students. The timing of the marathon coincides with other seasonal and harvest festivals of the Madia and Abhujmadia community across the district. A month before the peace marathon, the Basing mela/fair/carnival [colloquially referred as the ‘sarkari’ (official) mela]⁸⁴ was organised, which has become another annual event organised jointly by the district administration and the police. The festival, as was explained to me by Keshav* during our conversation in October 2019- was an outcome from a series of conversations with the batch of surrendered guerrillas in 2013 with the then SP Kamble. Keshav’s* explanation, centred around “showing vikas” to villagers,

“Initially, when we weren’t instituted into the force, the SP sir would call and talk to us. He wanted to know, what the police could do to gain more trust and win hearts of the people/villagers. In my opinion, I told him, to win hearts we need ‘vikas’. These villagers don’t much about the outside world. But now, things are different. It was based on these discussions, that we opened Basing police camp in 2014. It took us two days to go and settle the roads, we took amnesties with us as well, which we distributed among the villagers. Utensils, blankets etc. We even did open-air movie screenings for villagers,” Keshav* explained enthusiastically.

⁸⁴ These annual village or community fairs are deeply rooted in the Adivasi lifeworld as these melas are invoking blessings of their Adivasi Gods and Goddesses. With different clans within the Madia or Abhujmaadia communities, these melas are sites of uniting the sacred power under one sacred space—seeking blessings and protection for their year ahead. The gaitas (the priest in Gond) play a pivotal role in these melas since they become the conduits for God’s word. It is this characteristic of a mela, that Basing lacks and hence the reference as “official” mela, since it is devoid of any cultural or spiritual connection with everyday life and Adivasi lifeworld.

The Basing Mela, was instituted a few years later. Basing police camp and the initiation of the was considered a triumph since before this, the police found it impossible to move beyond 15 km from the Narayanpur district headquarters. And it is at the grounds adjacent to the Basing police camp, where the half-marathon would conclude.

The route for the peace marathon, began from the main grounds at the centre of the town, opposite the newly opened cinema hall and would go up to Basing police camp. 21.12 km of the route goes through the main town centre, crossing the RKM ashram at the outskirts, then onwards to Sonpur village, ending mid-way at Basing. Pitted as one of the biggest events across Bastar region organised by the administration, the committee responsible primarily included district administration and the police staff. In an informal chat with Praveen* I was informed that the mandate of sports and youth affairs, in the district, is linked to the police department, rather than local government, highlighting its important role in ‘hearts and minds’ counterinsurgency operations. A designated Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) ranked official looks after the overall logistics, media relations, hospitality, and door-to-door enrolment, as well as campaigning across schools and colleges in the district. A part of the canvassing included dissemination of information through catchy local songs and videos- depicting the forests and the culture of Abhujmadia community. A flagship campaign video, with voice bytes from local officials including the District Collector, Police SP depicting them preparing for the marathon, along with footage of weekly markets, drone footage of the vast green and the Ram Krishna Mission (RKM) ashram with a song “Abhujmad ko jitana hai” (Let Abhujmad Win)— was popularised by playing across shops and through local rikshaw loudspeakers. Along with it, the administration, as a lead-up to the marathon, started week-long morning exercise drills in the main district grounds.



Figure 6.1: The view of the pre-race celebrations at the district ground. Source: Author

On the day of the marathon, runners and organisers gathered in the early morning just as the night sky was about to break for dawn. The streets were spruced up with bordering white lines and arrows indicating the route for the run. An hour-long warm-up with booming music “Peace marathon 2020” filled up the otherwise languid town. The 2020 edition of peace marathon, saw about 11,000 runners enrol and participate. Many came from neighbouring districts of Bastar as well as other parts of the state. The unveiling of the marathon was a sort of a star-studded affair, with senior police officials including the Inspector General (IG) of Bastar range participating, again highlighting the security force’s central role. The high political importance of the event was also shown by the fact that the felicitation ceremony, which was organised at the cleared path next to Basing police camp, was to be attended by the Chief Minister (CM) -Bhupesh Baghel, Minister of industry and excise- Kawasi Lakhma (who is an Adivasi leader from Konta, Sukma district in Bastar) and local MLA (member of Legislative Assembly) Chandan Kashyap among others. While the CM didn’t make it for the event, the others were present and handed over the prizes to the winners.

While the felicitation ceremony was centred around the marathon, Basing police ground, serving as the venue, was turned into a small fair, with food and clothing stalls, joy rides and pavilions. There were pavilions of government departments as well, which included department of forest and minor produce, baas hastshilp (bamboo and handicrafts) and the police department. The first two pavilions had local produce such as honey, local grains of millets and pulses, handicrafts of bamboo and iron. The third pavilion was where the link between the marathon and the surrender policy was made clear. This

pavilion was run by the police department and had DRG personnel sitting along with large sized posters related to recent success in anti-naxal operations and surrenders. Many of the personnel sitting, were ex-guerrillas themselves, some of whom were my interviewees as well. Earlier, as the crowd waited for the winners reach the finishing line, I had met Keshav* who was visiting especially for the marathon. Keshav* since November had moved for police training in Jagdalpur—promotion for him, was on the cards. The direct links between the ability to hold such an event, the police camp, the surrendered guerrillas, and the state asserting political control was apparent. The marathon for the Indian state, represented a symbol of their control. It was also however part of a still ongoing strategy, hence the need to have surrendered guerrillas there – to show they could safely they inhabit public spaces, serving as an example for other Maoists guerrillas who might be toying with the idea of leaving behind a life of hardships and constant move. The pavilion and the police officers present there, were a testimony to how life could be and if successful, DRG officers have the choice of rising in the ranks as well.

As crowds from Narayanpur and neighbouring villages gathered and settled themselves to cheer for the winners—the loudspeakers in sync with the projector screens played songs in halbi and Gondi. One such audio-visual in halbi was a song 'kara samarpan'⁸⁵ (please surrender)- the video made by the Narayanpur police, shows a tired and disillusioned guerrilla, who through the narrative of the song, is being cajoled by a fellow villager, to surrender. The video, shows the protagonist, leaving behind his commander and committee when he was asked to plant an IED in the premises of a school and wanders into neighbouring village. The villager, who is lip-syncing to the opening lines of the song- is trying to convince the guerrilla to surrender leaving behind a life mired with bloodshed and alleged wrong-doings. The video shows the guerrilla recounting incidents as the song plays, about the people he has killed on the behest of his committee leader- who were depicted in black uniforms (unlike the actual olive-green uniforms of the PLGA) with a very stern stance, directing the protagonist to hurt a civilian. The song ends with the guerrilla convinced about leaving his life as a guerrilla and joining the police force- with the motive of protecting the people and villages.

After a few more dance performances, as the chief guests arrived at the venue for the felicitation ceremony, the winners of the two categories along with the runners-up were

⁸⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJG8WEQRn0Q>

presented with their awards. The award money, the amount of 1.6 lakh INR⁸⁶ (1763 Euros approx.) was presented to the two winners and 61,000 INR (672 Euros approx.); 31,000 INR (342 Euros approx.) was presented to the two runner ups. The prize money was donated through forms of sponsorship by public enlisted companies such as the Bhilai Steel Power Plant (BSP), Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and National Mining Development Corporation (NMDC). These companies are involved in mining and related activities running for over three decades in the region of Bastar. It is not a stretch to observe, that 'run for peace' is financed through the aegis of the same industries that the villagers across the region have contested against because of cyclical dispossession from their forests and alienation from their lifeworld. The cost of peace is financed through minerals of the land. It reflects on the ambivalence and oversight of decision makers towards the development needs as articulated by the local Adivasi population. They could not have found a more contentious sponsor than the mining companies, given the pivotal role of mining and the dispossession it produces in the region. It seemed to symbolise an absolute determination to proceed along a development path than can only bring further dispossession to forest dwellers. The event in many ways was a testimony to unwavering belief in a development model with no pretence or attempt to meet at a common understanding as gesture for people-centric governance.

Apart from the sponsorship of prizes by mining companies and the celebration of normalcy, the notable perception management and popularising the surrender policy of the State, there was silence on the promise and nature of development in Adivasi areas. The idea of development was structured around providing security cover and building of bridges and roads. The central government has introduced a scheme called the District Mineral Fund (DMF)- which aims to share profits from mining activities in the districts affected/neighbouring the mining districts.⁸⁷ The decision-making around where the

⁸⁶ Average per capita income in southern Bastar for Adivasi community is at 54,961 INR (601 Euros approx.) according to 'The 'Status of Adivasi Livelihoods (2022)' report published by PRADAN. PRADAN is a development organisation that has been livelihoods and rural social work in Adivasi areas across Central-Eastern-Northern India for over 4 decades. This annual household survey was conducted as a household survey across 6,019 households from Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. For more: <https://www.pradan.net/sampark/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/SAL-english.pdf>

⁸⁷ The scheme was introduced in 2015 by the Central Indian government. The policy was lauded as a progressive step towards benefit-sharing by organisations looking at environment and rights, a recent evaluation report published by Centre for Social and Economic Progress, observes that Chhattisgarh has been a top performer in collection and allocation of funds. The report further comments on the nature of funds allocated and notices that while the allocation follows the stipulated guidelines as instructed in the policy, 28.7 per cent of the funds are allocated on expenditure on physical infrastructure. A more detailed discussion on this is in the conclusion chapter. For the report, see: <https://csep.org/discussion-note/district-mineral-foundation-funds-evaluating-the-performance/> (accessed on 15.02.2022).

money is allocated, as most other planning activities, renders the Adivasis invisible or as passive recipients. There is limited or no engagement with Adivasi civil society, just as was the case with the marathon. The notion and perception of development is promoted through urbanisation. Urbanisation is promoted as more 'modern' than forest dwelling. India, hence, uses its security power to advance this model of urbanisation and overlooks alternative forms of engagement to persuade marginalised groups and guerrillas about alternatives that may exist rather than just simply surrendering.



Figure 6.2: Peace Marathon, 2020. Source: Author

The desired outcome of such a sporting event is to create a sense of normalcy in these designated disturbed areas. Much like the civic action programs, the marathon is a tool in furthering the doctrine of winning hearts and minds. The event, while it follows the recent trend of organising half-marathons across-India with the objective of introducing health into the everyday life, takes a different meaning in Narayanpur or other districts of Bastar where similar marathons were planned. In Bastar, the marathon was clearly and publicly organised by the police, following a pattern established earlier in other conflict areas such as Kashmir. Senior police officers were involved in the planning, the police (and surrendered guerrillas) were prominently active in preparations, a senior police officer flagged off the race and the marathon ended on grounds adjacent to a police camp, with a recruitment pavilion promoting surrender.

On his research on Kashmiri youth and self-determination, Ganie (2019) details various civic action programs implemented by the security forces. He observes that under the

larger policy of ‘winning hearts and minds’ a special focus was given to sporting events with the aim of increasing “engagement” with the youth. In 2011, the Indian army organised the Kashmir Premier League- a cricket tournament that continued for two years. One of the objectives/outcomes of the sporting event was described by Lt. General Syed Ata Hasnain who commanded the Indian Army in Kashmir, as “... we kept 40,000 people off the road (away from protests), primarily watching, playing, clapping, and doing anything...” (2019, p. 18).

Ganie, mentions the pan-India tour “watan ki sair” (travel to the nation) which takes Kashmiri youth across mainland India to introduce them to democratic India. Similar trips were organised in these parts of Central India as well. During visits across villages in Narayanpur block, while attending the jatras (local festivals for Adivasi deities), the youth present spoke to me about their visits across India including New Delhi, all organised by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs. Ironically, the selection of youth across the Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) districts was done in consultation with the Central Armed Paramilitary Forces (CAPF) deployed (Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, 2020).

Set in the backdrop of an active insurgency, the marathon is viewed and understood as a collective responsibility or duty of the people living in the district, especially for areas/villages closer to the district headquarters. The canvassing along with the large participation during the run-up and on the day of the marathon—was a breath of energy in an otherwise quiet town. The marathon, considered as one of the biggest sporting events across Bastar, for many is an indication of progress or a movement towards gradual urbanisation of a predominantly rural district and the region overall. The marathon reflected a much-increased Indian state presence, it symbolised for them their success, but it was not only about celebration, the presence of surrendered guerrillas at the end, the use of the Basing police camp as a finishing post, and the videos and songs, throughout the celebrations, all reflected the importance of the ongoing programme of surrender and the security needs of the state.

Just as the town was wrapping up the celebrations, between the administrative boundary of Narayanpur and neighbouring district of Kondagaon, villagers were coming together to mark the 110th anniversary of Gunda Dhur and his resistance. Set between a tri junction of Kondagaon, Narayanpur and Dantewada—the Gondwana samaj grounds in the village of Becchha had been a camping site for the villagers travelling from neighbouring districts

for over a month. The section below gives a thick description of the days spent amidst the visiting and protesting villagers against the recent police camp that was established in January of 2020.

6.3.2 Celebrating Gunda Dhur and Resisting militarisation

I managed to travel into the tri-junction the day after I witnessed the peace marathon. My ride and contact were Bikram*, who was the person who had called me in early January informing me about this gathering, in his words “this place is in the middle of three districts, in the interior and you should come. Pathalgadi rituals will be performed. There will be a discussion about Tularmetta as well- it’s a shrine.” The conversation was over the phone in a muffled tone. Bikram was careful about how much is shared through telephonic conversations. I could not go then, but in the next month each time I would meet him, accidentally in Naraynapur town/city, he would tell me that we will go but right now he is busy with panchayat elections. During this period, I also had a call from activist Soni Sori. Soni called asking me about these protests/gathering. She wanted to come from Dantewada and was not sure about the whereabouts of the village and the route she could take. She had received a call from a certain Birar* inviting her to come for the procession and to listen to the demands of the villagers coming from interior of madh (a colloquial way of referring to Abhujmaad). Soni had her commitments for Bhumkal divas in Dantewada, and she had called to ask me what details I knew about the protests going on against the new police camp that was established a month ago.

The police camp in question is the Kadiyameta police camp which was established at the intersection of Narayanpur and Kondagaon districts. The police camp is a part of the same plan of the government to connect North Bastar to Barsur in Dantewada district. Cutting through dense forest, Kadiyameta police camp is one of the three new police camps established by the Chhattisgarh police across Narayanpur, Kondagaon and Dantewada. The villagers evoking the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA) guidelines, were challenging the administration for establishing these police

camps within a 5 km radius of each other⁸⁸ without any consent from the Gram Sabha⁸⁹ of villages that share borders within these three districts. There was a stark contrast, between the response to the peace marathon and this protest gathering. None of the prominent local journalists had covered the protests. A few of local journalists that I had been acquainted with, were in contrast very committed, attending meetings for the marathon, organising publicity and enrolment of runners. The villagers had undergone a different kind of marathon walk, with their essentials, walking for up to 3 days to congregate in what was being referred as Gondwana samaj⁹⁰ meeting ground.

The meeting ground, set at this tri-junction of the three districts, was a strategic choice. The tri-junction would serve as a convenient space for villagers across districts to attend the commemoration as well as share information regarding everyday occurrences in their respective villages. Our travel to this village was itself an adventure. Bandhu* had agreed to come with me, but he requested that I keep my travel plan and even my absence inconspicuous from my neighbours and the staff at Saathi. It had been about a month since the villagers started gathering and protesting the new police camp at Kadiyameta. He was afraid that if word spread about my plans, there could be a possibility of police stopping us from going to the protest site. We decided to travel on 9th morning and enroute, Bikram's motorbike chain had to be replaced, since the rains over the previous few days, the mud road which led to Becha- the village closest to the Gondwana ground, was wet

⁸⁸ As per the guidelines, under PESA, no development related activity can be implemented without the consultation of the Gram Sabha (the entire population of the villages enrolled in the electoral rolls). The same holds true for construction of police camps. In Bastar region, across districts, villagers have one continuous grouse, that none of the development projects (including mining, road construction, dams etc) are done in consultation with the Gram Sabha. PESA which was passed in 1996, was expected to be implemented in areas with Adivasi population across Indian states to promote self-governance. The state of Chhattisgarh which was carved out from Madhya Pradesh in 2000, hasn't amended their Panchayati laws to accommodate the central law. In November 2020, the state issued the draft amendment and it has been circulated to different ministries and departments for review/consultation. During my field visit in December 2021, while interacting with Alok Putul, a senior journalist and environmental activist based in Chhattisgarh, remarked that the chances of the draft amendment passing in the state legislative are bleak because implementation of PESA kanoon (law) would eventually mean no access to natural resources by the industrialists and other corporates who at present can flout rules for their mining projects. An explainer on the same was published by the Indian Express newspaper: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/chhattisgarh-pesa-act-explained-7635076/>. Accessed on 13 April 2022.

⁸⁹ Gram Sabha is an assembly of people in the village above the age of 18 years. The Gram Sabha, as per the PESA Act of the Indian constitution gives power to the Gram Sabha/village assembly for making decisions related to the development, and socio-cultural life in the Adivasi areas.

⁹⁰ Gondwana Samaj is one of the many local Adivasi civil society groups. Gondwana- referring to the Gond Adivasis, is a part of a larger struggle for demand of a separate 'Gondwana' state. The movement for Gondwana state while gathered steam in 1960s, the request and referendums around this subject were ignored by larger political parties and politicians. Gondwana samaj- though are smaller village and district level organisations representative of the Gonds in the area and take up issues related to everyday living in these lands. The collective is responsible for organising larger district/state level meetings on issues of land, revival of Gond cultural religious practices and assertion of Koya/Gond identity. For more on demand for Gondwana land see <https://caravanmagazine.in/politics/heera-markam-fight-political-empowerment-gonds> (accessed on 18 May 2021).

and slushy and a new chain was needed so that we could smoothly ride through the slush avoiding any slippage.

This was the route of choice, because it had fewer police check points which may have hindered us from travelling further. It took us over half a day to travel from Chhote Donger to Becha with a break in a village enroute. We met with a group of villagers who were coming back from Gondwana samaj meeting. They had camped there for 3 days and were returning to their village which fell on the other side of Chhote Donger, where they will join another Bhumkal celebration. By the time we reached Becha, it was close to three in the evening. We had left Narayanpur at sharp 7 am in the morning. With all the breaks and the changes in our route, reaching the destination felt almost like winning a marathon. The ride wasn't an easy one, along with encountering a slushy road, we crossed around five brooks (streams) which meant getting off the motorbike and pushing the vehicle and wading through to make it to the other side. The entire journey was on mud-roads and occasionally encountering a search party of security personnel or villagers making their way to the closest local health centre at Chhote Donger.

Becha, is one of the many villages that until the forest clearance for road construction, would have been considered an "interior" village⁹¹. The village itself has streams passing through its various paras (residence clusters) and pahad (hills) on one side. We went to Birar's house which was one of the bigger houses in his para. We were greeted by his wife and Birar's extended family including mother, sisters, and children. Sumari* Birar's wife was this frail lady who greeted Bandhu with a knowing and familiar smile. Bandhu and Birar were cousins. By the time we reached their house, it was already past noon, the sun was high up. We decided to head to the protest grounds. We walked along with Sumari her children and Girdhar* another leader from Gondawana Samaj.

The Gondwana Samaj grounds, was situated between two streams where 3000 villagers from across the three districts were camping. Situated amidst the agricultural fields, this cleared up area, one of the senior members informed me, used to be the guest house of the forestry department till the early 90s. The forest department officials on their way

⁹¹ The notion of 'interior' village itself is contested. Interior from where and for who? In pure administrative parlance, interior villages are classified as places that have partial or non-existent connectivity through roads from district/administrative centres. These villages are situated deep into the forests where access is possible through motorbikes or by foot. During discussions, many times, my interlocutors would jokingly comment "who's interior? For us, these villages are and have always been accessible."

back to the district headquarters would use the guest house to stay overnight. The guest house was dismantled by the dada-log⁹² in mid 90s as a part of asserting the rights of the villagers over the forest land and to break from the maltreatment meted out by the officials towards the Madia community in these parts. The villagers had walked for an average of three days with their supplies for food and cooking in hand. Enduring the rain, the men, women, and children came together to celebrate their Adivasi icon- Gunda Dhur and their quest for autonomy. At the centre of the ground was a shrine dedicated to 'Persa Pen'- the Koitur supreme God. The shrine also had sacks full of supplies, from vegetables to sugar and tea. It was managed by the group of volunteers and senior members from the samaj, documenting and managing logistics. Next to the second stream was a community kitchen serving food for everyone especially for the volunteers of young Adivasi boys and girls who performed duties of managing crowds, leading the protests, and ensuring the safety of everyone there.

Several people were stationed at the police camp; I was told that about 3000 people were present for the celebration. Birar told me that at the beginning of the month they saw about 8000 people gathering. The number of people gathered when we reached the grounds was much smaller. Some people were moving around preparing for the evening ahead. We ate lunch from the community kitchen where we were joined by some others' who had come to report and document the day. One such person who introduced himself was Narendra* was a self-appointed local reporter who would publish in Deshbandhu and Patrika- regional dailies in Hindi. I noticed after the lunch, that Narendra and his friend went around taking video bites of people and asking them about the nature of the gathering and what the people wanted to say.

⁹² 'Dada-log' is a term colloquially used to refer to the Maoist guerrillas and ideologues. Another common term used is 'Mama' among the villagers.



Figure 6.3: The villagers gathered in front of the police camp. Source: Author

At about 3 pm the protestors started to return to this camping site. I saw all of them walking back in one line with various banners, silently marching back to their own campsites reuniting with their fellow villagers or family members. It was then, that I could understand the massive headcount that earlier Birar had mentioned to me. At an approximation, I could see that they were in the thousands. I met some of the youth who were volunteering for crowd management. All of them had a green cloth headband around them. Bandhu told me that the colour green signifies Gondwana Samaj or volunteers from Sarv Adivasi Samaj (an umbrella organisation under which local Adivasi organisations collectivise across Chhattisgarh), and a red headband is worn by the dadalog⁹³ and members of its cultural wing- CNM (Chetna Natya Manch).

One of the girls from the volunteer group, whose home was in neighbouring district of Bijapur, spoke to me about the protest rallies for the past month. She mentioned that the district SP and the collector had visited them a week ago,

“...they said that the orders for road construction and the police camp come from the Central government. The state government or the district government can't stall these projects or make any decision. They even heard the villagers. Some of the villagers said that they don't want these roads, but desire clean drinking water, a functional health centre and a school. The SP said they are willing to dig and present the villagers with a tube well if the villagers identify where they need it. But we didn't agree for that. We don't want the police to give us these as gifts. This is our

⁹³ Dadalog, as explained in Chapter 4, is a term used by the locals to refer to the Maoists. The word translates to 'older brother'.

right. Why should they come and encroach on our forest and make these roads? Eventually we will be at their mercy, and they will make things violent for us.”⁹⁴

While not everyone was conversant, there were men and women who spoke hesitantly about Bhumkal and the significance it held for them and their right to the land. Narendra in a slightly boisterous manner was moving from one cluster to another where people coming from same villagers were camping. A group of people who came from Dantewada spoke about their missing children, who were picked up by the police as Maoists. Another group of people spoke about their concerns with the construction of Bodhghat dam and apprehensions regarding the land that will be submerged. A lot of people spoke about the future development and mining activity in Aamdai ghati- which fell within Narayanpur district. Later, at night once after dinner was finished by all, the people got together close to the shrine and discussed issues related to PESA kanoon (law), Adivasi rights and autonomy over ‘jal, jungle, jameen’.

The next day, when I had walked to the site of the police camp, the police personnel (comprising mostly of the District Reserve Guards-(DRG)) did a check on me. The commanding officer, who I had interviewed, was suspicious of my presence at the site. One of the personnel recounted the negotiations between the SP and the protestors,

“...we told them that they will have to take their demands to the Governor who will route it to the PMO. After all these matters are not in the hands of the district administration. These villagers gave us the choicest of abuses, you were not here yesterday madam, you would’ve heard. Even we would never use such a language with them. If you ask me, we understand that it’s not these people’s fault. These Adivasis are very simple people. We know they are gullible. And they are just saying all these slogans and protesting under the influence of the naxals. Or else why will they say no to SPs proposition of the police department building clean water facilities? That is what these people desired, right? So why did they say no!”⁹⁵

said the gentleman, who hailed from rural Madhya Pradesh (MP).

This question of the legitimacy of the protest comes across as a standard strategy adapted to create confusion over the authenticity of the protestors. Such an argument, especially by the police and governing administration, knowingly reduces or limits Adivasi voices and agency. The Adivasi are just ‘simple people’— not protestors in their own right. It raises doubts for an observer who isn’t acquainted with the realities of Bastar as a region. It attempts to limit the spread of such news and incidents in the peri-urban areas such as

⁹⁴ Conversation with Malti* on 10th February 2020, Bechha, Kondagaon.

⁹⁵ Conversation with Chhattisgarh Police Personnel on 10th February 2020, Kadiyametta Police camp, Kondagaon

the district headquarters and other neighbouring districts, hoping that the villagers will tire and leave. The claims of the police personnel create an illusionary binary of two warring sides: the police or the government of India versus the Naxalites or Maoists. This binary obfuscates the realities inside these forests and the areas around it. It either considers all villagers as Maoists or motivated by the Maoists or pits them as supporters of the Indian nation. In these areas, where the Maoists have had a stronghold since the early 1980s, the relationships with the Maoist guerrillas are not just based on ideological grounds, the relationship is of kinship (Shah, 2013). This can be illustrated with an incident which occurred on the day of my arrival in Beccha.

After spending some time with the protestors, Birar and his family invited me back to their home, which was not far from the Gondwana Samaj ground. On my walk back, I hesitantly asked about the Maoist memorial we had earlier crossed. Sumari told me that the memorial was constructed to commemorate a villager who had joined the guerrillas and was shot in an encounter seven years ago. She told me that after his death, the family was survived by his father and the father too passed away shortly after son's death. Sumari told me that the village used to have a functional school with a roof, but the school was destroyed by the Maoists themselves during the time of Salwa Judum (the formation and history of Judum is explained in Chapter four). She added that now the school is run in a machan of sorts in the other corner of the village but has no roof which creates issues during the monsoons.

We reached their house and were offered tea and while I was acquainting myself with the rest of the family, I noticed Birar leave for some work. He went in the opposite direction to the protest site, I was told that after a walk of about 5 km, he would reach the hills and Birar would then have a steep climb. After a gap of a couple of hours, Birar returned along with a small keg of salphi- the local brew extracted out of salphi trees. He took me into a corner and offered me some salphi. As we sat drinking this light brew, he told me that he had visited the dadalog. The Area commander and his team were camping at a site about 7 to 10 kms away from the village,

"I told them about you. They said they are happy to know people from outside have come in solidarity. Then I said to them that today has been a very long day and that I do feel like a drink or two. I went and got the brew from the trees nearby to their camp! Sanjay* the area commander is there with some of his people. They are on a vigil but camping far away from this site," said Birar.

As we slowly drank through this fresh ale, Birar told me about his meetings with civil rights activist and academician Gautam Navlakha and Jan Myrdal⁹⁶

“...I was very young then when they had come and visited us here. The *sian* (older) gentleman, was a foreigner who couldn't walk. So, he was put on a cot and some of us trekked with him and showed him villages of Abhujmad. Gautam Navlakha was a true buddhijeevi (intellectual). He spoke to us at length about matters of political assertion, human rights and fighting against oppression,” Birar confided.⁹⁷

He later told me that he was arrested by the police in 2016 when the Federal government had declared demonetisation of certain money bills, “... they had arrested me because they were suspicious that I am carrying money on behalf of the naxals and changing them in the banks. Later I was released, they couldn't make a case against me,” Birar mentioned. Birar's younger brother works in the district administration, and they frequently visit the Kondagaon headquarters especially for official work. And Sumari —his wife - used to volunteer as an anganwadi⁹⁸ worker, cooking food and helping with other activities.

Through the course of this night and the next night, I spend time with Birar and his family. It was evident, though we didn't explicitly discuss it⁹⁹ that villagers were familiar with and knew the guerrillas personally. On the third morning of my stay, Birar went with a bag of medication to the Maoist camp to help a sick guerrilla. The village nurse, Meena* who was with me confided “... they take medicines for them sometimes. Some medicines come from my collection, and some are purchased from the market in the city.”

That same evening, while we all were chopping vegetables to prepare for that evenings' dinner, Birar, looked at me and spoke,

“... we would not vote for any other party if it was not for Bandhu. Since he campaigned for Ajit Jogi's party, we voted for them. We had BJP for fifteen years, what did they do for us? Even the present Congress government, what have they done till now? The police camps

⁹⁶ Gautam Navlakha and Jan Myrdal had travelled into the liberated zones in Dandakaranya and had spent time with the PLGA and Maoist leaders. Navlakha's book 'Days and Nights in the Heartland of Rebellion' and Myrdal's book 'Red Star over India: As the Wretched of the Earth are Rising' are some of the definitive texts that describe the guerrilla life and the working of the 'Jantana Sarkar' (People's government). Gautam Navlakha is currently in Byculla Jail in Mumbai along with 12 other civil rights activists popularly termed as BK-13 under UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act) on charges of conspiracy of assassinating Prime Minister Narendra Modi and on grounds of being 'left-wing' ideologues.

⁹⁷ Conversation with Birar, 10th February 2020, Bechha, Kondagaon.

⁹⁸ Anganwadis are childcare centres running across rural India. These creches are a part of the state welfare program aiming at combatting child malnourishment. These centres are run by the villagers themselves and have become an important space for discussing and disseminating knowledge and programs related to child and maternal health.

⁹⁹ As someone who was meeting the household for the first time, in the context of an on-going protest the police. I instinctively censured myself from asking pointed questions which may feel intrusive. The police personnel were suspicious of the protest and the people organising it. The villagers showed me drone cameras that were sent into the villages by the police, to check out the area. The police camp was heavily deployed and the knowledge of a Maoist camp 7 km away from the village, led me to be cautious with the nature of my questions and inquiry.

won't stop. We don't have many facilities. If truth be said, CPI is the only party that thinks about the poor."¹⁰⁰

The morning after my arrival, as the household went about their chores of cooking, I got a chance to move a bit around in the para where they resided. Bandhu showed me a few damaged/abandoned homes and told me that these were houses of two brothers who earlier worked as couriers for dadalog. In the course of their work, they ended up helping the police officers as well. The result was that the brothers were asked to leave the village. The incident, he recounted took place seven to eight years ago. We went over to a house where a group of men were sitting and discussing the previous nights' gathering and the debates that took place at the Gondwana grounds. While speaking to me as a group, most of them were circumspect about the nature of my questions.

While walking around the para where Birar and his family lived, one of the corner houses, before the para opened into the field on one side and climbed further into the forest on the other side, some of the men were gathered around. A group of six men, sitting outside, the discussion around the protest brought to light the fear of police entering their homes. A 20-year-old, who I later met at the main organising hut at the Gondwana samaj told us,

"...they came, with DRG specially, Sunila* and Somu*, and led into this village. She made the leader of their group stop here and pointed me out. She said that I use to attend the meetings regularly with dadalog- so they beat me, slapped me, and threw me on the ground. They broke my phone."

Everyone agreed that Sunila* knew this village and this area very well.

"She used to be a member of this area committee. She would roam around the villages along with her partner Somu*. Both knew us all. Now both have joined the DRG. They surrendered and got their due, but why are they coming and harassing us? We really fear how much more intimidation will we see by the police. Ever since the camp has opened. It has been two months now, once a month, when they go for their operations, they march along our villages and show their strength. One of the two new police camps that have been set-up, the Kadenar camp is on Sunila's fathers land," the boy, Budri* confided.

Sunila* was not unfamiliar to me. I had approached her requesting an interview, one day when she and I bumped into each other at a local store. She told me that she will when she is free, which is usually a way of politely refusing the interview. Later, this was confirmed when I had met Divya* one evening. Divya mentioned that Sunila* had complained about me to her, "...she said, why does that didi* want to talk to me? I am don't want to talk to her. So, I told her, if you don't want to, you can tell her," Divya told me one

¹⁰⁰ Conversation with Birar during dinner time, February 2020.

evening when she and I had met for tea. Divya went on to tell me about Sunila* and Somu* and their troubled relationship when they were inside the party,

“Sunila, was with someone else before, then she decided to be with Somu. And she and Somu from the beginning didn’t have a good relationship. She would sometimes hit him too. But even despite that, they both decided to surrender together. It has been a year, Sunila* has accused Somu* of domestic violence. Which is far from true. We know Somu and have seen him when he was inside (as a guerrilla) and now as well. She is now with another person, who works in the DRG. Sunila* is close with the DRG commander. She has been very proactive in providing them information. She is on good terms with them.”¹⁰¹

The men sitting together that morning in Bechha, agreed to the information about police using local ex-guerrillas’ familial relationships for security work, I noticed their hesitancy in speaking about the micropolitics of their village, especially to someone who is new to them.



Figure 6.4: The site where pathalgadi was erected—Gondwana Samaj Grounds. Source: Author

The next day, when I visited the protest grounds, the volunteers were sitting in the main centre and accepting handwritten notes from villagers across various blocks. These notes were handwritten complaints, requests, or solidarity messages for the protest. As I perused through these notes, a few were striking, they spoke about police harassment

¹⁰¹ Chat with Divya on December 2019.

when the personnel crossed their villages during searching operations. One complaint from village Tadopara, written in Hindi gave an account of arrests and shooting. The note said:

“Our people from the village were going to Orccha for the annual mela¹⁰²were arrested from Orchha and brought to Narayanpur. They were in police custody for two years. Similarly, another villager was shot dead by the police suspecting him as a naxal. This is what the police does when it enters our villages. We don’t want the police to come into the forests. They will not let us live peacefully. We are people of the jungle; how will we live with them (police)?”
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These undated notes spoke about illegal detention, arrests, and deaths on suspicions of being an informer or a naxal. The same night, when Bharat Kashyap* was addressing people at the grounds, he spoke about the incident that took place in Gumarakka¹⁰⁴ village. The village was in the news in September when during an operation, five naxals were allegedly shot. In the encounter, one security force member died, and another one was injured. It was alleged that one of the villagers who was shot was wrongly identified as a naxal and his wife with her two children had hung herself. This tragic news was discussed around in Narayanpur city as well.

Praveen* himself was disturbed by this story. He had later informed me, that Bikram* and some others — a team of four men had gone for a fact-finding to the village as well. There was chatter among some, that another female from the village had been sexually assaulted by someone from the police team during the operation. The Gumarkka incident was shocking for many, since the village, which is cooped deeply inside the Abhujmaad, is considered a Maoist stronghold. Bikram, confirmed to me, that even though it was a Maoist stronghold, the villager was innocent—he according to Bikram* was a civilian with no involvement in guerrilla activities.

The tragedy of Gumarkka or Tadopara isn’t unique to these two villages. Across all villages, there are stories of detention, assault —both sexual and physical, and many arrests, leading to people awaiting trial. Through the course of my meeting people across the district and within Narayapur block, these stories were a normal consequence of the conflict. The pervasive violence and show of force, is an outcome of this five-decade long

¹⁰² The annual mela (fair) are harvest festivals organised by the madia community across narayanpur and orccha block in the months of Feburary and March usually. These fair are community led events where villagers come together to worship their deities for blessings for the year ahead. Further, these fairs become a space for relatives and villagers to meet each other living in faraway villages to congregate.

¹⁰³ Note shared from villagers and collected by the organisers- were shared with me for documentation.

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.jagran.com/news/national-husband-killed-in-encounter-with-two-innocent-children-hangs-mla-demands-investigation-19568535.html>

war, which tends to polarise the perspectives of local population depending on the proximity to the administrative headquarters or to the forest lifeworld.

These themes resonated with the content of the protest's evening address by Kashyap*. Speaking in Gondi, he spoke about Adivasis being stuck between two governments, where one is supporting them and another which seeks compliance through coercion and use of their own Adivasi people (referring to the DRG). Kashyap* further elaborated on the need to educate themselves about pathalgadi and PESA kanoon by informing more Adivasis about this. The address was reminding Adivasis that the struggle for the forest is legitimate, and they have a right to seek what is rightfully theirs.

Spending this time walking around the protests and talking to people I was repeatedly struck by the question of agency. Clearly there were committed Maoists, but there were many more who were focused on issues as recounted in the notes to the rally, in conversations and speeches. They were concerned at the loss of forest; that roads and police camps would be followed by mines or dams. They contrasted the cost of roads, mines, and camps with the lack of basic health services, wells, or schools, but they were not willing to trade their wish for autonomy to secure such services via the police and/or the paramilitaries. They spoke about abuse and coercion by security forces. The villagers had their own demands, their own perspectives. They may have felt intimidated about voicing their difficulties vis-à-vis the Maoist guerrillas or leadership; or they may have seen them as supporters, but they certainly had specific and detailed concerns of their own concerning land and forest rights. These conversations would circle back to the need for autonomy in governance and control over their resources.

Shah (2011; 2013) , explains that the organising and mobilising of communities especially the Dalits and Adivasi communities and their resilience in maintaining revolutionary ties. Shah over her long engagement with the movement in the state of Jharkhand illustrates the kinship ties and close relationships many of the guerrilla's form with the villages, at first through their informer networks but over prolonged engagement, relationships evolve and emerge and, in some instances, transform into ties of kinship. Tyagi (2016) through her fieldwork in Andhra Pradesh, concludes that the answer to building resilience for revolutionary mobilisation despite state-repression, is

“... influenced by the relative economic position of the most dispossessed individuals to others within a village (especially in instances where it wasn't an Adivasi populous village), combined with economic ties and appropriately formulated movement strategies that countered state absence and or state violence. The movement earned and

retained legitimacy by using violence in a limited, although targeted form (against the state and community approved targets)" (Tyagi, 2016, p. 148).

What I observed during my time at the protest gathering and celebration in Bechha showed close familial ties with the guerrilla leadership. In an Adivasi populous village, the villagers through their customs of shared labour on each other's farms, maintained close familial ties, where the presence of the guerrillas was not considered to be an aberration or coercion. The sustained presence and involvement of the movement, saw the intermingling of the village with the guerrillas and in some instances, the area commanders and divisional chiefs are Adivasis belonging to either the Madia community or to the Dandami¹⁰⁵ community (who hail from South Bastar- Sukma, Bijapur districts). These ties in this instance, just as shown by Shah and Tyagi, indicate closer relationships between the Adivasi and the guerrillas. In some instances, the familial links or ties of kin, continue in the guerrillas' life in the aftermath of their surrender or retirement. The instance of Sunila*, whose family resides in a neighbouring village from Kadiyameta, indicated ties with both villagers (civilians), the police or state security forces and the revolutionaries.

Such stories are widespread. Sheila* a surrendered guerrilla serving in the DRG, has an uncle and his family who are active in the Maoist movement, while the friend with whom she had joined the movement, surrendered, and now lives in one of the villages inside Abhujmad. Sheila's husband, Sanket* serving in the DRG, is well respected in the villages across borders of Bijapur and Orchha block. He, at the time of Salwa Judum had helped them escape violence while he was an active guerrilla, now as one of the older contingents of surrendered/DRG personnel, he helps the police in excursions and searching operations inside the forest.

These complex histories and lived experiences come with constant iterations and warnings from the Maoist leadership and the active insurgents as well. The section below, illustrates this through an exploration of Maoist circulars, circulated in the district and at large, as words of caution to the Adivasi community, which gives a wider context to the conversations I was personally part of.

¹⁰⁵ The tribes across Bastar have been classified into different sub-tribes namely, Dandami, Madia/Muria, Hill Muria/Abhujmadia, Dorla- while they speak Gondi, there are different variations of Gondi that are spoken among them. The new generation of scholars, activists- from the region, are constructing a pan-Gondi identity through the understanding and use of the term 'Koitur' or 'Koi'- which as explained in Chapter 4, refers to the 'people of the land'.

6.3.3 Maoist Response through Circulars

The Maoist circulars both those issued in the local area committees and those published by the press in different zones, serve as an important source of communication of the Party's ideological stance, as well as providing insight into the everyday political assertions by/of the CPI (Maoist). Each zone, such as the Dandakaranya¹⁰⁶ Zonal Committee has a press division where the guerrillas work on a rotational basis. It is through this press (in these areas, the guerrillas refer to it as DK Press) that communication with citizens and civilians in the area, as well as larger audiences across the districts is maintained.



Figure 6.5: Maoist banner on boycotting the local elections in 2019. We encountered this banner on our visit to one of the interior villages. Source: Author

During my fieldwork, on commemorative events, such as eighth December, the founding day for People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA), are celebrated as a week-long commemoration. As a run-up to such ear-marked events, the press division is involved in

¹⁰⁶ Dandakaranya, the name finds its reference from the Hindu epic, 'The Ramanaya'. Dandakaranya is the dense forest in which Rama, Sita and Laxman travelled to from their capital in Ayodhya to serve the fourteen year exile. In the epic, the unexplored and dense forests of Dandakaranya are considered to be the home of Asuras, whose king was Ravana. Arguably, these parts of Bastar and neighbouring areas of Orissa, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh are considered to be part of Dandakaranya. The Adivasis, in these areas, consider Ravana as their king/God and in recent past, have challenged the brahmin/savarna politics of venerating the Ramanayana and in the process, denigrating Ravana and the Asuras'—who in description are similar to the Gonds/Koiturs residing in these parts. Dandakarnaya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC)- one of the main zonal committees of the CPI (Maoist) which is responsible for operations in the region including the functioning of the 'Jantana Sarkar (people's government).

publishing A-4 sized circulars, meant as publicity materials. Other than these, there are detailed circulars as well, which are published by the Central Committee of the CPI (Maoist) that concern the larger policy and ideological positioning of the Maoist party. These circulars, though not always accessible in the areas, are available through the online platform www.bannedthought.com. The repository as the name suggests, archives circulars, posters, documents, and other news articles concerning radical left politics across the world and is not just restricted to the Indian radical left. The repository provides links connected to various solidarity networks spread across the globe on the intersection of radical politics, indigenous politics, race and subaltern movements. It is through these networks, that international solidarity across left movements is established, permitting sharing of knowledge.

The circulars available through the repository provides access to, or a window into, the discussions and discussions steered by the Maoists. Most of the circulars are available post-facto, hence ascertaining a current updated analysis about the internal considerations or rumination of the Maoist party is difficult to establish. However, given it is a guerrilla movement, these official circulars, analysis documents, and life stories are the closest credible source for gaining insights. While the analysis of revolutionary movements through biographical accounts provides a peek into the inner worlds of radical leaders, they may lack the outwardly looking messaging vis-à-vis contemporary reality.

One of the most striking of the circulars, which was distributed locally, and even published in the local dailies in Narayanpur, was related to the three surrendered DRG commandos. The circular (left image below) called for three of these surrendered/DRG commandos to be excluded by the Madia community because of their actions and involvement in various searching operations in the forests. The circular calls them traitors to the community, accusing them of threatening and destroying Adivasi life. The circular expands on identifying other Adivasi civilians who according to the Maoists are traitors since they have wrongfully used development funds assigned to the village. In a similar vein, the image on the right, is a circular targeting one Madia Adivasi who was involved in advocacy work related to land rights in consultation with another civil rights activist, Shubhranshu Choudhary—who popularised community radio ‘CGNet Swara’ in Bastar region.

सोनपुर में नक्सली पर्व से फैली दहशत

नक्सलवाद

नक्सलियों ने 2 से 8 दिसंबर तक पीपुल्स फ्रंट का कार्यक्रम का किया।

माडिया समाज के बहिष्कार करने व आम आंदोलन में हिंसा करने को प्रोत्साहित करने का उद्देश्य है।

www.maoist.org

उद्देश्य किमा है कि पीपुल्स फ्रंट की 19 वीं वर्षगांठ पर क्रान्तिकारी जन सरकारों, जनसंघटनों के नेताओं, कार्यकर्ताओं और जनता के प्रति 2 से 8 दिसंबर तक क्रान्तिकारी उत्साह और दृढ़ता के साथ नक्सली, तथा ही डींगलाने के जनरो को माडिया समाज के बहिष्कार को प्रोत्साहित करने के लिए है।

सुझुपू नुदेटी व अन्य डींगलानी गुणवों को माडिया समाज से बहिष्कार करो!

पीपुल्स फ्रंट की 19 वीं वर्षगांठ को 2 से 8 दिसंबर तक क्रान्तिकारी उत्साह और दृढ़ता के साथ मनाएं!

पीपुल्स फ्रंट की 19 वीं वर्षगांठ को अवसर पर क्रान्तिकारी जन सरकारों, जनसंघटनों के नेताओं एवं कार्यकर्ताओं और जनता के लिए माड डिविजनल कमेटी माकपा (माओवादी)

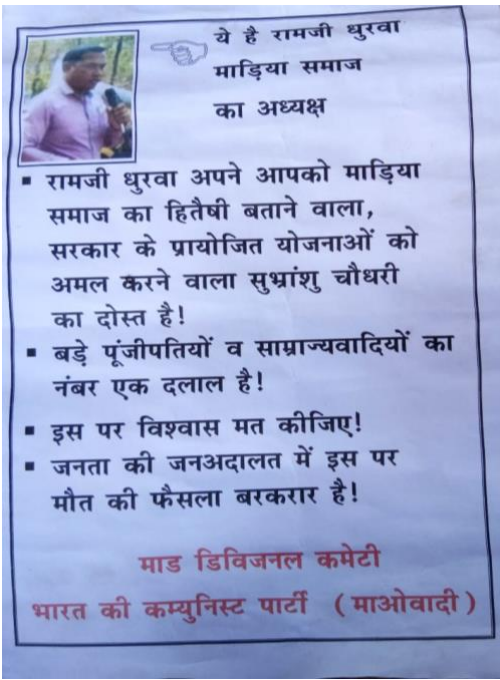


Figure 6.6: Maoist circulars that were reported and shared during fieldwork. Source: Author

In both these circulars, the Maoists label these men as ‘traitors’ to the Adivasi community at large, and as conspirators with government administration to take the rights of the Adivasis away from them. In case of Shubhranshu Choudhary, another pamphlet (see Appendix) questioning the motivation behind his interest in working on Adivasi issues was issued in January 2019. Choudhary, as a journalist for the BBC in the early 2000s, was one of the few scribes who had access to the Maoist guerrillas. His book ‘Let’s call him Vasu’ (2012) chronicles Choudhary’s conversations with a Maoist ideologue and recounts the journey he made into the forests on the invitation of the Maoist leadership. However, when published, the observations made by the author about the Maoist movement, didn’t sit well with the party leadership. The Maoist party saw this too, as an act of betrayal. In my interactions with Choudhary, a decade after the publication of the book, he maintains, “... the book was based on what I saw, and it is my analysis and commentary. Whether the party likes it or not, is not my responsibility. But after that, they have maintained an antagonistic relationship with me. Which is one of the reasons they now are hostile towards my initiatives in the region.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Conversation with Shubhranshu Choudhary in Raipur, Chhattisgarh, August 2019.

While the micro-politics and the differences between the Maoists and targeted individuals is out of the purview or objective of the overall analysis, it shows the nature of political dialogue and space for dialectics within the radical left movement. At the same time, the above two circulars show a similar practice, and a demand for loyalty from the population/civilians at large. The evocation of a true and authentic Adivasi versus the money-minded, characterising them as greedy, fixes this binary for the civilian population, which is then used as a justification by the Maoists to call out a decree which could range from excommunication to death—through the process of the people’s courts. Another pamphlet addressed to informers (see Appendix), issued in January 2019, sends out a warning to the village informers asking them to not side with the police and the district administration. A two-page long pamphlet, it then requests these informers to come back to their Adivasi life in the village and once they openly accept their mistake (crime), the Maoists assure the informers that the party will not harm them. Lastly, the pamphlet ends with the appeal to join the movement as it serves as the only path for correcting the course of Indian democracy.

These appeals, and the assurance of safety for police informers and their families serve as public service messages however, whether they are seen as a genuine effort by the party to humanise people and acknowledge individual agency and choice is debatable. Ironically, most of these circulars, never address issues of non-functional or destroyed schools, lack of clean drinking water or accountability of these past Maoist actions. Just as the state machinery through their media perception campaign aims to send a message, the Maoists use these forms for public communication. And in both, there is an implicit evocation of loyalty and purism, from the State for the sake of nationhood and from the Maoists for an imagined nation. As Spencer rightfully observes, regardless of the failure of the State to address the current social and material injustices, it shapes the political and moral imagination for the most radical of revolutionaries (2007, p. 99). The structures and practices, of both the Indian state and the Maoists, are grounded in the contestation about the State and in gaining moral and popular support through similar ‘winning hearts and minds’ strategies of communication, mimicking each other in appearing proportionally dogmatic or authoritative.

In these similarities in their praxis, both the state and the Maoists behave like each other and restrict their imagination to a Weberian State—with a focus on legitimacy and the use of violence. Both of these actors, self-sabotage in achieving their said goal “of equitable

society” because of their inherent blind spots for the emerging practices of people and their everyday agency. The agency of the people and their ways of using conflicting power institutions, is viewed through the lens of dismissal, as both actors demand ‘sacrifice’ and the pursuit of higher ideals of loyalty to power structures such as the Indian nation or a Communist State.

6.4 Insurgent citizenship and mimesis

Seeking to neatly divide this area between supporters of Maoists versus supporters of the police, is a lazy construct. The villagers, use both, the state, and the non-state actors for different functions and purposes. Villagers recognise the importance of welfare schemes and the services of the state. Healthcare, education, facilities for clean drinking water, employment generation schemes, housing schemes and electrification of villages- these are important aspects of the state that everyone regardless of their affiliations, consider theirs to claim. The Maoists or dadalog, play a role that could be seen as that of an advisor. The local area commanders, as observed in this instance, were aware of the protest and had helped in organising and spreading the word across villages in order to increase participation. The sheer number of people who travelled from far away villages to congregate at the site, could not be explained as activity that was done on basis of intimidation or coercion. That was not the nature of the interactions which I observed and was not how people spoke. The form of trust that some villagers showed for the Maoist local leadership is indicative of Adivasis agency and their use of both state and non-state actors for garnering support for furthering pertinent issues. Kunnath (2022) based on their ethnographic engagement and research in Eastern India, observes that in the case of the Jantana Sarkar (JS) in India’s Maoist areas, unlike the democratic representative government, JS provides a government by the marginalised and secondly, democratic autonomy as it represents a government outside of the Indian state. They further elaborate:

In all guerrilla zones, especially in the areas where the state has been regaining control, the insurgent consciousness of the poor manifests in covert tactics employed by the Jantana Sarkar to challenge state authority... In Krantipur, since Adivasis and Dalits relied on state welfare schemes, their resistance to the state often manifested against its failure to deliver them. Jantana Sarkar channelled people’s anger into delegitimising the state for its failure to provide public services. It mobilised the masses against price rises and corruption, and demanded healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. This strategy was in line with what Holston (1999) and others’ (Gordon and Stack, 2007) description of how the poor, while distancing from the state, create ‘a kind of room for manoeuvre’ without renouncing all claims to the state,” (Kunnath, 2022, p. 15).

Sundar while speaking of Adivasi agency has a different explanation on people needing both the state and the non-State, "...they need open parliamentary and civil liberties groups who can help them when they get arrested, as well as party like the Maoists who can help them keep their land." (Sundar, 2016, p. 366).

Both observations help in understanding the complex spaces that citizenship acquires in a context of a conflict where all actors are socially embedded and the lines between the civilian and armed actors are blurred. However, a common thread running through these explanations indicates the importance of considering Adivasi voices and their political assertion and moving beyond the axis of legitimising these voices through use of violence or non-violence.

The Bhumkal celebration is a good example of this complex sphere of legitimacy. The police officials seek to deny Adivasi agency, by constantly referring to 'Maoist inspired' protests, in spite of the fact that the protests are non-violent. In the larger mandate of counterinsurgency, it is noticeable that the construction of police camps, and the broad roads cutting into the forests, reflect the specific geographical needs of the investment and interests of extractive capital in these areas. The peace marathon that ran parallel to these protests at the district headquarters was an attempt to "attract people and tourists here," mentioned the SP-Police during one of our meetings. However, the marathon was sponsored by a mining company, and run with a high level of police involvement, including a stall at the end promoting 'surrender'. It was a counter-insurgency lens which dominated, not a tourism promotion or social development lens. The nature of the conflict, as it has evolved over the past five decades, with increasing state control in these lands, appears to be reaching a final stage of confrontation- between the State and the Maoists, with the forests being prepared as the battleground. At the same time, there is a rise in Adivasi assertion which is moving beyond the class-based analysis of the Maoist revolutionaries.

Jaoul (2016) calls for a different conceptualisation of citizenship which is not representational, and neither is it restrictive through identity politics. What they ask for, is to look at the interplay between dominant citizenship and insurgent citizenship. The focus of this interplay should move beyond the elites in the subaltern—who tend to reassert domination over the subordinated within the subaltern as well. This in everyday life, would perhaps mean to pay heed and hear the voices of people who were protesting at the police camp in Kadiyametta or are currently protesting in Silger, Bijapur district in

South Bastar. What these movements symbolise is an amalgamation of the political consciousness of Adivasis who have witnessed both the failures and the successes of radical revolutionary politics and democratic politics. The assertion found in these parts of Bastar implores us to think through the messy notions of citizenship and state rather than fixing points of analysis on legitimacy.

What is clear from the events and discussions analysed in this chapter is that the nature of Indian security policy is not a form of DDR as discussed earlier. There is no sense that ex-guerrillas and the communities from where they belong, are a part of the development process, or are they considered as active agents in development and peace policies. Ex-guerrillas are primarily used as part of the security response – as sources of information for members of the police in serving their intelligence gaps. This is a model which promises some prospect of economic livelihood and economic security, and limits its sustainability beyond the security architecture, with limited or risk-laden scope for ex-guerrillas at an authentic and genuine chance for rehabilitation, or as active agents for political change and action.

While there were some references to ‘attracting tourists’, the peace marathon was a symbolic display of public relations and perception management. It was designed, to project normality, to show that the Indian state had control and could organise such an event. It was however a highly securitised form of normality. It was organised by the police, presided over by them, and ended at a police camp with a stall promoting the surrender policy. The nature of the protest and celebration of Bhumkal Divas showed a contestation against this form of displayed normality.

The people-driven celebration, was their assertion for their rights and entitlements, which demanded a critical lens at the nature of development and progress for the Adivasis. What these two incidents clarified, is that rather than binaries, the nature of political, is a form of triad where people’s assertion holds both the state and the Maoists accountable. Accountability here, takes different ways of expression, in one case through protesting against the State, and in other instances seen in the everyday negotiations by villagers with Maoists or area commanders, for creating safe and peaceful spaces for everyone to co-exist. The latter was evident when Sheila*¹⁰⁸ recounted to me one day, that while she and her husband Sanket* have surrendered and live and work with the police,

¹⁰⁸ Sheila* is referred in the earlier section ‘Celebrating Gunda Dhur’ of this chapter.

her uncle and cousins are active members of the PLGA. In their last conversation over the phone,

“... he told me that now you, your husband and your children live there. Do not try to come back to the village. Live there and make a life. That’s the best way to be,” she recounted to me.

These everyday realities, highlight the emerging and changing nature of socio-political materiality which both, the state and non-state fail to consider and incorporate in their praxis and analysis. And hence, as shown in this chapter, they mimic each other in demanding blind belief in their respective institutional power. And ironically, they both fail to notice the emergent emancipatory Adivasi politics which is redefining the contours of institutional and democratic politics.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter, puts the people at the centre and traces the circuitous nature of power asymmetry between dominant state practices and representatives, the insurgent movement and the Adivasi civilian/non-combatant. The chapter illustrates, that each of these categories, itself are complicated with constant shifting of labels depending on which side of legitimacy individuals or communities align. The chapter describes the state-led civic action program, the Abujmad peace marathon, and the inadvertent involvement of citizens in a symbolic show of Narayanpur’s peace. The civic action program also shows a deeply problematic method of ‘showcasing’ Adivasi culture and state’s success in surrender stories by displaying the men themselves and the new peaceful lives they lead. The state’s racial gaze, is evident.

The chapter contrasts this state-event to the commemoration of Gunda Dhur by the forest-dwelling Adivasis’ and their consternation towards state’s dominant development and security practices. The chapter, also brings out the mimetic nature of insurgent actors and their counter-reactions or counterclaims to these processes. At the heart of this empirical chapter, is the story of the diffused identities and fissures of dominant state and insurgent narratives. The historical pre-colonial Adivasi agency and lifeworld, consistently, through everyday acts of resistance lays claim on the space that is at the centre of the India-Maoist conflict. The chapter problematises the binary of state and non-state and builds an empirical understanding on fractured but imminent Adivasi assertion.

Chapter 7: Roads, bridges, and police camps: development as counterinsurgency?

7.1 Introduction

Local and regional disputes about confiscation and control of land, for mining, hydropower dams, industrial parks, roads and related security bases has been at the heart of the Maoist conflict for most of its contemporary history. So much so, that the deeper conflict around marginalisation and expropriation can at times be lost to the here and now conflict around a particular mine or road. The connections are always there however, even if complex and multi-layered.

7.2 Development Story for Bastar

This complexity can be seen in the recent history of Bastar region; between the year 2003 and 2013, the State allocated land to TISCO (Tata Iron and Steel Company) and ESSAR Steel Ltd— under the Chhattisgarh State Mineral Policy 2001. These Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) between the state government and the conglomerates, and the sites for these projects, led to widespread resistance and series of protests by Adivasis specifically from Lohandiguda and Dhuri block in Bastar¹⁰⁹. After prolonged protests from the Adivasis, led by Manish Kunjam¹¹⁰, the leader of the Communist Party of India (CPI), public interest litigations (PIL) by civil liberties organisations, both TISCO and Essar pulled out from Bastar.

The state's logic for these mining projects was based on the assumption that infrastructure-led development initiatives foster ripe circumstances for employment. The popular sentiment of the Maoist guerrillas as 'misguided youth' further cements these policy prescriptions which provide economic integration as a viable and implementable solution. This sentiment is often echoed in the policy statements such as the surrender and rehabilitation, wherein the objective itself it states that the policy is drafted

“...to wean away the misguided youth and hardcore naxalites who have strayed into the fold of naxal movement and now find themselves trapped into that net.” (2009)

¹⁰⁹ For more on this see: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/chhattisgarh-hc-issues-notice-to-tata-essar/article5012290.ece>; Sudha Bhardwaj's essay on the cumulative struggle against multinationals and dispossession of labour and Adivasi communities: <https://www.revolutionarydemocracy.org/rdv15/bastar.htm> ; both accessed on 17.01.2023

¹¹⁰ <https://www.dailypioneer.com/2013/state-editions/tata-steel-project-finally-moves-on-in-chhattisgarh.html> accessed on 18.01.2023

At the heart of this resistance to the plans for industrialisation was the state's disregard for flouting constitutional rules and processes by approving them without the prior and informed consent of the Gram Sabha (village assembly) which is responsible for approving developmental works. These powers guaranteed through the PESA kanoon¹¹¹ are repeatedly violated with the logic of 'development for a larger cause'. In this chapter I analyse the particular role of infrastructure and development and its relationship to counterinsurgency. The chapter will show how the analytical framework of infrastructure (as synonymised with development/growth/progress) takes a political turn in relation to the place and space in which it is located. The chapter will conceptually unpack infrastructure, recognising the relational and agentic nature of it, and then explore its role in the securitised and militarised setting of Narayanpur and Bastar at large.

Discussion on the nature of infrastructure and its aesthetics, has opened up questions around whether infrastructure can be considered as a technopolitical material object which is embedded in networks, or infrastructure as a "concrete semiotic and aesthetic vehicle(s) oriented to the addressees. They emerge out of and store within them forms of desire and fantasy and can take on fetish-like aspects that sometimes can be wholly autonomous from their technical forms," (Brian Larkin, 2013, p. 329). Appel et al. (2018) claim that infrastructure such as trains, drains, roads, electricity lines and ports etc are "dense social, material, aesthetic, and political formations" which play a defining role in experiences of the everyday and "expectations of the future" (Appel et al., 2018, p. 212). In this framing infrastructure is a symbolic, material and aspirational reflection. The reflection on infrastructure has promised modernity, development, progress and freedom.

Etymologically, the Merriam-Webster dictionary dates the introduction of this Latin-French word 'infra' meaning 'from below' as a consequence of England's loss to the French in the Norman invasion of 1066. A consequence of the war, the word which could be synonymous to 'foundation' or 'substructure' in the English language, was popularised through military doctrines and regional plans of reconstruction especially in the world after the Second World War. The usage of the word got intricately linked into

¹¹¹ PESA kanoon as discussed earlier chapters (three onwards), devolves power to the village assembly and village level panchayats, especially in the areas populous with SCs and STs. This legislation guarantees the decision making to the villagers and village-level bodies on development related matters.

international discourse in the mid-1950s in documents and speeches delivered and found in NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) documentation for war mobilisation studies, (Batt, 1984).

Batt who attempts to look at the historical passage of the word, identifies two simultaneous developments around the 1950s, the inclusion of the word in military parlance and in the area of economic development, specifically in the context of the 'global south' popularised under the collective categorisation of 'under-developed nations' characterised by high levels of disguised unemployment, low per-capita income and comparatively lower rates of industrialisation especially in heavy industries and agri-trade. The development and aid programs routed through international donor organisations and multi-lateral international financial institutions, were geared towards including these newly independent and decolonised nations into the global economy for wealth generation and subsequent poverty alleviation. As a consequence, the logic of connectivity and industrial growth, encompassed and promoted the notion of infrastructure- which moved away from a military to an economic and subsequently a socio-economic meaning and significance. These socio-economic characteristics sometimes had their own logic, as part of global capitalist expansion, but they remained often connected to more orthodox military thinking.

Moving from the general context of global capitalism, to the specific cases of such development in situations of conflict, Laleh Khalili, in her extensive research on the Arabian peninsula and writing on counterinsurgencies and confinement (2013) traces the strategies and tactics used in the nineteenth century by the imperial powers' expansion specifically in "...the French conquest of Algeria, the nascent United States' wars against the Native Americans, and the alternating butcher-and-bolt and policing policies of the British Empire in the northwestern and western frontiers of India," (pp. 13, 2013). Khalili, traces the connection between these practices of the early nineteenth century and their role in asymmetrical warfare in Africa and Indochina for France, the Philippines, Vietnam. Latin America for the United States' and in Asia for the British. This transnational reach of practices and strategy is traced through the institutional memory of global military doctrine, and in the form of individual doctrines published by generals or military strategists such as David Galula; Gallienei and Lyautey; and Callwell and

Gwyn.¹¹² These doctrines, irrespective if these stipulations led to success or not, became the cornerstone of modern counterinsurgency strategy (Khalili, 2013, p. 22).

These foundational doctrines, especially that of Gallieni, can be directly linked to the modern ideas of ‘winning hearts and minds’, the use of local elites or tribal chieftains, and the deployment and use of the military as “armed social work”, where military officers oversaw the reconstruction (or construction) of roads, schools and markets “using corvee labour if necessary” (pp. 25, 2013). What is of significant importance is the simultaneous development or refinement of military and allied institutions that promote logistical efficiency in the containment of these insurgencies. As a result, the objective of ‘civilising the barbarian’ by introducing insurgent areas to the national or global economies, is led by the military in cooperation with allied industries and services, to support these logistical solutions. Infrastructure, hence became synonymous as both a military tactic, but also as a normative symbol for progress, development, and civilising vis-à-vis the population. A central theme common to all these doctrines was the analysis of the ‘population’ as ‘demographic’ management, devoid of social relations and sovereign agency. In most instances, this inevitably led to the suppression of dissent, because of its rational linkage to racialisation of counterinsurgency rooted in imperialist ethos.

The word infrastructure has, therefore, evolved and expanded its meaning from being part of strategic military terminology, to include structural and larger encompassing systems such as irrigation networks, circulation of goods and people through land, water and air-based transportation networks. The expansion of the term to include and adapt to the introduction of new technologies has not however seen any significant, related analysis of what ‘infrastructure’ means in the context of political contestation, and the new meanings it creates through interactions and formations of new spaces and interpretations because of addition of new materials, objects and the lifeworld this introduces. Appell et. al., contend that

“...the material and political lives of infrastructure frequently undermine narratives of technological progress, liberal equality, and economic growth, revealing fragile and often violent relations between people, things and the institutions that govern or provision them. This tension — between aspiration

¹¹² Khalili in her book traces these men and their practices implemented across different insurgencies or colonial occupations and the way these practices became institutional wisdom and practice from nineteenth century into twentieth century and into modern day counterinsurgency doctrine. These three men in specific, according to Khalili’s research into military history and archives, played an important role in making of the modern day doctrine and practices that are considered as the norm in today’s counterinsurgency literature.

and failure, provision and abjection, and technical progress and its underbelly — makes infrastructure a productive location to examine the constitution, maintenance, and reproduction of political and economic life,” (Appel et al., 2018, p. 128).

The practice of infrastructure creation is rooted in the implicit understanding that it (infrastructure) is apolitical and more so that it is a material symbol for progress and modernity. This gives infrastructure a ‘larger than life’ existence, with the underlying assumption that, its existence itself is not relational (Trowsell et al., 2021), i.e. where infrastructure exists on its own, with limited, restricted or indeed no perceived interaction with social processes and structures. This is effectively evident in the outlook of the State across Bastar and places such as the Northeast and Kashmir within the South Asian subcontinent. Through the logic of building roads, bridges and dams and through the promotion of extractive industries such as mining, the state utilises and promotes the rationale of developmental gains for communities and the nation on the whole. The implicit and explicit wisdom of this approach is that the trinity of modernity, reason and technology, will provide for freedom of movement, migration and a consolidation of state power. This common ‘wisdom’ perpetuates a notion of the neutrality of infrastructure, that regardless of the individual or social context, infrastructure does not differentiate or discriminate. While this idea of infrastructure retains a common-sense hegemonic position, when analysed in situations of conflict and political contestation a counter hegemonic view emerges, which can be seen through the processes of everyday life, where at a local level and especially among marginalised communities the assumed neutrality of infrastructure and development is questioned. The counter-hegemonic can indeed be the majority view in a given locality and a different story emerges.

“...the material and political lives of infrastructure frequently undermines narratives of technological progress, liberal equality, and economic growth, revealing fragile and often violent relations between people, things and the institutions that govern or provision them. This tension—between aspiration and failure, provision and abjection, and technical progress and its underbelly—makes infrastructure a productive location to examine the constitution, maintenance, and reproduction of political and economic life...” (Appel et al., 2018, p. 100)

While, they argue for building a research agenda with an anthropological turn to study infrastructure, for the purpose of this thesis, the analysis here focuses on the use of infrastructure as part of the underlying logic of development and hence progress, especially because of its perceived neutrality and apolitical nature, beyond the conflict region. The underlying rationale for the persistence and popularity of revolutionary

politics in Adivasi and lower-caste populous areas as provided by the State, focused on 'underdevelopment' and therefore justifies the introduction of 'modernity' and hence 'development' as one of the cornerstones of conflict management and resolution. The burgeoning literature especially emerging from security studies, (Dudouet, 2009; Ganguly and Thompson, 2016; Khanna and Zimmermann, 2017; Parashar, 2018; Subramanian, 2010; Thachil, 2014) focuses on increasing 'state presence' through the introduction of development and policing. Commonly referred to as securitised development, the logic of security first, then development follows through by focussing on infrastructure which is synonymous with structures such as bridges, roads, canals, railways etc. This policy of introducing systems which specify movement of goods, people and information, is based on the military logic of increasing access to the symbols of state development, but also to what the State views as 'material' gains for people and the governing institutions.

The most common reasons advanced to explain the legitimacy and resilience of the Maoist movement in Bastar, especially through the security-State analysis, are based empirically on the 'backwardness' of the region and the lack of access to state-led mechanisms of governance such as the various targeted welfare programs. Kunnath, based on fieldwork between 2008 and 2010 in the state of Jharkhand¹¹³, observes that the establishment of primary schools, community-run development projects for irrigation, pisciculture etc are indicative of the agency of the marginalised and the success of the Janathana Sarkar (people's government) in creating alternative democratic structures and successfully either distanced the state and/or in other contexts "create a room for manoeuvre without renouncing all claims on the state" (2022, p. 15).

This linking of insurgency to economic 'backwardness', places the Maoist conflicts firmly within the mainstream of dominant Indian political narratives, seen in the upper caste or savarna¹¹⁴ and racially differentiating rationale of introducing the Adivasis or these forest-dwelling communities to modernity, which finds a perfect ally in post-

¹¹³ As mentioned in the earlier chapters, specifically chapter 3, Jharkhand (erstwhile north Bihar) was one of the strongholds of the Maoist movement. The ethnographic work by George Kunnath besides Alpa Shah's 'Walking with the Comrades' are the most recent ethnographic accounts about the contemporary phase of the Maoist movement in India. Kunnath's account empirically affirms the argument in this chapter—that the popular support for the Maoist movement in these parts was based on years of mobilisation and strengthening of individual agency especially among Adivasi women and youth.

¹¹⁴ Savarna, in Sanskrit literally means "those with Varna", is a broad categorisation or label used to describe the four varna's, on basis of which caste hierarchies are classified within the Vedic Hindu texts.

independence India's developmentalism that focussed on industrialisation and the consequent changes in land relations across the nation. Bhat (2020) iterates this looking at the theorizing of infrastructure in the context of subject-state relations and makes an observation regarding the "instability of science and technology" in colonial and postcolonial India. Borrowing from historian Gyan Prakash's work on India and modernity, Bhat argues that while the British championed 'modernity' in the same framing definition as was understood in Europe, in postcolonial India, in the hands of the Indian elite, modernity entered into a project of translation where reason was understood as reform. This translation and borrowing of modernity/rationality followed a universal language which was embedded within the caste hierarchies and which promoted a Hindu or savarna universalist philosophy of modernity. Bhatt extends this argument of Gyan Prakash and contends that, while the Indian elite furthered the project of modernity, the continuities from colonial times were extended within the same territorial imagination of nation. The practice of reason, sought its tangible expression in the conceptualisation of 'space' and it is in this conceptualisation of space, that the sub-altern or the 'other' sought to claim space and power as well.

These two guiding principles, namely, adoption of modernity and the contestation of space, are visible in many intersections of social-political life in India, it is most stark, in instances of militarised spaces such as Bastar and northeast India, where racial difference and indigenous practices are fundamentally seen through a lens of 'othering'. Hence, the notion of development through roads, inclusion of industries (small and/or heavy) comes into direct conflict with both the communitarian notions of Adivasi regarding the forests, and with the Maoist ideology that opposes the Indian state as partisan in increasing private ownership and moving away from a vision of a socialist India.

Since the conflict is rooted in structural inequality and injustice, the elite-driven policy response is embedded within the modernity/rationality logic which in praxis finds interpretation through symbolic material structures of roads, bridges, communication infrastructure such as towers among others. Manu Goswami (2004) in her book 'Producing India From Colonial Economy to National Space', draws on historical and archival research, to argue that the new decolonized and/or post-colonial nation (of India) was built on to the pre-existing colonial infrastructure of railways and telegraph (2004, p. 45). What is understood in the real sense, is that the colonial infrastructure, though aimed primarily at producing economic gains, negotiated with space to create or form territorial nationalism, which shaped postcolonial India. This extension of

nationality, through interaction with, and based on, precolonial organisation of space and infrastructure, has perpetuated the same triangulation of modernity-reason-reform without any view of criticality. It is this logic that finds resonance in the construction of roads, bridges and other infrastructure projects in Adivasi and 'naxal-peedit' areas; since it assumes that increasing access to 'outside' world, a world of modernity and reform, would leave the Adivasis convinced that instead of resisting through arms, they should become part of the progress story.

However, the observations made through the fieldwork for this research, on the recent developments in Narayanpur and its neighbouring areas, along with interviews and conversations with surrendered Maoists, block officers and villagers who I spoke with, all present a picture that indicates friction and fault lines between villagers and villages, depending on the proximity to roads, the police camps and district headquarters. The friction emerges naturally in conversation, about developmental projects, but in particular the infrastructure projects both at village level and the larger projects which involve road and bridge construction- which are overseen by the district administration but involve state and national level decision making. These are complex critiques from diverse local communities, made in conditions which are at times tense. Gathering and understanding their positions, is impossible to do via short survey or interview-based research. It took time to build relationships, to conduct personal observations, and to have endless conversations, before that complexity could be disentangled.

7.3 Unpacking (Critical) Infrastructure as understood by the Indian State

Under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) response to 'tackle' LWE (Left Wing Extremism), police modernisation, increased road construction, and mobile connectivity take prominence. The rationale behind these three elements feeds into the larger logic of countering the radical left, through the 'provision' of modernity, by the process of road building that would eventually link the Adivasi lifeworld with capital and the market. Alongside the surrender and rehabilitation policy, the State's response involves three other key policy initiatives, as explained through the annual reports of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

The annual reports of the MHA from 2014 to 2021, show that stipulated Security Related Expenditure (SRE) has increased from 207.8 crore INR in 2013-14 to 304.49 crore INR in the year 2020-21. The year 2019-20 saw a total expenditure of 367. 26 crore INR. The

SRE header provides the financial resources to the states with LWE-marked districts, towards “family or civilian/security forces killed in violence, insurance of police personnel, training and operational needs of security forces, compensation for LWE cadres who surrender, community policing, security related infrastructure for village defence committees and publicity material.” Alongside SRE, the MHA has a Special Infrastructure Scheme (SIS) which was introduced in 2008-09 and which seeks to fill “critical infrastructure gaps” which aren’t addressed or financed through other existing schemes or programs by the union of India or the federal state. In the MHA annual reports, critical infrastructure is defined or identified as the “requirement of mobility for the police/security forces by upgrading existing road/tracks in inaccessible areas, providing secure camping grounds and helipads in strategic locations in remote and interior areas, measures to enhance security in respect of police stations/outposts located in vulnerable areas etc.,” (MHA annual report, 2008-09 pp. 20).

Between the financial years 2008-09 to 2012-13, through the five-year planning commission, an annual expenditure of 500 crore INR was allocated for expenditure related to roads and tracks for security forces out of which 445.82 crores INR (almost 90% of the total) was released for the stipulated LWE states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. From the year 2013-14 onwards, the SIS scheme underwent some operational changes which included “funding for training infrastructure, residential infrastructure, weaponry, vehicles.” (MHA-2013-14 annual report, pp. 28). This change in the guidelines on what expenditure could be used for was justified as “filling gaps” in the need of special forces in LWE states (and districts in specific states) following a similar pattern to the ‘Greyhounds’ of Andhra Pradesh¹¹⁵.

The inclusion of security forces and allied specific military responses, such as support for local militias, within the definition of ‘special infrastructure’ is a telling sign of the way

¹¹⁵ The Greyhound special force was a specific police group trained and tasked for conducting counterinsurgency operations in the erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh. The Greyhounds were the first of its kind to combat violence in context of the Maoist violence and in the policy and security circles, is considered a big success—as noticed in the papers, policy documents and public articles written by commentators on India’s internal security (See, Ramana (2011, 2013); Goswami (2012), et al). An immediate ramification of the Greyhounds was the repression of radical left voices in the state and the subsequent movement of the People’s War Group (PWG) members into the neighbouring forests of unified Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Maharashtra. The Dandakranya forest initially became a refuge for the guerrillas and later, area for mobilization and setting up new guerrilla teams. The history and politics around Greyhounds of Andhra Pradesh, is discussed in Chapter three- which traces the historical and contemporary roots of the Maoist movement and the state-response.

infrastructure is conceived and conceptualised in security policymaking. The understanding of critical infrastructure, is reaffirmed through a literal implementation of these policies on the ground. In Narayanpur, alongside these road construction projects, the security camps (which house the police stations as well, in some instances) are established first. In Sonpur, the village which administratively falls under the Narayanpur block, but also serves as the gateway into Orchha block and further into the forest of Abhujmaad- has a security camp manned by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), and has a large helipad alongside. The camp, which was established in January 2019, sprawls across a huge clearing just as the village of Sonpur ends. The camp was established primarily, to protect works on the road construction which would extend the road from Basing security camp to Sonpur into villages of Garpa and eventually connecting it to Maroda—a border village falling in the neighbouring state of Maharashtra.



*Figure 7.1: Helipad adjacent to the ITBP security camp located in Sonpur village, Narayanpur.
Source: Author*

The road project which comes under the Road Requirement Plan (RRP-I) and Road Connectivity Project in Left-Wing Extremism Affected Areas (RCPLWEA), two schemes which are financed by the Central government through Ministry of Road and Transport and Highways, and routed through the Public Works Department (PWD) at the district level. This 78 kilometre long road which was commissioned in 2015 is still under construction. The planned road, is expected to traverse through the denser parts of 'maad' (as the forest is referred to by the koitur) and in turn, will be cutting through the dense forest cover that provide refuge to the guerrillas and their camps.

As is a common practice in these areas, the road projects take a long time, and are completed in parts. The usual trajectory of such road projects follows a formulaic understanding of dividing the long road projects into smaller patches of ten to fifteen kilometres, each of which are divided among different contractors to expedite the construction process. The SP, Manish Gupta* explained his frustration about these operational procedures,

“... surrender and the involvement of them in different aspects of policing is largely community policing. It is helpful to develop trust and to make them acceptable to development and democracy. But this policing is not the solution, we all know it. The eventual solution is by bringing development to interior areas. Let’s say, by giving contracts to make roads. We have been pushing them (contractors) to make roads, since the villagers come and talk to us as we end up going into the interiors. We bring these demands to development agencies, I conduct meetings with all the departments. Check on status of mobile connectivity- BSNL and JIO¹¹⁶ and road construction between Raipur and New Delhi—depending on who is funding the projects. The speed of development in Narayanpur has been slow, in comparison to other districts such as Bijapur. The road which is to connect to Orchha started construction in 2011 and its still incomplete. There needs to be more accountability. In Narayanpur, too many petty contractors are involved unlike in Bijapur, where bigger contractors are involved and end up completing road projects in three years.”¹¹⁷

Construction of road projects, and the local political economy of material gains and distribution across the political actors, requires a more in-depth or investigative inquiry, but a news story published on June 16, 2020¹¹⁸ indicates the nexus between contractors, the Maoist leadership and parliamentary political actors- for negotiating access and approval of development activities. The column by journalist Ashutosh Bhardwaj, who was reporting on the Maoist conflict between 2013 and 2017, sheds light on the presence of political arrangements between the CPI (Maoist) and the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) through middle-men or contractors. The article confirmed how a contractor served as a conduit between a local BJP leader and the Maoist leadership, where money was promised for what is commonly understood as “protection money” , to persuade the Maoists not interfere in the construction projects.

¹¹⁶ Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and JIO are two of the main service providers for mobile connectivity in the district. In most interior villages, BSNL- which is state run telecom company, is the only source of maintaining connection in the area. Along with road connectivity plan by the MHA, mobile connectivity is another program that has been in focus. The logic of increasing mobile connectivity is the same as that of increasing the network of roads. While there is merit in the argument of increasing, deepening, and strengthening connectivity (digital and analogue) the purpose of introducing these technologies for development of Adivasi communities is debatable.

¹¹⁷ Conversation with SP in October 2019.

¹¹⁸ <https://theprint.in/opinion/bjps-cozy-nexus-with-maoists-in-chhattisgarh-flourishes-despite-leaders-murder-arrest/442326/> (Accessed on 19 Jun 2022)

The nexus between contractors, the Maoists and other political parties, based on illegal funding from development projects is difficult to establish. However, across a very wide range of actors who discussed the issue during the field research, there was a widespread belief that such financial connections exist at significant scale. These arrangements follow the 'greed' logic of parallel governments, existing especially in contexts of long running low-intensity armed violence. Similar spaces of "extortion" or "taxation" by non-state armed actors has been seen in the context of the nationalist/self-determination movements in Nagaland, Manipur, Myanmar (towards India's east), in Afghanistan and in Sri Lanka, at the time of the LTTE's reign. In the fieldwork region the construction of roads by the state are often funded through the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojna (PMGSY) scheme — a pan-India scheme for enhancing rural road connectivity, which is expected to be utilised in 'naxal affected' areas for connecting "unconnected habitations with population above 500 and above 250 in plain and hilly/tribal areas". Despite the widespread allegations of extortion, the development of infrastructure, especially roads, often encounters long delays and disruption to the successful completion of these projects. The nature of delays or disruption, in most instances concerns damage to contractor equipment such as the colloquially referred 'JCB' which is used for digging, breaking and trenching for construction of these rural roads. The JCBs are often burnt out by the local guerrilla squads especially in instances where there was history of previous discord with the contractors who have been working in the areas. This form of disruption to road building does not seem consistent with a routine system of corruption involving insurgents. It seems unlikely that extortion payments would continue to be routinely paid, if armed disruption continues to be the normal pattern, but there may also simply be communication breakdowns or instances of non-payment.

Between November and December of 2021, during my visit, there was an incident where a JCB burnt was burnt out and the ex-sarpanch of the village Karmari was shot dead . The incident took place in Karmari panchayat- one of the last panchayats that lies between Narayanpur block and Orchha block and situated at the edge of maad forest. The ex-sarpanch whose wife is the current sarpanch, was allegedly warned about his involvement in construction work by the local Nelnar Area Committee of the CPI (Maoist). A resident of the same panchayat, Gawade* spoke about the conundrum about such threats.

“sometimes, we have spoken to dadalog¹¹⁹, and they ask us that why is there a need for pakka (permanent/tar-road) road? You have roads for using your bikes. If you get bigger roads, then police is going to enter. The space for debate is limited. Once they (area committee) give a ‘no’ then it is tough to negotiate. The sacchiv (the appointed official under the decentralisation structure of the state), had visited us last week, to celebrate constitutional day. In that meeting, we did write an application requesting for pond, and road through PMGSY. But now this incident might delay it.”¹²⁰

Another resident, who is the owner of a JCB shared his strategy about working around these diktats of the party. Poyam*, who bought a JCB a year ago, is clear about using the JCB for digging of ponds, a primary health centre and even the roads that are within the village, but will not enter into road construction activities. Usually, according to him, instances of burning or damaging of property are indicative of some kind of breakdown in communication lines between the Maoist local area commander and the person or family involved. As cited in context of the incident on 27th November, it is rumoured that the ex-sarpanch had not distributed the funds under the state’s employment guarantee scheme—NREGA (National Rural Employment Guarantee Act).



Figure 7.2: A part of the railway line between Antagarh and Narayanpur. The railway line is expected to link the Rowghat mines to DalliRajhara. There is an ITBP camp adjacent to this railway line. The photo was clicked in December 2021. Source: Author

¹¹⁹ Dadalog can be loosely translated to ‘brothers’. This term is interchanged with ‘mamalog’ is used by locals when referring to the Maoist guerrillas (regardless of the gender of these combatants) that are active in the region. In a highly securitized and surveilled places such as Narayanpur and neighbouring districts, the word helps in providing some form of safeguard against attracting attention from police and their informers. The term is discussed in Chapter five as well.

¹²⁰ Interview with Gawade, on November 29, 2021.

Verification of the precise details of any one incident is almost impossible, but the incidents are not isolated ones, and it is the pattern of behaviour and people's responses which is more important for the purposes of this research. Incidents of JCB burning, as an act of dissuading or delaying construction of roads, and attacks on construction sites especially on the work related to the laying of railway line from DalliRajhara -Rowghat - Jagdalpur were common¹²¹. The track would cut through Kondagaon and Narayanpur, thus increasing the connectivity of North Bastar. This railway line, is one of three main parallel development projects underway, in the region, which concern the issue of mineral extraction from the region. The Rowghat mines, located in the Matla Reserve Forest that stretches between Kanker and Narayanpur district, with its estimated 511 million tonnes of iron ore reserves, will serve the growing demand of the Bhilai Steel Plant- (BSP). The iconic BSP is inextricably linked to the growth story of post-independent India, the Nehruvian idea of industrialisation and the possibility of making a new modern India. The main focus of the railway line, called as 'maal-gaadi' (trains specifically meant for transfer of goods) in Hindi, is to connect these mining sites township of Bhilai and the capital city of Raipur.

The proposed railway line will be the second line in the region. The first one connects Jagdalpur-Dantewada to southern port city of Vishakhapatnam in coastal Andhra Pradesh. The Raipur-Jagdalpur-Vishakhapatnam line which serves as the main route for moving iron ore from Bailadila mines which is operated by NMDC (National Minerals Development Cooperation). Conversations around connectivity of this southern region of the state with the rest of the state, usually concerns the lack of railway connectivity for daily passengers and migrant workers travelling for employment. For everyday movement of people working across districts especially teachers, nurses and paramilitary forces deployed, road transport in the form of buses is the only viable option. In June 2018, Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, had inaugurated the Jagdalpur airport as an attempt to boost tourism in the region. The airport, suffered intermittent operations only to resume

¹²¹ DalliRajhara is a town in one of neighbouring districts to Narayanpur. It is home to captive mines of iron-ore which are utilised in the Bhilai Steel Plant- BSP; one of India's largest integrated steel power plant. BSP which along with two other steel powerplants in Roureklea in Odisha and Durgapur in West Bengal, were three main industrial plants established with technological help of former USSR, Germany, and Great Britain respectively. Among these three BSP was considered as the "...beacon on the path to India's future, a great national 'temple' to its industrial modernity," (Parry and T.G., 2020, p. 16). DalliRajhara, which houses the two captive iron ore mines, is projected to have reached its capacity and to meet the capacity of the steel plant, the neighbouring reserves from Rowghat mines, are underway. See: <https://indianexpress.com/article/business/business-others/bhilai-steel-plant-depleting-iron-ore-reserves-may-hit-expansion-plans-4490204/> (accessed on 12.06.2022).

flights from Hyderabad to Jagdalpur in the past two years. The introduction of air travel to Jagdalpur does not solve the connectivity issues for the Adivasi workers and other government employees for whom movement is inter-district or occasionally to other states, where bus or rail travel is more economical.

So while, on one side the rationale for increasing road connectivity especially for movement of people and goods is widely seen as an imperative for the region by those I spoke to, however the prioritising of particular road networks- state highways or national highways as well as the railway lines, are seen by local communities as not being primarily for their benefit but rather are linked to the larger goals of mineral extraction and industrial growth.

The linking of infrastructure, development and security- provides us with a chance to understand the new meaning that occurs at these sites of resistance and counter-insurgent violence. This meaning making, finds different methods of legitimacy using development and modernity- the cornerstones for logic of the modern nation state, especially in areas or space considered as backward or primitive. As Padel et. al (2022) say, “...in such a context, state-sponsored development is a tool of violence and erasure by the state..” This inference isn’t restricted to the Abhujmadia tribe in Narayanpur or the Gonds in Bastar, it is an everyday reality for Adivasis across central India. While there is a logic to militarisation to counter the radical left-wing violence, the use of force against its own unarmed citizens both by the State and the non-State is at the centre of another fight between violence of global capitalism and dispossession of Adivasis and indigenous communities.

7.4 Mining, roads and the surrender story

Lakshman* who is now serving in the DRG at Narayanpur, lives in the part of Shanti Nagar, which adjoins the Rowghat train line. In one of our chats at his home, he was quick to point out to me that the entire locality consisting of around 100 households from Shanti Nagar will soon be displaced and provided with new housing since the land would be required for the extension of the railway line into Narayanpur. As a DRG, Lakshman’s story about his motivation for leaving the Maoist movement was more existential, and his journey to joining the DRG, incidental,

“I joined and rose quickly in the Maoist ranks, I was an area committee commander for kutul¹²². One of the main concerns of villagers was regarding the party’s diktat against using state development funds. Surviving on forest produce wasn’t enough. In the backdrop of Salwa Judum, a lot of schools in the interiors were stopped because the force (paramilitary) would use them. Education that was provided by (Janata) Sarkar run schools didn’t follow any formal certification. Despite everything they taught, which included, teaching children computer, what use would this knowledge be? It wasn’t like they could go outside and use this knowledge to find employment.

At the end of it all, one is expected to get involved in this politics, the politics of revolution— I would often think about this. Many of us, even though not vocally, we would ponder about the futility of revolution. A revolution that we would never win, so what were we really fighting for? As we would expand our campaign, so would the administration and the police.

Say for example, in my area of responsibility, some of the villages which were closer to Narayanpur city or to Orchha or other bigger villages, there the government would introduce some kind of development works. Whereas, in the interior villages, there would be no work. The party insisted that the interior villages would be stay away from administration or police access as much as possible. But the villagers suffered, for them, it was all or nothing. For them, it was difficult to understand, that while some areas would still have the choice of using development funds, the others are devoid. The tactics made everyday life tougher...”¹²³

Now, sitting in his house of one-room and kitchen in Shanti Nagar, Lakshman had made peace with the nature of his life here. He did not want to fight against the party, but in the end he has now made that compromise. His duties as a DRG are the same as other ex-guerrillas, of going on searching operations and conducting ambushes against the guerrillas. But one focus, along with these searching operations or gast, has been about increasing the road networks in the forested areas. The rationale among the ex-guerrillas for increasing police camps and consequently road infrastructure, is considered synonymous with development and access.

Bikram*, had another opinion on this and so did Birar* who I met during the second field visit, in November 2021, and was now connected and involved with another grassroots organisation working on civil liberties locally in Bastar as well as across the state. Birar, is now focussed on campaigning with other Adivasi community leaders on the implementation of PESA kanoon, and is of the opinion, that while roads are of importance, the kind of road projects which are prioritised or given importance are not selected in consultation with the locals and neither does it concern their everyday activities.

¹²² Kutul a village in narayapur block and located in the forests of Abhujmad Is considered as the heart of the Maoist guerrilla activities. The Janata Sarkar according to accounts of ex-guerrillas, was the strongest in this area. In one of the interviews, an ex-guerrilla informed that after crossing Kutul, as one moves further into the forest, the villages serve as home for some of the senior most leadership of the central committee resides here.

¹²³ Interview with Lakshman* November 2019.

“... we haven’t received any help from prashasan (government). They think that if they inform the Adivasis about our rights, the Adivasi will get empowered and take claim on what is rightfully ours. Before 2020, any kind of information or access to community organisations such as Gondwana samaj or Sarv Adivasi samaj, was limited. Not many karyakartas (social workers) would come to this village. It was with this idea, that we should do something for our village, that we decided to commemorate Gunda Dhur’s anniversary in 2020 and initiate activities related to civic and political engagement for betterment of this village and our lives. The Maowadi (Maoists), they talk to us about Jal, Jungle, Jameen¹²⁴—their line is different from ours, they use force and arms. Earlier they would come to our villages, often to organise discussions and talks. Mostly these conversations would be around these issues and inform us about news from around the world related to forest rights, health and education. Earlier, if someone in the village was unwell and they required some assistance, they would provide monetary assistance or other forms of welfare activities. Now, because of the police camps they have gone deeper into the forests”¹²⁵

The implicit understanding that roads increase connectivity and improve access in remote areas, as discussed in the chapter above, is a cornerstone for the planned implementation of developmental activities. What remains ignored for critical inquiry is the notion of remoteness itself. What and who classifies an area, or population as remote? What are they remote from?

In recent anthropological explorations, remoteness itself is credited “as a contribution of the consequences of state policies and practice,” (Gohain, 2019). In her ethnographic writing about the Monpa community living in Monyul, a borderland region between Bhutan, Tibet and Arunachal Pradesh (in North East India), Gohain makes a compelling argument about remoteness as a construct of state practices. She observes through her thick description of the area, that while the region because of its geographical positioning, can host heavy military deployment along with heavy infrastructure investment for movement of these security forces, the same villages and region have fractured civilian infrastructure including all weather rural-urban roads, healthcare and education related facilities. She calls it “politics of access” through which population is controlled or regulated (2019, p. 206).

¹²⁴ As discussed in Chapter four, the call for ‘jal, jungle, jameen’ was first called in the 1940 by Gond Adivasi Komaram Bhim in Adilabad in present day state of Telangana and was part of undivided Andhra Pradesh earlier. The call translating to ‘water, forest and land’ was first made by him as a response to the Nizam rule in pre-independent India, claiming that the rights of the Adivasis over their resources and their livelihood. A more detailed account of this struggle can be found in Bhanga Bhukya’s book ‘The roots of periphery: a history of the Gonds in the Deccan’, 2017.

¹²⁵ Interview with Birar*27th November 2021.

The controlling of population through the security-infrastructure-access-resources is noticeable in Narayanpur. Many of my conversations with villagers explicitly talk about the check-points that are adjacent to the police camps, across the bus ride between the district headquarter and Orchha block. The checkpoints, though local people say they have reduced in number in 2019, in comparison to 2010, still act as one way of screening and controlling movement of the population. Unlike the police barricades, observed in metropolitan India, these check-points are manned by security personnel who have discretionary powers to stop public and private vehicles, and question movement and purpose of visits.

The check point and adjacent police camp before reaching Chhote Dongar enroute to Orchha, stands on the grounds where there was a school approximately a decade ago, Praveenji had told me during one of our bike rides to the village of Mahima Gawadi. The use of school buildings by the security forces, because of they provided secure buildings during the initial years of conducting security operations in these forested areas, led to the destruction or shutting of the schools (especially the buildings) by the Maoists. What this means in present times, is that high-schools are lined alongside the roads, since this provides easy access for controlling and regulating the population. In this way, schools (which are welcomed by local communities) become associated with security checks and securitisation which is not welcome, and which is disruptive to people's lives.

The primary and middle-schools are closer to homes, but there is only minimal teaching and non-teaching staff. Most teachers reside, in the main township and travel fortnightly to their respective schools, where they spend over a week to ten days and then return to the town. So while there is access to education, it is, just like the rains, seasonal. Some of the teachers who I would meet during my bus rides between the two blocks, would give a resounding explanation regarding the difficulties of living in far-flung villages where moving their families wasn't an option—the stark difference in the aspirational value of educating their own family, versus the quality of education provided to Adivasi children, is an unintended and a normalised repercussion of securitised savarna discourse in these parts.

As an attempt to increase the quality of education, the state and central governments have promoted residential schools, especially middle school onwards, which are run by charity or faith-based organisations such as Ramkrishna Mission (RKM) in

Narayanpur (discussed in chapter five) alongside the state-funded Portacabin schools. These residential schools have been critiqued for the decontextualised nature of their teaching, further deepening the racialised notion of Adivasi practices and knowledge as unscientific and in need of reform. In addition, post-independence India, provided land to faith-based organisations such as the RKM and Hindu right-wing organisation—Rashtriya Swyamsevak Sangathan (RSS) to manage residential schools, which promoted the notion that Adivasis were backward Hindu communities with a need to be uplifted into modern India (Hindus). Therefore, in conversation with people, these types of schools are regularly identified as an assault on Adivasi identity, and a means whereby the Hindu right is seeking to undermine Adivasi's very cultural existence. As with security camps and roads, a potential public good (education) is seen by the community as an existential threat.

Sundar (Sundar, 2004) and Froerer (2007) based on their ethnographic engagement with Bastar and northern Chhattisgarh, mention the saffronisation of education and the consequences of it on Adivasi youth. In addition, in post Salwa Judum Bastar, these residential schools served a dual purpose of acting as safe spaces which would prevent youth and children from joining the armed guerrillas. This is an important aspect which is seldom understood by the practitioners of 'law and order' and the policy planners. The path dependent wisdom does attach a certain level of truism so that everyone who is living in the villages or continues to (in the present/contemporary times) is seen as either a sympathiser or a guerrilla hopeful or a 'part-time guerrilla' a colloquial way to address what formally referred to as Janatana Sarkar's Gram Raksha Dal (Village Defence Group).

Sailesh* who I met between 2019 and 2020, was one such example. A student of the school run by the Maoists in his village, which was in Orchha block. His socialisation, to the Maoist ideology was through their Bal sangathan (children's collective) and then through the Chetna Natya Manch (CNM), Sailesh was inspired by the political conversations of the party. It was then, that he decided to join the party,

“...I was involved in the platoon and then from 2013 to 2018, I was in the DVC. I received training from them and from here as well (with the security personnel after surrender). I was active and moved around in Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. I was involved in a lot of ghatna (events involving combat). In 2018, there was an incident where one of our people (guerrillas) became a martyr. It was in January, four months after that incident, I came to this side.

One of my brothers he had surrendered in 2016. He is now posted in Manna for training. He had written to me. His letter said that I should think about coming out, the fight for revolution is futile and it would get difficult for you to survive in the forest. He said that if I come and surrender, I would be given job opportunities and can live a safer life.

We had seen some senior guerrillas leave and it was discussed inside as well. Charcha (discussion) was mostly about how these guerrillas who left or surrendered don't have a firm grip on politics and have a weak political understanding and hence they leave the revolution. I use to think as well, because I saw some of them surrender and come and join the force, some would come back and continue living in the villages. This kind of 'going/coming' keeps occurring. What's wrong, what's right, I wasn't sure about all of it. Who will win, who will lose, and we run so much and the struggle that comes with it. So I decided to leave the party. I left with an INSAS rifle..."¹²⁶

Sailesh's oldest brother is in the village with his parents and his younger brother is studying in the school in Orchha. The inference, that schools in the interior villages serve as grounds for ideological indoctrination, serves as basis to promote the residential schools through government and institutionalised policy. The fundamental right of 'access to education' in an ironic move, becomes the state's response in an institutionalised non-military response to the conflict. What it does not take into account is the democratic freedom to dissent, especially coming from the educated Adivasi such as Birar*. Neither does the state response allow for locally controlled, culturally appropriate education – all such education is seen as potentially insurgent-based.

Through his interactions with the Maoists, while Birar could see the validity of the issues raised by the Maoists and the need for creating a more collectivised political voice in his village, he chose to resort to constitutional methods and means.

I am educated, we thought, instead of picking up arms, maybe we use the court and our legislations. It was a decision made, that if this is provided in our constitution, should we then not be using the constitution to fight against our injustices? With use of arms, has caused narsanhaar (massacre)- as we have seen, so the use of arms isn't the right way to move ahead... For us, it is important to look at these developments, now, they are broadening the roads around Kadiyameta police camp for construction of national highway 3 (NH3), and without any consent from the gram sabha. The contractors come and even use the mud/silt from these areas for other construction work. If we were consulted, the gram sabha could have received royalty from this. And this royalty (money) could then be used for other activities in the village—for development purposes. There is a lot that is at stake here."¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Interview with Sailesh* October 2019.

¹²⁷ Interview with Birar* December 2021.

Just as roads, bridges, and extractive industries such as mining, (mainstream) education, under a postcolonial savarna militarised state, also becomes a tool in counterinsurgency. The welfare aspect of the state, is used to try and build state-loyalty from the 'othered' Adivasi community. The two accounts below, show how the logic of infrastructure and social welfare, is co-opted by the securitised state for larger gains of territorial and population control.

During the peak of COVID-19 pandemic, in November 2020, through WhatsApp, Birar had shared with me a series of videos and photographs of protests. When we met in December of 2021, he explained that security personnel from Kadiyametta camp, during their rounds, had picked up five villagers, "... there was no news of them. We even went to the camp to inquire and got no information. After a week of them missing, we sat down to protest. and we blocked the main road connecting from Narayanpur and going towards (Chhote) Dongar, it was then we found out that they were in the Jail in Jagdalpur." It was in those months that agitation around the Amdai ghati mining site had started to grow. Between November of 2020 and February 2021, Narayanpur saw rounds of protests with participation and involvement of civil liberties activists and politicians such as Bela Bhatia and Soni Sori and Arvind Netam¹²⁸.

One of the person arrested, was a 21 year old boy Sampat*. I had met Sampat* in December 2021, over the course of the few days, it was the ASHA worker who mentioned to me first about Sampat's alleged arrest/abduction. One day, when the ladies were busy sipping on some mahua along with the matriarchs of the family, Sampat, who would mostly stay nearby to the house and not venture too far from his home, recounted how the police took him into the forest and made him wear khaki clothes and would have shot him, had it not been for these villagers protesting and demanding accountability from the police¹²⁹.

¹²⁸ Arvind Netam is one of independent India's foremost ministers for Tribal Welfare. He himself is a Gond Adivasi and one of the very few leaders who had made it to the Centre during the Nehruvian years. Arvind Netam, a member of the Congress party, resides in Jagdalpur and while he does not involve himself in national politics, is still revered and considered an important intellectual in the Gond samaj (society).

¹²⁹ Sampat told me this story when I revisited Birar and his village in 2021. Sitting one evening around a fire, he hesitantly recounted the night of the incident. The next morning, standing amidst five other men, while one of Birar's younger brother was fixing the tyre of their tractor (manually), Birar, chewing on his datoon (bark of neem tree that's used for teeth in rural India), recounted the nightmare he had the night before. He woke up to sounds of boots marching in front on their home, it was only after he woke up and walked around the house, he reassure himself that it was just a nightmare. His sharing, almost made the men present there, talk about the nightmares they had

The protests on the issue of iron ore mining, around Amdai Ghati, were wound down because of the growing covid-19 pandemic and the second wave that hit the country, but also because of the different convictions among the Adivasis as well. Birar was candid sharing that there were varying interests amid the villagers from different panchayats,

“...Neco company was offered mining rights in Amdai ghati (for iron ore) by the Congress sarkar (government). There again, the consent provided by the Gram sabha is farji (dubious). They had organised a camp for issuing of some government documents, the villagers went for that, and it is now being said that this was the meeting organised for approval of mining in the area. We have set-up a committee- Amdai Sangharsh Samiti (Amdai Struggle Collective). There are 18 panchayats that will get affected because of the mining related construction work. But there again, it is difficult to gain some form of consensus. Villagers from the main seven villages, believe that this would provide them employment— these are villages that are closer to the roads as well. We are from a different panchayat, even though we are a part of the committee. They are of the opinion that they will be provided with new employment opportunities, especially the younger people. If there isn’t any consensus, what can we say, so the work there is stalled. Meanwhile, the security officials are providing the contractors security cover and the mining work has begun. We now think, that instead of gaining momentum on mining related issues, we need to gain more strength on campaign of implementation of PESA kanoon. This is the only way, we Adivasis, can ensure that we have the access and ownership of these lands and resources. If PESA is duly implemented, then these companies, security professionals and all- they will be answerable and obligated towards our consent.”¹³⁰

It becomes difficult to ignore the different lived experiences within the Adivasi population who live closer to modern day infrastructures and the Adivasis residing within the forests. The communities who persevere and continue with their forest-dwelling lives, are understood as supporters or Maoist informers in direct contrast to the Adivasi villages that are adjacent or closer to roads and in some instances to the police camps or check-points. The newly constructed cemented sheds aimed to provide covered spaces for the weekly haat bazaars (weekly markets), is another such attempt to move population into alleged safe spaces where movement is monitored and is more suitable for state officials (security personnel, more importantly). As observed earlier, the state duty of providing welfare and simplifying access to basic needs, is curated for the convenience of the securitised state. The incident below, is an example of how this happens.

and some of the recurrent ones’ and how they cope with it. These memories of violence and fear of precarious present and futures— this collective trauma, remain unattended and rarely spoken, these incidental accounts of sharing, illicit hesitant laughter and they move on with their day.

¹³⁰ Chat with Birar* December 2021.

During my second visit to Birar's village in December 2021, he introduced me to a group of villagers from the neighbouring districts of Bijapur and Dantewada. We met the group in the fields while they were walking back to their respective villages after a trip to the market in Markapal village. Birar raised the possibility of arranging a meeting with them, and they said they wanted to share their opinions about Dantewada police's surrender campaign 'Lon Varattu'¹³¹.

The men spoke about the fake surrenders that took place on 22nd October 2020 during the COVID lockdown. While most of the alleged surrendered villagers belonged to Bijapur district, they were picked from a ration shop in Barsur—the block that acts as a main sub-district centre for many of the interior villages. It was reported that seventeen people were labelled/listed as surrendered and after spending a night in the police station, they all returned to their villages, however, the next day, the news of their surrender made it to newspapers especially in Patrika¹³². Some of them, who had been surrendered and then released, were present in the group. When discussing these surrenders, it was revealed that the sarpanch of the village was instrumental in organising these surrenders.

The motivations of the sarpanch were unknown, but the general sentiment in such instances is to reduce potential conflict between two power structures—State and the Maoists especially when the State's power and welfare structures may provide some benefits for the villagers who opt in. This is a sentiment, that was more openly discussed in villages in Narayanpur block as opposed to the Orchha block and other bordering villages between Kondagaon, Bijapur and Dantewada.¹³³

This trade-off to win the trust of population especially in instances of contested legitimacy between two opposing power institutions, is observed across villages, especially the ones that lie closer to these roads. During my visits in October to December 2019, many spoke about the much reduced frequency of visits by Maoist

¹³¹ The phrase 'Lone Varratu' in Gondi translates to Ghar Wapsi in Hindi. The phrase itself, reminiscent of the right-wing campaign against conversions specifically aimed at the Muslim community across India. Ghar Wapsi in English would translate to "return to home".

¹³² Patrika is one of the Hindi language dailies in the state.

¹³³ These villages especially in Narayanpur block, are the ones which fall on the new road

guerrilla squads following the construction of a police camp or a road¹³⁴. In Timaru gaon or in Mahima Gawadi or Madamnaar— the discussions centered around descriptions of ‘then vs now’. Then signifying a time before the existence of a police camp nearby when movement of squads was frequent and more openly acknowledged.

During one such visit to Timaru gaon in October 2019, while speaking with the sarpanch who lived adjacent to the tar road that would connect Narayanpur and Barsur, he commented on the reduction of guerrilla movements ever since the construction work on the road had begun, “till about nine to 12 months ago, they would cross and camp in these parts. Now it’s not possible. I went to jail as well, on account of being an informer and was in the jail for three years. Now, I’m out and I have become the sarpanch. The government now is distributing patta (land deeds) in our village and around. This is a beneficial move for us all. We can have our land records and begin with other development related projects. I don’t see any merit in supporting the Maowadi- it was because of them I went to jail.”¹³⁵

The spatial distribution of varying sentiments pertaining to support for the Maoists or critical of the state, changes depending on the proximity of villages or paras¹³⁶ to pakka (constructed) roads. And is colloquially used as an example indicative of the success of the “wining hearts and minds.” The day of our visit to Timaru gaon, the Sarpanch showed us the patta distribution activity that was underway in the panchayat bhavan across the other side of the road from where we were sitting. The patta or distribution of land ownership documents by the district administration under the controversial forest rights act—which provides the Adivasis or forest dwellers with the constitutional right to claim land ownership by individuals and community as opposed to the earlier version of this law, under which the individuals or communities with no title deed in their name, were expected to vacate their traditional land that has been passed on over generations. This policy of distribution of title deeds, through the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF), is one of the measures used by the MHA as well as a policy response in LWE areas with the logic of ensuring food and livelihood security for individuals/community.

¹³⁴ While there is no way to make a connection or a correlation to roads and the successes in surrenders, it does confirm the State’s logic of recruiting ex-guerrillas and their help in making incursions into Maoist strongholds.

¹³⁵ Meeting with Sarpanch, Timaru gaon, October 2019.

¹³⁶ Smaller units within the village especially in demographically mixed villages with SC, ST or OBC population as opposed to purely ST population residing in the interior of the forests in the areas.

It would be safe to conclude that the reach of officials for distribution or confirmation of these claims on land is linked to the proximity and awareness of communities about these legislative, procedures and the people within the community, who would be conversant and knowledgeable with laws and the officials. There is subtle messaging that is conveyed through these measures of the state, where roads are not just symbolic of progress or modernity, it becomes a material representation of enabling (space) for recognition or making of citizenship. In some ways, roads transcend their immediate function of flow of goods and people into a strategic object that links to larger lexicon of state making and identity.

7.5 Conclusion

Roads and other forms of infrastructure are at the heart of counter-insurgency policy in this region. They are also an example of the triangular relationships between Adivasi, Maoists and the State. For the state, roads and to some extent schools are pathways to modernity and development. They represent the means by which poor forest communities would be alleviated from their backwardness and 'be developed'. There are key aspects of this which are problematic and at the heart of the conflict.

Firstly, such road development frequently happens in conditions of corruption around control of land, mining and other extractive development which sees the state seize land, with minimal or no compensation. In their analysis between Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, Adhikari and Chhotray (2020) conclude that Chhattisgarh's uninterrupted fifteen year rule by the Raman Singh led BJP government ensured that the interests of specific groups that enabled or fostered relationships with monetary gains (especially in conjunction with the large reserves of natural resources) received favourable treatment towards industries for access to land (2020, pp. 857–861). The inherent casteist/racist bias among the elite leadership and bureaucracy, disregards Adivasi practices and cosmology and cumulatively and asymmetrically dispossesses many among the Adivasi communities. The negotiations between the elite and the Adivasis, through use of incentives, brute force and tactics of intimidation/threat—creates another layer conflict between the Adivasis themselves, on grounds of resource accumulation and complicity with the State.

With roads as an example, even if they are not planned based on the needs of mining companies, they are often built based on an assumption of a hierarchical model of 'development' whereby the only future for Adivasi communities is to abandon traditional ways of life, to be incorporated into the Indian state, and in many cases to migrate from their lands, to schools or for work in towns or in mines. Again this can divide communities based on people's sense of personal gain, or their belief in the possibility of resisting the state. Even where people have moved into towns, in conversations they often said that they did so out of a sense of despair, a belief that life in the forest was impossible, rather than out of a sense of optimism or hope.

In many of the examples discussed during fieldwork, infrastructure was also self-evidently securitised. Police camps were built along with roads, and security forces used new school buildings for protection. In this way, infrastructure and policing were strongly linked, in their personal experience, by those I spoke to.

For the Maoists, the security that comes with roads is almost always seen as a threat. Their conflict with the state is in some ways simple. However, if the Maoists are to retain local support they also need to balance their military need to restrict state encroachment via roads and secure buildings, with the Adivasi's communities desire for services, schools and in some cases roads. There is therefore a potential dilemma for the Maoists, as seen in some of the examples above.

Ultimately, state encroachment is unlikely to be welcomed by Adivasi communities if it is perceived to be based on a model of development which is designed to, or which in practice, undermines their cultural existence, or which divides their community creating conflict between those, who gain some marginal benefits from infrastructure and those who do not. The development of school-related infrastructure and roads for movement of goods and people, effectively diminishes the cultural advantage of Adivasis on their native land, and coerces them to move into a new development paradigm, without their willingness and consent.

Chapter 8: Relationality and embracing difference: pathways to peace?

"I don't understand, why can't they just let us Adivasis take the ownership of the forests and these lands? If they give it to us, then we will be the ones who can negotiate with the Maoists. We will be the ones to ask them to stop the violence. Why don't they let us decide our future?" Soni Sori¹³⁷

8.1 Introduction

This thesis, premised and set in the backdrop of the five-and-a-half-decade long Maoist insurgency unpacks the state's response, specifically focusing on the surrender and rehabilitation policy. This policy, directed at disarmament and rehabilitation, aims to reduce the level of armed conflict by providing ex-combatants with vocational training and/or alternative employment options. In that regard it is based on an analysis of the conflict between the state and the Maoists, as one which is based on the limited access to employment and resource mobilisation, in the conflict-impacted areas, and which assumes that a significant proportion would leave the Maoist movement if economic inducements were provided. The notion of "mis-guided youth", often assumed to be

¹³⁷ This was shared with the researcher during a visit to Soni Sori in October of 2019 at her residence in Gidam. Soni Sori, was a schoolteacher who was under police custody along with her nephew Lingaram Kodopi. She was arrested by the Chhattisgarh police in 2011 as a naxal courier/messenger and was in the Jagdalpur jail for two years. The campaign to release Soni Sori, initiated by the civil liberties network active in Chhattisgarh and across India, spread across the world, like the campaign of release of Dr. Binayak Sen—a doctor and an activist working with the workers union at Bhilai Steel Power Plant. Soni's campaign much like Dr Sen's got international attention and a global campaign against their wrongful incarceration mobilised popular opinion against the militarisation and policing tactics of the State. The campaign incidentally brought the conflict between the Maoists and the State into international focus as well. And consequently, led to media coverage in widely read international media such as the Guardian and The New York Times. Nandini Sundar in her book, 'The Burning Forest' traces Soni's foray into activism and observes quoting from Clifford Bob's book 'The Marketing of Rebellion' that Soni's case "as a classic case... where obscure individuals may also be thrust into leadership roles through outside activism." (pp. 539). While Sundar's analysis and referenced words err on the side of condescension, one cannot ignore the ramifications of prolonged armed violence, militarisation, and everyday oppression among the Adivasis. The ubiquitous nature of violence in Bastar, is bound to effect and impact citizens' psyche and convictions. Rise of Soni Sori as an activist, and her "celebrity activism" doesn't necessarily overshadow historically active social movements, but it does provide new spaces for engagement and building public opinion for newer generations, who may not be members or active in other movements. Soni's campaign did raise awareness about Bastar among the middleclass youth in India. An Adivasi woman, trying to raise awareness on illegal detention, women's issues and fake encounters is commendable and tough in a predominantly patriarchal society.

young people with limited formal education or job prospects, who join the movement, finds a resonance in the surrender and rehabilitation policy. Hence, the first aspect of the policy is designed to initially provide monetary compensation based on seniority of the person surrendering and the quantity and quality of arms surrendered with them. The second part of the policy is designed to provide those surrendering with long-term employment, providing livelihood possibilities for both the ex-combatants and their families including children.

The thesis looks at both the intended and the un-intended consequences of the surrender and rehabilitation policy, on the people directly involved and impacted by the violence and counter-violence. The thesis analyses everyday life in the backdrop of this policy on three different, yet related, constituencies —the ex-combatant or the surrendered individuals; the villagers or the civilian/non-combatant population, and lastly, those influencing the long-term transformations within institutions to accommodate these ex-guerrillas. Since the policy is grounded in the idea of de-escalation and reduction of violence, it explores the challenges and successes of this policy in creating avenues for assimilation of ex-guerrillas into the society outside of the conflict. It seeks to understand how and where spaces for peace are negotiated through this policy of disarmament. The thesis analyses the process from a people-centric approach, using ethnographic and interpretivist methods to move away from the traditional state-centric methodologies, within which the agency of the state typically supersedes and dominates. This dominance is reflected in the discourse promoted through policy formulation, praxis and eventually inclusion as a state-led rationale for knowledge production across disciplines of social sciences. As evident through the three empirical chapters, the legitimacy accorded to these forms of knowledge production affect or impact efforts to gain 'voice', by Adivasis and other communities alike, who question the legitimacy of these institutions vis-à-vis their own representation within them.

The guiding question for the thesis: "*What spaces for conflict transformation does the Indian State's policy on disarmament (surrender and rehabilitation policy) create in the case of the protracted conflict with the Maoists?*" is worded to avoid employing language that leads to hypothesis testing or research focused on establishing causality. As shared in the methodology chapter, based on my own lived and shared experiences of working in (on) armed violence, the aim through my research project was to diversify security studies (especially from of South-Asian/South-East Asian region) and break the path

dependency of this stream with use of interpretive methodology.¹³⁸ The aim was to examine how meanings of security, rehabilitation, peace or rights are understood, by ‘... taking into account the historical, socio-cultural and political contexts’ in which these conversations and phenomenon occur (Wilkinson, 2012, p. 133).

While measuring impact or assessing the success of the policy was not the focus of the study, the questions presented to different stakeholders vis-à-vis the policy, did include an effort to understand what the policy-makers or policy implementors considered a viable reason for continuation of such a policy—basing it on a historical precedence of using a similar strategy of surrender and rehabilitation in Northeast India and in Jammu and Kashmir. The scope of this research, especially its attempts to understand the nuances of everyday life and how the policy intertwines the lives of the interlocuters or stakeholders pertinent for this thesis, necessarily involved engaging with decision-makers such as the bureaucracy at federal, sub-national and district level, and also living, sharing and engaging with Adivasi communities who have over generations lived through/with the conflict as a part of their lifeworld.

Hence, instead of approaching the ‘impact’ of the policy as a chain of ‘action-reaction-counterreaction’, to look at the complexities or the circuitry of social relations and the myriad ways in which everyday life is impacted with such a policy, or vice-versa, the research project moved beyond the people and social relations that are seen in direct relation to ‘surrender and rehabilitation’, and situated the work within an understanding that conflict is understood within the ecosystem and space it situates itself in. For this purpose, traversing from/between elite interviews of security and policy practitioners, to villagers or community members spread across the district of Narayanpur, were all a part of the continuum, despite the geographical (and social) distance between the decision-makers and the communities.

¹³⁸ Through the course of my thesis journey, which was disrupted (especially the field work) due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I attended the first ECPR virtual methods summer school on ‘Ethnographic Field Research Methods: Issues and Interpretations’ taught by Dr Cai Wilkinson. The two-week long course provided all of us participants with perspectives on positionality, ethics, reflexivity, and ethnographic fieldwork. A mixed bag of scholars using ethnographic methods to study social movements, the gaining popularity of the far-right in Europe, institutional ethnography of climate politics; this diverse group researchers engaged on the principles and the differences between ethnography as understood in anthropology (as participant observation) and (critical) interpretivism which seeks to broaden the definition and understanding of ‘fieldwork’ (participant observation, archival documents and historical-cultural context). The summer school was instrumental in exploring different ways of reading and writing ethnography.

The broad stroke cast by the leading question, required conceptual deliberation on space. This required the identification and unpacking of tangible everyday experiences that could be addressed by/with relevant actors and stakeholders, vis-à-vis the surrender and rehabilitation policy, engaging with everyday lived realities through an on-going armed conflict and in sites which showed different forms of resistance.

With different forms of resistance, the research marks a difference between the ideological political resistance of Maoist politics and the Adivasi assertion. This was one of the central considerations for the thesis—the unit of analysis, people and communities of people take on different identities, marked through an articulation of collective identities as Maoists, Adivasi, Unarmed-Armed, State-People — all of them defined through legalisation of bodies (or by deeming the bodies illegitimate). It is this contestation over legitimacy, that, in traditional state-centric discourse, is overlooked, such as it overlooks the resistance to the laws that institutionalise illegitimacy.

These nuances were captured by breaking down the main question into different pieces with the aim to unpack and create space for details to emerge. These key issues below, were discussed with different stakeholders with the aim of capturing the continuum of the policy from the issue of finances, through to the practice of the people who implement them on ‘the ground’:

- a) The role of surrender and rehabilitation policy in the protection and maintenance of the security architecture of the State.
- b) The role of the Centre and the federal state in the implementation of the policy.
- c) The means by which the community/locals engage with surrendered guerrillas.
- d) An exploration of the everyday life of surrendered guerrillas and how they (re)integrate.
- e) The impacts on overall community relations at village and district level.

The analysis of topics a) and b) is intended to capture the elite perspectives from both the policy framing and individual perspectives of senior officials from the paramilitary and security services. Both questions served as signposts, with the intention of fostering space for more in-depth conversations based on the answers by the officials. In many instances, the interviewees, especially within the elites associated directly with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), responded to the questions with discussions on how the policy’s focus, at the ministry-level, was on expenditure and deployment of paramilitary forces. Topics c) to e) were more relevant for officials, community leaders, social workers and

villagers. The questions around these topics, were broad and as the first two, were mere signposts to steer the conversation, aiming to draw out in conversation the linkages between them. These topics also served as a reminder for my own participant observations and field diaries, to ensure a structure to the observations made. While these questions were penned during the formative days of field research, as the field work progressed, more nuanced questions and conversations took primacy over these, and the elaborations can be seen in the quotes used in the empirical chapters.

As mentioned in chapter three—methodology—the elite interviews were difficult to schedule, especially given the political environment within India, where critical research especially looking at aspects of internal armed violence and security, is viewed with suspicion and distrust. The limitations of elite interviews were compensated for, by a thorough analysis of the historical trajectory and evolution of the conflict, including the new shifts in policy response in regions with prevalence or even dominance of Maoist politics, hence, tracking the questions in the parliamentary debates, looking at localised analysis, reportage and interviewing scholars and security experts, was imperative. These interviews and informal meetings helped in broadening my own understanding of who I needed to speak to during the fieldwork.

8.2 Contribution to literature

The research, with the aim of unpacking disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) in instances of on-going conflict, was designed to expand the conceptual lens of DDR which derived its intellectual knowledge primarily through praxis and which is understood as “a broad set of practices with a dominant approach of social engineering populations for promotion of liberal democratic norms,” (Berdal, 2007). Grounded in the post-cold war interventionist liberal agenda, DDR practices were de-historicised and de-politicised. This epistemological positioning was later recognised by practitioners and scholars and Muggah and O’Donnell (2015) who emphasised the need to broaden the analytical categories through people-centric policies and practices, and to acknowledge local contexts and country-specific political realities.

In the decade following 2010, the need to address DDR in instances of armed violence where neither a ceasefire nor a peace agreement was a plausible precondition, led to conceptual shift, from a sequential set of practices to inclusion of different armed actors for conflict prevention, and a recognition of the state’s limitations and monopoly over violence. A critical look at the inherent state-centric discourse of DDR, fed into the larger

debates on humanitarian interventions and its colonial legacy, continued through power asymmetry, despite the 'decolonialising' agenda of international aid and humanitarian assistance in strengthening erstwhile colonies.

My research, and the case of Maoist conflict, presents a study that contributes to this body of literature—DDR in the context of an ongoing low-intensity, but heavily militarised conflict, where the multiplicity of actors: Indian State, Maoist guerrillas and Adivasis, and the historical injustices complicate the legitimacy of the State to implement such a program. As is observed and illustrated through the empirical chapters, the surrender policy is not one of 'demobilisation' rather it is a 're-mobilisation' of ex-guerrillas to strengthen the state's capacity for counterinsurgency. This research, contributes to the body of literature at the intersection of conflict studies, anthropology of security and the decolonising project within the 'Académie'— through the process of thick description of Adivasis enduring resistance to structural and armed violence. It further indicates the state's complicity and inherent racialised attitude towards the Adivasis, whose assertion is either subsumed under Maoist violence or is framed as resistance of the "meek and gentile" who have been "left behind" in the global project of integrating socio-economic lives of people through trade, information and a monetary system. Savyasachi (2018, pp. 7-18) expands on this transformation of the social contract that is established through the promise of currency and how it compels any form of difference to be understood within a binary. A binary between modern and non-modern, state and non-state, civilised and savage/uncivilised etc. This is an important intervention and often ignored, specially within disciplines such as security studies, because of the fundamentals of these knowledge processes and their intertwined logic of a society and governance that is led through material exchange and economic ties. The notion of the Adivasi, existing beyond the construction of time which is valued as productive-unproductive or their chosen lifeworld, is one that requires rebuilding, reconstruction and development. The study, at its core, ends up revisiting the debates on the idea of development and the philosophical questions of what does progress really mean and for who? This reflection is inextricably linked to the question of disarmament, since the Indian state's security policies suffer from an inherent tendency to find solutions designed to link Adivasi empowerment to mechanisms of global capital and its flows.

These security policies are linked to the broader mandates of the state on nation building, with its thrust towards economic and financial prowess. The public messaging through use of media, on building an image of India as a world power, emboldens masculine

notions of a state that is powerful, infallible and united or homogenous i.e. identifiable with one common identity. And hence comes the construction of the 'traitor other' or 'anti-national' which provides a rationale for the use of force or the security apparatus, and which strengthens a military-industry nexus. As an effect, the ubiquity of security measures such as police camps, check-points, community policing in spaces such as Bastar and the introduction of surveillance cameras and bio-metric systems at airports, train stations, institutions and buildings of historical and administrative importance, including military facilities, has led to the securitising of everyday life, for protection from potential security threats. The notion of an insurgent, and 'small wars' where threat and violence shifts from the battlefield to spaces which are considered peaceful, builds further grounds for protecting institutions and infrastructure, relegating the protection of people or citizens to a secondary need.

The decolonial agenda within securitisation aims to highlight this dark side, it seeks to "understand how certain racialised and classed subjects are constituted as security threats, against which the use of militarised violence and repression becomes warranted, if not necessary, to defend the body politic," (Behra et al., 2021). This critical lens, made space for cross-disciplinary inquiries with the intention of turning the research agenda and knowledge-building into a more inclusive space, wherein the research objectives shed the exclusionary gaze of the researcher and make way for active learning through the voices of the interlocutors.

This epistemological turn and introduction of an 'anthropology of security', and an 'anthropology of peace' - the two distinct sub-disciplines - provides a more robust research and methodological diversity, which opens spaces for discussion on people-centric international relations. Reversing the flow of knowledge from west to non-west, using participant observation, interviews, and an understanding of space as a site of politics, the discourse becomes inclusive of not just a study of the human race but of the shared ecosystems with nature: 'The Anthropocene' (Harrington, 2016). And with this acknowledgement of understanding the consequences of human activity/action on more than just the people, in international relations, specifically in the study of violence, has initiated a conversation between considered separate disciplines: International relations and Anthropology.

To understand violence, is to address the notion of fear of the unknown and uncertain (Goldstein, 2010; Holbraad and Pedersen, 2013) and the manifestations of this violence

and exacerbation of human and ecological precarity, is where observations pertaining to 'meaning-making' are themselves questioned. The meaning-making in international relations, has followed a top-down approach, where notions of power and its concentration was codified through super-structures. From seeing security through a traditional military lens, security itself is understood as practices that 'make meaning' to tackle uncertainty in everyday life. And this is where analysis of the grounded practices of the everyday, and the state's agentic manifestations, bring richness to our understanding.

As illustrated in the introduction chapter one and chapter two, the literature on counterinsurgency, driven and dominated by experts from the security architecture such as, serving or retired security personnel, and high-ranking officials within the ministries mandated to look at national and regional security —because of the nature of their experiential learning and praxis, criminalise and/or delegitimise the opponent (or the actors who are party to the conflict). Khalili (2013) explicitly shows through archival data, that combat/counterinsurgency tactics passed through various military minds had originated during the imperial rule with the specific practices of the British empire. In the field, the public, policy and much academic discourse is trusting of the military and suspicious of Adivasi and human rights activists. By public, in this context, I indicate the mainland and the Non-Adivasi population who by the virtue of their reliance on institutional history, narratives and their inherent bias towards the 'other' find solace in colonial legacies and practices. This is my observation, as a Non-Adivasi, the world I inhabit and with others like me, whose relationship with nature is more transactional and embedded within the structures of capital and production. To us, the Adivasi world, is defined from a formative stage, as a remnant of the past, and unknowingly or ignorantly, depriving them of coevalness (Fabian, 1983). At the heart of it, the conflict is about denial of Adivasi history, culture and their lifeworld and their 'rights' as the savage other, who do not know what is good for them and hence coercion is justifiable.

Employing ethnographic methods for peace research, and borrowing conceptual definitions from anthropological texts, enriched this research. To study ramifications and changes in state-society relations, the ethnographic methods helped in unpacking the meaning of peace and its different articulations in 'adhikaar', 'mava naate mava raaj' and 'sangharsh'. This phrase, "mava naate, mava raaj" (my land, my rule), a call for self-determination that was first articulated in series of 'Gondwana sabhas' (Gondawana

conclave)¹³⁹ in early 20th century and later with the formation of Gondwana Ganatantra Party in 1990s. Poyam (2016) in his piece on the political movement for a separate Gondwana state to ensure the safeguarding of the Adivasi lifeworld and avoid assimilation within savarna Hindu identity, concludes, that the diffusion of power and the primacy given to the reorganisation of states to form Chhattisgarh, has impacted the consolidation of the political movement. But the call for ‘my land, my rule’ indicates a new growing voice of the Adivasi, who continues to organise, agitate and resist against the State’s incursions into Adivasi lands, and the manipulation of the land for capital intensive activities. Interconnected with the call for self-rule, is a call for entitlement and rights as ‘adhikaar’ (right) and this articulation of right to self-rule, the Adivasis of the forests realise will be through a concerted struggle (sangharsh). This acceptance of struggle, or resistance against acquiescing among the forest-dwelling communities, is an act of defiance against both, the state and the Maoists.

8.3 Disarming through participant observations and thick description

The observations from the field, through thick description and sharing of space, infers that through disarmament and reintegration, the State is attempting to strengthen its monopoly over violence, and in the process delegitimise the voices of Adivasi population residing in the forests and in the urban dwellings. In a hyper securitised set-up, in a context of guerrilla warfare, the State’s reintegration program impacts the status-quo and the strength of the guerrilla forces, but this shift is not one which favours the civilian population/Adivasis. The objective of the program or policy, limits and defines armed violence and conflict through a State-dominant discourse, with the implicit understanding that the State responds to acts of violence, and that State itself is not a perpetrator, or a violator of the dignity of its citizens, community rights and entitlements.

The edifice of the State is based on a foundation that the institution views its citizens as equal. However, in praxis, equality is maintained among communities and people with generational privilege and power. Such an observation resonates with recent international solidarity campaigns and public acknowledgement of historical injustices against the indigenous population in Northern America. The residential schools for indigenous people in Canada (Leeuw, 2007) or the occupation of indigenous land for agriculture and allied activities. As Khalili (2013) shows, all of these practices link to a

¹³⁹ Gondwana literally translates to land of the Gonds—the Gonds or as explained in chapter five, the pan-Adivasi identity of the people who speak Gondi and are natives to the deccan plateau in central India.

violent past, perpetuated by the enormous needs of the capitalist systems and the inter-dependency on resources for fuelling this ideology of wealth an accumulation.

In his book, 'The nutmeg's curse' Amitav Ghosh (2021), encapsulates the European colonial enterprise of conquest of goods such as nutmeg by the Dutch traders, and the onslaught of violence and occupation of indigenous lands that followed. Introducing his readers to 'terraforming' as not a word used in science fiction to describe "planetary engineering designed to enhance the capacity of an extraterrestrial planetary environment to sustain life" (2021, p. 53), Ghosh illustrates through a series of examples, that terraforming, (making of land) itself is an extrapolation from colonial history of "...wars of extermination—the conflict that eliminated the indigenous population of Tasmania after the Island's colonisation by the British" (ibid.).

I introduce this term, terraforming at this point in the text, to bring a correlation between the methods used by the European colonisers/settlers in the Americas and other parts of the world and the form of internal colonisation of the Indian state on Adivasi land. The adaptation of land, for use in accordance with the modernity project of the Indian state, in essence, devalues land and the attached ecosystems and lifeworld for their difference and estrangement from modernity. For land to be of use, for communities to be modern, the State requires them to become contributory forces to the economic growth projections that are determined through use of resources extracted from the land. The land-making or land-moulding in this context would signify the rationale for militarisation and asserting territorial claim against the guerrillas and subsequently securing it for development projects such as roads, bridges, and mining.

The relationship between land, the Adivasis and the forests, is undermined and relegated into pre-modern relations. The introduction of modern relations in these forests, results in unintentional ramifications, and ecological repercussions, that remain understudied and under-analysed. The pollution through mining activities into the perennial rivers abundantly flowing across Bastar or the prevalence of malnourishment, malaria and subsequent mortality of children and youth, contribute to the burden of everyday life. The collective demands for Adivasi assertion through constitutional provisions, in the region of Bastar, because of the militarised and securitised setting, are viewed with suspicion, by the state.

An evident impact of the militarised response emerges through the interviews and discussion on the implementation of the directives laid out under the surrender and rehabilitation policy. Chapter four, the first of the three empirical chapters brings this out. By tracing and sharing of their experiences of what led to surrender of people/individuals who were now attached to the security architecture. It details their 'everyday life' and the nature of their involvement in the security and activities related to policing. It attempts to speak to the inner world of these people, and the way they make sense of their new reality and life where combat persists and continues to play a significant role in their lives, both in their new involvement in the state security forces, and in many cases continuing threats from their former comrades.

Chapter five expands and captures two aspects of the precarity of living in contested spaces. The description of the state-organised event of an annual peace marathon captures in detail the process of state-sponsored sporting events that feed into the management of the public perception of the Maoist conflict. A peace (half) marathon where the race route of 21.1 km includes areas between the district headquarter and towards Sonpur block—the route which until six years ago was considered dangerous and prone to IED attacks. The marathon, and the route for the race, is used as a tool to spin positive news stories about the space, which was often synonymous with terrorism, violence and under-development. The media campaign for the sporting event, utilised a narrative of positive change, to construct an image of violence-free and peaceful forests of Abhujmaad. Almost like akin to a "before and after" imagery, the messaging was an intentional effort at promoting local tourism and a mass messaging platform to spread the word about various efforts by the provincial government in the rehabilitation of ex-guerrillas. The contrasting imagery of protesting Adivasis against police camps, planned iron ore mining and demanding PESA kanoon¹⁴⁰, in the same empirical chapter, illustrates the contestation, or sangharsh, of the Adivasis as citizens within the same India which exalts the idea of a loyal and obedient citizen. The contestation of these narratives, resonates across Bastar, where the Adivasi population routinely raises their voice against

¹⁴⁰ PESA kanoon as explained earlier, was a legislation passed by the Indian constitution in 1996 as a way of devolving power and extending this power or devolution to areas with Adivasi and Tribal population across India. The act, with its two separate sections, 'schedule six' and 'schedule seven' which provides the Adivasi and other Tribal population to continue with their customary laws for use of land, resources and governance. Across Bastar region, villagers have one continuous grouse, that none of the development projects (including mining, road construction, dams etc) are done in accordance with the stipulations provided under the PESA Kanoon.

state practices and reminds the government officials and political leadership about their constitutional right of self-rule.

This claim can be extended to the indigenous movement for assertion across India, especially for areas that are administratively classified under the PESA kanon. As explained in the chapter, PESA as a constitutional provision gives space for Adivasis and other indigenous communities in North and Northeast India. Birar's* conversation when we met in 2021, resonates with this; he along with others like him, understood the complications generated using violence, but the district and state authorities continue to disregard the implementation of the stipulations under PESA, even two decades after the constitutional amendment. In the legislative elections of 2023 in Chhattisgarh, the demand to institute PESA was not even on the political agenda of either the INC or the BJP. Simultaneously, Adivasi assertion continues, where collectives are demanding inclusion of 'Sarna' as a category for religion in the census of India to undo the historical assimilation of the Adivasis as Hindus and promotion of Adivasi history, folklore and cultural practices through exclusive publication houses such as Adivaani¹⁴¹, that focus on promoting and documenting Adivasi culture which has had a tradition of sharing knowledge through oral histories.

This project of giving prominence to Adivasi identity and lifeworld, and highlighting its distinct nature, is an important facet of understanding present-day politics in Adivasi India and specifically in Bastar. The growing demands of India's development needs such as energy consumption or extraction of resources from the forests, as shared in Chapter six of the thesis, undermines the homelands of people who have lived in synchronous rhythm with nature and other non-human forms for centuries. In the last of the empirical chapter, the conundrum of infrastructure development to ensure security for furthering other development activities, versus the desirable developmental intervention for people, comes into spotlight. The rationale for infrastructure as articulated by the state, is a pre-requisite for more developmental activities, but a resonating question "who are these roads for?" becomes a key question. The desirable development, for roads between villages, for primary healthcare, pipelines for water, electrification or their rightful demand for sharing of earnings from sand mining with villages, remain elusive. The

¹⁴¹ Adivaani, is a publication house started by Ruby Hembrom- a Santhal Adivasi, born to first generation migrants to the city. Her endeavour to start an exclusive Adivasi publication house was motivated because of the discriminatory attitude towards Adivasi languages and culture as inferior and inconsequential. Formed in 2012, the publication has collections of literary and scholarly publications addressing different aspects of indigenous culture from parts of India.

chapter, argues that what is understood as value neutral or an equalising material intervention—roads, bridges and police camps are responsible for pushing the forest dwellers to the margins of urbanised spaces within the district and to other parts of the state and beyond. Glimpses of this dispossession is visible in Shanti Nagar, that I describe in chapter four, where wives and children of men who have left the forest either because of the pressure from the security forces or because of the Maoist accusations of them as informers, live on the edge of the district headquarters and seek daily work for sustenance.

8.4 Relationality: questioning the boundaries of liberal critical peacebuilding

The response of the State, promotes terraforming, where the forests derive new meaning and purpose. The project of civilising, in the form of roads, bridges, new forms of housing and technology for resource extraction—all have the purpose of contributing to developing the land. And hence, securing land, from communities and people, who have traditionally held an intricate and synchronous relationship with the forest and its resources, becomes the right of initiation for a state to come into being. And all this while, Gaia¹⁴², as Ghosh refers to Earth and the elements that build together our lifeworld, builds an argument for the readers to look beyond the Anthropocene gaze (Ghosh, 2021). Gaia—as understood to encompass everything living or as complex ecosystems living or growing in tandem with each other, the inter-dependency of life upon each other is a constant reckoning fact. Gaia is not passive, and it communicates and retaliates. The growing climate crisis, with change in weather patterns, heating of oceanic waters and the changes in oceanic currents, are testimony to non-passivity of Gaia.

¹⁴² The concept of Gaia, originally was presented as Gaia hypothesis and then a theory developed by scientists James Lovelock, and microbiologist Lynn Margulis from 1960 onwards. Derived from the name the ancient Greeks gave to planet Earth—the goddess Gaia who is considered the primordial goddess who emerged from Chaos (or the great void). According to the Gaia hypothesis, the Earth is viewed as a self-regulating system made up with the “totality of organisms, the surface rocks, the ocean and the atmosphere tightly coupled as an evolving system. The theory see this system as having a goal—the regulation of surface conditions so as always be as favourable as possible for contemporary life,” Fellows (2022, p. 1234) cites Lovelock (2009, p. 166). I encountered the concept while reading Amitav Ghosh and the reason I refer to it here, is because of the similarity between the overall thought behind the Gaia theory and the Adivasi lifeworld. For the Adivasis, the forest is a living system comprising of beings, organisms and the system itself works with a rhythm and balance. This is evident in the practices of setting up new homes on forest land. An adivasi village, would collectively mark the land and leave some offerings on the piece of land leave it for the forest gods overnight. The idea is that if the marked land interferes with the paths or land used by other organisms that inhabit the forest and if the re-working of the boundary impacts the rhythm or the stasis of the forest (Narendra, 2018, pp. 519–543). These ideas of seeing the world as an organism, emerging from varied cultural practices, does provide an impetus to the growing body of literature and scientific research into understanding earth and its challenges especially in light of the human intervention over the past centuries.

This inter-dependency or what is defined as relationality in peace and conflict studies, in reference to the local turn and indigenous cosmologies, questions the very fabric of liberal peacebuilding ontology. Rather than analysing frameworks through explaining of pre-existing identities or entities, relationality tells us that entities are co-constitutive and the “ontological priority is on the nature of the relationships between entities rather than the characteristics of the entities,” (Randazzo, 2021). Scholars such as Dorethe Rosenow (2018) and Morgan Brigg (2018) speak to each other through their focus on the categories of decolonisation and looking at difference through relational lens, respectively. Their scholarly pursuit recognises the value in indigenous knowledge systems as they challenge the western knowledge systems or worldviews that have reduced life to “capital currencies and financial instruments” (ibid.).

The growing belief in alternative knowledge systems as the answer for responding to human made changes such as the climate crisis and conflict, is serendipitously substantiated looking at the field and the sites of resistance which are mobilised and motivated towards preserving of their lifeworld where the role of humans and non-humans are considered at par without any moral hierarchies of reason or rationality. In the course of fieldwork in north Bastar, where militarisation, armed violence and structural violence are an overarching reality, that redefine relationships between individuals, communities and materiality; the conflict presents scholars and practitioners with signs that itself urge us to think and question the nature of existing relations—between the state and its citizens and between humans and non-human.

To return finally to where this research project began with the question, *what spaces for conflict transformation does the Indian State’s policy on disarmament (surrender and rehabilitation policy) create in the case of the protracted conflict with the Maoists?* It is evident that notwithstanding the use of a similar language to other international contexts, that the policy has had no positive impact on conflict transformation. “Surrender and rehabilitation” is primarily a policy of counterinsurgency. Rather than seeking to move beyond conflict, it re-militarises individuals and the wider community by running the scheme through the security forces and recruiting many of those who surrender back into armed state security forces of one sort or another. There is no (re)integration into a post-conflict life. There is, at times, some pragmatic relations with surrendered family and community members as outlined in the empirical chapters, but it is overlaid and

dominated by the securitised context —unless they entirely leave the wider region, as is noticed in case of Varun and Smriti, who I mention in chapter three.

Methodologically, the use of an ethnographic approach and an attempt to explore the everyday, brings a perspective into the debate, that is entirely missing in state dominated discourses in the parliament, Government and security policy documents. It is also largely missing in the national media. Exploring a series of everyday practices, brings the local oral discourse and local practices of resistance into the storey of how we analyse the impact of state-led policy and practice. It also allows us to ‘see’ the Adivasi as actors in this process, certainly neither the gullible victims of some state discourses, but neither are they simply Maoist cadre in a binary conflict with the state. They are self-aware actors in their own right, making choices in difficult circumstances, seeking to both defend their territory and communities, but also assert a different way of looking at the forests and their homes.

So, while the historical context has made the forests of Dandakaranya safe space for the Maoists, the conflict between the state and the Maoists contemporarily suffers from an analytical blind spot which is embedded in the larger savarna settler colonial practices, that inherently view difference as an opportunity for assimilation. This present-day conflict and the policy of surrender falls under this trajectory. In the arming of Adivasis by forming specialised battalions such as the ‘Bastariya Battalion’ or through integration of ex-guerrillas in the DRG, the bodies of the Adivasis, are treated as expendable. This policy of the state, which continues without any formal review or assessment of what does its implementation really do on the ground indicates the racist attitudes of the state and its representatives, who continue to deny or see the Adivasis as people with history, culture and politics.

8.5 Conclusion: Adivasi Assertion

I would like to refer to the quote by Soni Sori at the beginning of this chapter. Soni lays out a question for every one of us to consider: the inclusion of Adivasis as mediators or as agents for peace in this conflict between the state and the non-state. The historical claim making of the Adivasis in Bastar region, is well documented in subaltern studies literature and in the growing field of Adivasi studies within India. However, while in the sphere of culture studies, these voices are best heard, in practices of security and peace studies, the primacy of the state, impedes or limits spaces for engaging with alternative methods for

restoring or finding peace in these parts. The Adivasis, as is evident, have a lifeworld, which often is challenged by the state through the language and practice of modernity. Adivasi politics in India has existed in parallel to the larger democratic politics, and while the language of representation has been an important tool for asserting their claims, Adivasi assertion, through difference rather than assimilation, is recent. We now, witness the demand of sarna religion as a separate category, or the emergent field of Adivasi studies is a testament to this new wave of awakening or re-assertion of indigenous rights.

If we look closely, the people closest to both the state and the Maoists, are the Adivasis who reside in these insurgent spaces. The limitation of the State, in recognising the role of the Adivasi as an interlocuter or a mediator between the Maoists and them, is deliberate. The deliberate omission of these voices, is indicative of the larger systems of accumulation and dispossession, which the Indian state prefers to honour or maintain. If the state, decides to include the Adivasis onto the dialogue table, providing them equal rights on their natural resources, acknowledging the constitutional right of the Adivasis on their forests and connect lifeworlds, the state, could possibly lay grounds for building trust among and within different constituents who have been impacted by the violence. As referred in the introduction chapter, the remedial nature of finding a recourse to political violence, as is explicit through the analysis of the contemporary phase of Maoist conflict, limits the transformatory nature of political violence. In circumstances, where this violence is not delegitimised, it would provide the state to reconfigure its own state-practices, to accommodate peaceful recourse to political violence through foregrounding the community who has been at the forefront of this armed struggle.

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Appendix- I

Questions for Security Analysts, MHA/CAPF Officials at National /State-level

1. How would you describe the role of your agency in managing the conflict between the State and Maoists?
 - 1.1. For how long have you been involved in this conflict?
 - 1.2. What are the different locations (if any) you have been deployed?
 - 1.3. Under what capacity?
2. What are the merits of introducing the policy on disarmament?
 - 2.1. How do you view its success?
 - 2.2. How does it contribute to peace?
 - 2.3. What would you understand by peace?
3. What other measures could be introduced to strengthen the disarmament process?
4. How does surrender contribute or foster grounds for non-violence or conflict resolution?
 - 4.1. What do you consider as resolution?
5. What are the responses from officials posted in the field?
 - 5.1. Who are the people surrendering from the movement?
 - 5.2. What are their motivations and aspirations for rehabilitation?
 - 5.3. How are aspirations of women different?
6. What would be the role of surrendered and rehabilitated individuals in the society?
 - 6.1. Would you consider these individuals as citizens?
 - 6.2. What is the difference between the male and female surrendered Maoist?
7. The policy suggests rehabilitation and subsequent vocational training. What do we understand by rehabilitation?
 - 7.1. What are these measures/ procedures?
 - 7.2. What is the 'change' imagined or expected through these programmes?
 - 7.3. How and through who are they implemented?
 - 7.4. From past experiences, what is the role of rehabilitation? peace?
8. Tracing India's experience in surrender, what is the reason that the government pursues this policy?
 - 8.1. Is there a convergence on internal conflicts in India?
9. What kind of revisions or alterations would you consider in the policy?
 - 9.1. What alterations would you consider in addressing the conflict?
10. How does the welfare policy contribute to overall rehabilitation?
 - 10.1. What policies enable in gaining access to welfare?

11. How do you see your cooperation with other agencies?

11.1. What is the contribution of civil society actors?

11.2. What about local elected representatives?

11.3. What about funding and investment in these regions?

11.4. How do you view local development based organisations- NGOs?

11.5. What is their contribution in maintaining or fostering spaces for dialogue and peace?

Appendix-II

Maoist Circular shared locally on Surrender and Informers

पुलिस मित्र अभियान का बहिष्कार करो!

हमारे जानी दुश्मन हमारे मित्र कैसे हो सकते हैं?

कतई नहीं.

इन दिनों पुलिस विभाग द्वारा गांवों, थानों व कैंपों में बैठक आयोजित कर पुलिस मित्र अभियान चलाया जा रहा है. 'अपराधों-अपराधियों, संदिग्ध व्यक्तियों', गांवों में आने-जाने वालों से लेकर गांव की हर गतिविधि तक की सूचना देने आदि काम सौंपते हुए पुलिस मित्र दलों का गठन किया जा रहा है. जो हमारे भाई-बहनों, हमारी प्यारी संतान को मारते हैं, हमारा कल्लेआम करते हैं, हमारी मांओं, बहनों, बहु-बेटियों के साथ अत्याचार करते हैं, हमारी संपत्ति लूटते हैं, हमारे गांव व घरों में तबाही मचाते हैं वे हमारे मित्र कैसे हो सकते हैं?

क्या पुलिस वाकई में जनता को मित्र बनाने के इरादे से आ रही है?

नहीं, नहीं.

जनता के बीच में जो मित्रता व एकता कायम है उसे भंग करने के लिए. एक दूसरे पर शक पैदा करने के लिए. हर किसी को घर का भेदी बनाने के लिए. हर गांव को अपनी मुट्ठी में बांधने के लिए. अब किसी के घर में मेहमान आता है, तो वो संदिग्ध बन जाएगा. पुलिस यह सब इसलिए कर रही है कि गांव में ऐसी कोई गतिविधि न हो जो उसकी जानकारी में न हो. साफ है कि क्रांतिकारी आंदोलन की गतिविधियों को रोकने व उनके बारे में सूचनाएं एकत्रित करने का इरादा इसके पीछे छुपा है.

चूंकि क्रांतिकारी आंदोलन जनता के लिए जारी है इसलिए इसके विरोध में गठित किए जाने वाले पुलिस मित्र दलों में शामिल होने का मतलब है, पुलिस का मुखबिर और जनता का शत्रु बनना.

क्या कोई शरीफ आदमी पुलिस मुखबिर/जनता का शत्रु बनना चाहता है?

बिलकुल नहीं!

क्या अपनी आंखों को अपने ही हाथों से फोड़ने तैयार होंगे?

बिल्कुल ही नहीं.

आप लोग इस विषय से अच्छी तरह वाकिफ हैं कि दंडकारण्य में विगत 38 वर्षों से भारत की कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी (माओवादी) के नेतृत्व में जल, जंगल, जमीन के लिए जनता लड़ रही है. जनता द्वारा संचालित जन युद्ध व जन संघर्ष के

फलस्वरूप गांव-गांव में गठित क्रांतिकारी जनताना सरकारों द्वारा जनता के असली विकास के लिए कोशिश की जा रही है. यह कहने की जरूरत नहीं है कि यह लड़ाई साम्राज्यवादियों, देशी विदेशी बड़े पूंजीपतियों, जमींदारों जो यहां की सारी संपत्ति व संसाधनों को हड़पने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं, के खिलाफ है. इसलिए क्रांतिकारी आंदोलन व जनताना सरकारों को कुचलने के मकसद से शासक वर्गों द्वारा पहले से ही अपने हथियारबंद बलों का इस्तेमाल किया जा रहा है. इसके तहत दिन-ब-दिन सशस्त्र बलों की तादाद बढ़ रही है. कॉरपेट सेक्युरिटी के तहत गांव-गांव में सशस्त्र बलों के कैंप बिठाए जा रहे हैं. शासक वर्गों को अच्छी तरह पता है कि वो सिर्फ अपने हथियारबंद बलों के जरिए ही किसी भी क्रांतिकारी आंदोलन का उन्मूलन नहीं कर सकते हैं. इसलिए वे अपनी षड़यंत्रपूर्ण कम तीव्रता वाली युद्ध नीति पर अमल कर रहे हैं. इसके तहत जनता व हमारे निर्माणों के बीच से ही मुखबिर बनाने की योजना पर जोर दे रहे हैं. हरेक गांव में 10 मुखबिर बनाने में फोर्स लगी है. पुलिस, सीआरपीएफ, आइटीबीपी, बीएसएफ, डीआरजी वाले अलग-अलग मुखबिर नेटवर्क बना रहे हैं. इन मुखबिरों के जरिए ही सूचनाएं इकट्ठी करके हमारे आंदोलन को खत्म करने की साजिश रच रहे हैं. इनकी सूचनाओं पर आधारित होकर ही हमारे जन संगठनों, सेल, जीपीसी, जनताना सरकारों के कार्यकर्ताओं, नेताओं को पकड़ना, गोली मारना, आत्मसमर्पण करवाना, झूठी मुठभेड़ों में गाली मार कर हत्या करना आदि जारी हैं. पुलिस की आंख और कान ये मुखबिर ही हैं.

छत्तीसगढ़ राज्य में विगत की भाजपा सरकार द्वारा प्रारंभ 'समाधान' हमले के तहत ही नव गठित कांग्रेस सरकार पुलिस मित्र दलों का गठन करते हुए अपने आप यह साबित कर रही है कि क्रांतिकारी आंदोलन को कुचलने में वह विगत की भाजपा के नक्शे कदम ही चलने वाली है.

इसलिए सभी उत्पीड़ित वर्गों व तबकों की जनता से हमारी अपील है कि इन षड़यंत्रकारी कार्यक्रमों का बहिष्कार करें. अपनी समस्याओं के असली समाधान के लिए संघर्ष के रास्ते में आगे बढ़ें. क्रांतिकारी आंदोलन के पक्ष में खड़े हों, जनताना सरकारों को बचाए रखने व मजबूत करने एवं उनका विस्तार करने में मदद दें.

क्रांतिकारी अभिनंदन के साथ,

दंडकारण्य स्पेशल जोनल कमेटी,
भारत की कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी (माओवादी)
दिनांक - 30 जनवरी 2019



ये है रामजी धुरवा
माड़िया समाज
का अध्यक्ष

- रामजी धुरवा अपने आपको माड़िया समाज का हितैषी बताने वाला, सरकार के प्रायोजित योजनाओं को अमल करने वाला सुभ्रांशु चौधरी का दोस्त है!
- बड़े पूंजीपतियों व साम्राज्यवादियों का नंबर एक दलाल है!
- इस पर विश्वास मत कीजिए!
- जनता की जनअदालत में इस पर मौत की फैसला बरकरार है!

माड डिविजनल कमेटी
भारत की कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी (माओवादी)

This is a circular issued by the Maad Divisional Committee, CPI (Maoist) on accusing Ramji Dhurva, a local of the area, as a conspirator with the state. They also single out a Chhattisgarh based activist, Shubhranshu Chaudhary, founder of a community radio network, CGNet Swara. This community radio helped in recording violence during the Salwa Judum years (2005-07). Chaudhary was invited by the Maoists to spend time and interview the party leadership. He published a book, 'Lets Call Him Vasu' (Choudhary, 2012), which was critical of the Maoist party. The writing also questioned the 'communist' ethos of the CPI (Maoist) and for the party leadership, it was a breach of trust, since Subhranshu caricatured their leadership and their political acumen. This circular is a response to the growing distrust between the party and Shubhranshu and the people who were associated with him and his work. At the time of my fieldwork, Shubhranshu was working with local groups on organising 'shanti yatra' or a peace walk, with

the intention of creating critical popular support towards a creating peace in Bastar. In connection to this, the party had issued a circular in specific against support for Choudhary's peace walk (see the circular below)



भारत की कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी (माओवादी) दण्डकारण्य स्पेशल जोनल कमेटी

प्रेस वक्तव्य

दिनांक-20 जनवरी, 2019

साइकिल यात्रा से शांति संभव नहीं!

**मध्य भारत में असली शांति के लिए संसाधनों की कॉरपोरेट लूट बंद करने,
कैंपों को बंद कर पुलिस, अर्ध-सैनिक बलों को वापस भेजने की मांग करें!**

भारत की कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी (माओवादी) की दण्डकारण्य स्पेशल जोनल कमेटी छत्तीसगढ़ सहित देश भर के आदिवासी, दलित, धार्मिक अल्पसंख्यक व अन्य पिछड़े तबकों की जनता, जनवादी-प्रगतिशील बुद्धिजीवियों, जनपक्षधर मीडियाकर्मियों, आदिवासी व गैर-आदिवासी सामाजिक संगठनों, मानवाधिकार व महिला संगठनों, छात्रों, नवजवानों एवं असली शांति चाहने वाले सभी लोगों से अपील करती है कि वे मध्य भारत में शांति के नाम पर आगामी 22 से 28 फरवरी तक प्रस्तावित जगदलपुर-रायपुर 'शांति साइकिल यात्रा' के आयोजक देशी, विदेशी कॉरपोरेट घरानों के विश्वसनीय सेवक/एजेंट शुभांशु चौधरी की असलियत को पहचाने एवं उक्त यात्रा का बहिष्कार करें एवं उससे दूर रहें. साथ ही हमारी पार्टी यह आह्वान करती है कि वे मध्य भारत में असली शांति कायम करने के लिए देश के संसाधनों की कॉरपोरेट लूट से संबंधित तमाम एमओयू को रद्द करने, संघर्ष इलाकों से कैंपों को बंद करके पुलिस, अर्ध-सैनिक व कमांडो बलों को वापस भेजने तथा डीआरजी, बस्तर बटालियन, ब्लैक पैथर्स आदि हत्यारे कमांडो बलों को रद्द करने की सरकारों से जोरदार मांग करें.

यह जगजाहिर है कि हमारी पार्टी के नेतृत्व में जारी देश के क्रांतिकारी आंदोलन का सफाया करके सार्वजनिक संपत्ति एवं संसाधनों को देशी, विदेशी कॉरपोरेट घरानों के हवाले करने के तमाम एमओयू पर अमल को यथाशीघ्र सुनिश्चित करने के लिए ही मई, 2017 से केंद्र, राज्य सरकारों द्वारा बहुआयामी 'समाधान' दमन योजना लागू की जा रही है. उसी के तहत कॉरपोरेट सेक्युरिटी का विस्तार करते हुए लगातार नए कैंप बैठाए जा रहे हैं. बड़े पैमाने पर पुलिस, अर्ध-सैनिक, कमांडो बल तैनात किए जा रहे हैं. गांवों पर हमलें तेज किए जा रहे हैं.

यहां यह समझना आवश्यक है कि शुभांशु की अगुआई में प्रस्तावित शांति साइकिल यात्रा दरअसल इसी 'समाधान' का एक कुटिल व षड्यंत्रकारी पहलू है. समाधान के बर्बर दमन पर परदा डालने की कोशिश का हिस्सा है. यह खनन व औद्योगिक परियोजनाओं के लिए सरकारों के साथ एमओयू करने वाली कॉरपोरेट कंपनियों द्वारा उनके फायदे के लिए प्रायोजित कार्यक्रम है. साम्राज्यवादी हित पोषक धितक समूह(थिंक टैंक) एवं एमआईटी (मैसाच्यूसेट्स इंस्टिट्यूट ऑफ टेक्नॉलॉजी) जैसे कॉरपोरेट उच्च प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थानों से उपजे सीजी नेट, स्वरा जैसे कार्यक्रमों का संचालन करते हुए शुभांशु संवाद के नाम पर आदिवासी जनता, बुद्धिजीवियों व सामाजिक संगठनों के कार्यकर्ताओं को विस्थापन विरोधी व क्रांतिकारी आंदोलनों से दूर करने/भटकाने के लिए योजनाबद्ध तरीके से काम कर रहे हैं.

छत्तीसगढ़ राज्य में विगत 15 सालों के दौरान जारी भाजपा सरकार की जनविरोधी व दमनकारी नीतियों का कुछ हद तक विरोध करते हुए एवं राज्य की जनता में व्याप्त भाजपा विरोधी माहौल का उपयोग करके दिसंबर, 2019 में सत्तासीन हुई कांग्रेस सरकार ने भाजपा के ही ढर्रे पर चलते हुए नए कैंप बैठा रही है. हाल ही में कांकर जिले के कोइलीबेडा के डुट्टा एवं छत्तीसगढ़ व महाराष्ट्र के सरहदी पानावारा में एक-एक नया कैंप बैठाया है. चुनाव के पहले जो फासीवादी दमन चल रहा था, वह चुनावों के दौरान एवं नई सरकार के गठन के बाद भी बेरोकटोक जारी है. हर हमेशा गश्त अभियान, गांवों पर हमलें, गिरफ्तारियां, मुठभेड़ें निर्बाध गति से जारी ही हैं. कांग्रेस की नई सरकार ने खुलेआम ऐलान किया कि माओवादियों के खिलाफ ऑपरेशंस यथावत जारी रहेंगे. नए मुख्य मंत्री भूपेश बघेल ने स्पष्ट कहा कि बस्तर में तैनात अर्ध सैनिक बलों की 70 बटालियन फोर्स नहीं हटायी जाएगी.

ऐसे हालात में शांति साइकिल यात्रा के आयोजकों जिनमें सीपीआई का जन संगठन आदिवासी महासभा भी शामिल है, की ओर से सभी पक्षों से हिंसा त्यागकर बातचीत द्वारा समाधान खोजने की अपील करने का मतलब है, सरकार एवं हमारी पार्टी-दोनों को एक समान देखना जोकि हास्यास्पद ही नहीं, वाहियात भी है. सच तो यह है कि सरकारें स्वयं अशांति व हिंसा फैला रही हैं. हिंसा के बगैर शोषक-शासकों का एक दिन भी नहीं गुजरता है. सशस्त्र बलों की ताकत के बलबूते ही अपनी सत्ता व लूट को जारी रखे हुए हैं. पिछले साल आयोजित शांति यात्रा, डायलाग-एक हो या आगामी फरवरी में प्रस्तावित शांति साइकिल यात्रा व डायलाग-दो हो, यहाँ असली समस्या शांति, अहिंसा की नहीं है. समस्या तो वर्ग हितों की है. एक ओर सरकारें देशी, विदेशी कॉरपोरेट

Appendix-III

Questions for Civil Society Actors at National and Local Level

1. What is the role of Non-governmental organisation in the Maoist conflict?
2. What contributions could you see of civil society in fostering peace?
 - 2.1. What kind of civil society formations do you observe in the current context?
 - 2.2. What
3. In your opinion, how has rehabilitation been conceptualised?
 - 3.1. What are the spaces for dialogue between the State and Maoists?
 - 3.2. What is the role of citizen?
4. How do you view the human rights in areas affected by Maoist conflict?
 - 4.1. What according to you, are the reasons for failure of ensuring protection?
 - 4.2. How do you understand the idea of citizenship vis-à-vis legitimacy of non-state actors?
5. How do you view peace?
 - 5.1. Who do you consider as main actors in peace in the context of the conflict?
 - 5.2. What are their roles?
6. In your opinion, what is the significance of disarmament or surrender in conceptualising and actualising peace?
 - 6.1. What could be the role of surrendered individuals in this regard?
7. How is surrender conceptualised by the State?
8. What is the attitude of the State towards political prisoners in case of the Maoist conflict?
9. Through the course of your work on ground, what changes in society relations do you observe because of introduction of surrender and rehabilitation policy?
 - 9.1. What forms of rehabilitation are implemented?
 - 9.2. How effective are these efforts of rehabilitation?
 - 9.3. What parameters would you consider to evaluate their effectiveness?
10. How would you qualitatively evaluate the role of State representatives in these areas?
 - 10.1. What role does the elected representative have in creating spaces for conflict transformation?
 - 10.2. What roles does the traditional leaders play in resolving tensions emerging through policy implementation?
 - 10.3. What are the ramifications on household and/or family members?
11. What role could development play in connecting disarmament to larger process of welfare?

- 11.1. Would you consider involving these individuals in decision making?
- 11.2. What would, according to you, be State's opinion on this?
12. Describe the role of security forces as a stakeholder in building peace?
 - 12.1. How would you describe your relationship (as a civil society member) with security forces?
 - 12.2. What spaces of cooperation do you view in future?
13. The change in leadership in the Maoist command- what does this indicate for the party leadership?
 - 13.1. How would this have an impact on the conflict trajectory?

Appendix-IV

Questions for Surrendered- Local Level :

For most part, the opening questions would start based on the context and the setting of the interview itself. There could be possible scenarios: interview in the setting of their homes; interview in a neutral space of either a community hall or local NGO office; interview in the home of the researcher; interview in the thana/police station where they are stationed for duty (this is the last option to explore). Questions could be opened with about their day and how it was/tiring etc. The idea is to make both the respondent and the researcher at ease looking for cues of body language etc.

1. Since when have they been serving in the DRG/ or the police?
2. What are their responsibilities?
3. Where do they stay and if they are staying with their families or with friends?
4. Asking them about their daily activities and what do they do in their spare time?
5. Have they taken any leaves till now? What about visiting family and friends?
6. What were the circumstances under which they surrendered, are they from this area?
7. For how long were they associated with dada-log? And under what capacity?
8. Who is the in-charge for them, here in DRG/Police?
9. In the years that they have been serving with the police, what kind of assistance and amnesties have they been offered by the police?
10. What's the difference between a gopniay sainik and an arakshak?
11. What are their aspirations and how are they envisioning their future life ahead?
12. What do they miss? And what are the options of going back to the village- do they want to?

Appendix- V

Surrender data using incident data from SATP. This table documented the names of the individual surrendered and who either belonged to Narayanpur or surrendered under Narayanpur Police Station. The columns in the table below, list name, age, gender, date of surrender, their designation/role as guerrilla, source of news and other. The other section lists out any details shared by these press releases. There a column 'Praveen confirmed' this was my way of verification, relying on information available by Praveen and his knowledge of kin-based associations and hence the information of if the surrendered individual is living in narayanpur. This information enabled, for me as a researcher, to think about which localities to visit for meeting with these surrendered or their kin.

S. No	Name	Praveen* Confirmation	Age	Gender	Police Station	Date of Surrender	Designation	Source	Other
1	Sondhar Kashyap	Yes	30		Narayanpur HQ	15.03.2019	Military Supply Team/ Platoon 16	Devids course	
2	Pandru Usendi	Yes	25		Narayanpur HQ	15.03.2019	Local Organisation Squad (LOS)	Devids course	
3	Sudru Kashyap	Yes	25		narayanpur HQ	15.03.2019	Militia Member	Devids course	
4	Sannu Kunjam	Yes	28		Dante wada	22.08.2019	Jan Militia Commander	Firstpost	Active in Gangaloor Area-Bijapur
5	Budhram Mandavi	Yes	20		Dante wada	22.08.2019	Dandkaranya Adivasi Kisan Majdoor Sangathan (DAKMS)	Firstpost	Active in Gangaloor Area-Bijapur
6	Mehattar Korram/Ronda	Yes	35		Narayanpur HQ	22.08.2019	Head of Jantana Sarkar-Baynar Area	Firstpost	
7	Sonaru Poyam	Maybe	N.A		Jagdapur,	22.08.2019	Area Commitee	Firstpost	Husband of Manju Mandavi

					Bastar		Members- Orissa		
8	Manju Mandavi	Yes	N . A	Female	Jagdapur, Bastar	22.08 .2019	Area Committee Members- Orissa	Firstpost	Wife of Sonaru Poyam
9	Sukhraj Kawachi	Yes	22		Narayanpur HQ	26.04 .2018	Jan Militia Commander	The Hindustan Times	
10	Sannu Ram Potai	Yes	18		Narayanpur HQ	26.04 .2018	Jan Militia Commander	The Hindustan Times	
11	Jaisu Vadda	Yes	25		narayanpur HQ	26.04 .2018	Jan Militia Commander	The Hindustan Times	
12	Narsingh Kawachi	Yes	40		Narayanpur HQ	26.04 .2018	DAKMS	The Hindustan Times	
13	Santu Ram Vadde/Karan	Yes	21		Narayanpur HQ	30.04 .2018	Deputy Commander- Dandakaranya Communication Team	The Pioneer	Skilled in operating wireless device/IE Ds
14	Ghasi Ram Nureti	Yes	25		Narayanpur HQ	30.04 .2018	Militia Commander- Kutur LOS	The Pioneer	
15	Sanno Nureti	Yes	22	Female	Narayanpur HQ	30.04 .2018	Militia Commander- Kutur LOS	The Pioneer	
16	Lakhmu Nureti	Yes	30		Narayanpur HQ	30.04 .2018	Head of Kader Jantana Sarkar	The Pioneer	
17	Kaveram Salaam	Yes			Narayanpur HQ	12.01 .2017	Bagjhar Jantana Sarkar, Benoir Police Station	The Hindu	Assigned tasks as arranging meetings, food, distributing

									pamphlets
18	Jagnu Salaam	Yes	30		Narayapur HQ	12.01.2017	Bagjhar Jantana Sarkar, Benoor Police Station	The Hindu	Assigned tasks as arranging meetings, food, distributing pamphlets
19	Nemchand Gavde	Yes			Ongnar-Benoor PS, Narayapur	16.03.2017	CPI-Maoist cadre	The Times of India	Police Mitra Prog.-Benoor village-low cash reward
20	Ramsingh Potai	Yes			Ongnar-Benoor PS, Narayapur	16.03.2017	CPI-Maoist cadre	The Times of India	Police Mitra Prog.-Benoor village-low cash reward
21	Giluram Potai	Yes			Ongnar-Benoor PS, Narayapur	16.03.2017	CPI-Maoist cadre	The Times of India	Police Mitra Prog.-Benoor village-low cash reward
22	Sonu Gavde	Yes			Ongnar-Benoor PS, Narayapur	16.03.2017	CPI-Maoist cadre	The Times of India	Police Mitra Prog.-Benoor village-low cash reward
23	Manghal Singh Korram	Yes			Ongnar-Benoor PS, Narayapur	16.03.2017	CPI-Maoist cadre	The Times of India	police Mitra Prog.-Benoor village-low cash reward
24	Bholu Ram Potai	Yes			Ongnar-Benoor PS, Narayapur	16.03.2017	CPI-Maoist cadre	The Times of India	Police Mitra Prog.-Benoor village-

									low cash reward
25	Dhansingh Vadde	Yes			Ongn aar-Beno or PS, Narayanpur	16.03.2017	CPI-Maoist cadre	The Times of India	Police Mitra Prog.-Benoor village-low cash reward
26	Ghasia Potai	Yes			Ongn aar-Beno or PS, Narayanpur	16.03.2017	CPI-Maoist cadre	The Times of India	Police Mitra Prog.-Benoor village-low cash reward
27	Sudu Ram Salam	Yes			Ongn aar-Beno or PS, Narayanpur	16.03.2017	CPI-Maoist cadre	The Times of India	Police Mitra Prog.-Benoor village-low cash reward
28	Manish Salam	Yes	21		Narayanpur HQ	25.08.2017	Maoists Dandakaranya Instructor Team	India Today	Antagarh Local Operation Squad
29	Mandar Korram	Yes	30		Narayanpur HQ	25.08.2017	CPI-Maoist cadre	India Today	
30	Peelsai Korram	Yes	40		Narayanpur HQ	25.08.2017	CPI-Maoist cadre	India Today	
31	Roshan Padihar	Maybe	41		Narayanpur HQ	25.08.2017	CPI-Maoist cadre	India Today	
32	Anulal Bhandari	Yes	37		Narayanpur HQ	25.08.2017	CPI-Maoist cadre	India Today	
33	Sampat	Yes	27		Narayanpur HQ	25.08.2017	CPI-Maoist cadre	India Today	
34	Chunni Lal Bhandari	Yes	38		Narayanpur HQ	25.08.2017	CPI-Maoist cadre	India Today	
35	Sudor Vatti	Yes	30		Narayanpur HQ	22.12.2017	CPI-Maoist cadre	Indian Express	
36	Somaru Kavde	Yes	22		Narayanpur HQ	22.12.2017	CPI-Maoist cadre	Indian Express	

37	Balmati Korram	Yes	40	Female	Naray anpur HQ	22.12 .2017	CPI- Maoist cadre	Indian Express	
38	Sukaru Salaam	Yes	22	Female	Naray anpur HQ	10.04 .2016	Active in Aundhi Local Organisation Squad, Rajnand gaon	The Hindu	Surrendered with a 4 month old girl. Expressed desire to give the child a better life.
39	Phulo Salaam	Yes		Female	Naray anpur HQ	4.09. 2016	Deputy Commander	The Times of India	
40	Sanno Korram	Yes	25	Female	Dhau di PS, Naray anpur	27.11 .2016	Member of Chetna Natya Manch	The Daily Pioneer	Native of Permapal Village
41	Ramoli Korram	Yes	25	Female	Dhau di PS, Naray anpur	27.11 .2016	Member of Chetna Natya Manch	The Daily Pioneer	Native of Permapal Village
42	Ramesh Poyam	Yes	30		Naray anpur HQ	05.04 .2015	Deputy Commander of Maoist Military Company 6/Commander of Platoon 1	The Pioneer	
43	Budhram Vadhda/Ratti	Yes	22		Naray anpur HQ	05.04 .2015	Member of Section-B under Platoon 2 of Company 1	The Pioneer	
44	Somaru Poyam/Sukhlol	Maybe	40		naray anpur HQ	05.04 .2015	CPI- Maoist cadre	The Pioneer	
45	Dhananjay Dhruva/Ajay	Yes	28		Naray anpur HQ	16.12 .2015	Section Commander, Military	PTI	

							Platoon no. 5, Military company 1		
46	Bhagat Kowachi/Vikas	Yes	23		Narayanpur HQ	16.12.2015	Section Commander, Military Platoon no. 17	PTI	
47	Mansingh	Maybe	40		Narayanpur HQ	16.12.2015	Active member, Partapur Area Committee	PTI	
48	Rasiya Padda	Yes	25		Narayanpur HQ	16.12.2015	CPI-Maoist cadre	PTI	Active in supplying commodities of daily use
49	Sannu Dhruva	Yes	29		Narayanpur HQ	16.12.2015	CPI-Maoist cadre	PTI	Active in supplying commodities of daily use
50	Gandram Yadav/Vinod	Yes			Narayanpur HQ	16.01.2014	CPI-Maoist cadre	The Hindu	
51	Jaymati	Maybe		Female?	Narayanpur HQ	16.01.2014	CPI-Maoist cadre	The Hindu	
52	Balkrishna/Krishna Nag	Maybe	37		Narayanpur HQ	16.09.2014	CPI-Maoist cadre	The Pioneer	
53	Dayaram	Maybe	32		Narayanpur HQ	16.09.2014	CPI-Maoist cadre	The Pioneer	
54	Lalit Kumar Potai	MAYBE	30		Narayanpur HQ	16.09.2014	CPI-Maoist cadre	The Pioneer	
55	Guddu Medam/Pavan Kumar Pradhan	Maybe	40		Narayanpur HQ	16.09.2014	CPI-Maoist cadre	The Pioneer	
56	Koliya/Sudhram Netam	Maybe	25		Narayanpur HQ	16.09.2014	CPI-Maoist cadre	The Pioneer	

57	Tilanand/Guddu	Maybe	20		Narayanpur HQ	16.09.2014	CPI-Maoist cadre	The Pioneer	
58	Suki Vadde	Maybe	25	Female	Narayanpur HQ	16.09.2014	CPI-Maoist cadre	The Pioneer	
59	Sukhdas Vishnav/Fajul	yes	40		Narayanpur PS	26.09.2014	President, DAKMS	The Pioneer	Resident of Bhattipara, Narayanpur. Joined in 2008. Intelligence gathering
60	Keshu/Fakir	Maybe	40		Narayanpur PS	26.09.2014	CPI-Maoist cadre	The Pioneer	
61	Ranjeet/Sheeturam	yes			Narayanpur HQ	15.10.2014	Section Commander, Platoon No. 2, Company no. 2	The Pioneer	Husband of Jano/Sambatti. Surrendered in front of Kalluri
62	Jano/Sambatti	yes			Narayanpur HQ	15.10.2014	Section Commander, Company no. 1	The Pioneer	Wife of Ranjeet/Sheeturam. Surrendered in front of Kalluri
63	Dalsai Vadde/Santosh	yes			Narayanpur HQ	15.10.2014	Active member of division action team, Manpur-Mohala, Rajnandagaon	The Pioneer	brother was shot in encounter. Was a maoist cadre as well.
64	Sunil/Sunnu Koram	yes	24		Narayanpur HQ	16.10.2014	Maraskol Militia members	The Hindu	Surrendered with CRPF
65	Sayatram/Guddu Salam	yes	22		Narayanpur HQ	16.10.2014	Maraskol Militia	The Hindu	Surrendered with CRPF

							member s		
6 6	Rajju/Ma ngatu Koram	yes	2 4		Naray anpur HQ	16.10 .2014	Maraskol Militia member s	The Hindu	Surrende rd with CRPF
6 7	Rupram/J ugalu Koram	yes	2 3		Naray anpur HQ	16.10 .2014	Maraskol Militia member s	The Hindu	Surrende rd with CRPF
6 8	Mainura m Salam	yes	2 3		Naray anpur HQ	16.10 .2014	Maraskol Militia member s	The Hindu	Surrende rd with CRPF
6 9	Motiram Koram	yes	2 5		Naray anpur HQ	16.10 .2014	Maraskol Militia member s	The Hindu	Surrende rd with CRPF
7 0	Rainu Nureti	yes	2 5		Naray anpur HQ	16.10 .2014	Kiskodo Militia Comman der	The Hindu	Surrende rd with CRPF
7 1	Raidhar Karanga/ Surinder	yes	2 8		Naray anpur HQ	16.10 .2014	Rawghat /Raogha t LGS Comman der	The Hindu	Surrende rd with CRPF
7 2	Sukhdas	yes	4 0		Naray anpur HQ	27.10 .2014	Head, Sonpur Dandaka ranya Kisan Mazdoor Sangatha n	Zee News	
7 3	Keshu	yes	4 0		Naray anpur HQ	27.10 .2014	Sonpur Militia Comman der	Zee News	
7 4	Urmila Vatti	yes		Fem ale	Kond agaon HQ	06.12 .2014	Member, No. 6 Compan y	niticent ral.com	Joined at the age of 14.
7 5	Rajbati	maybe	3 0	Fem ale	Naray anpur HQ	06.12 .2014	CPI- Maoist cadre	niticent ral.com	
7 6	Phulo	maybe	2 2	Fena le	Naray anpur HQ	06.12 .2014	CPI- Maoist cadre	niticent ral.com	
7 7	Mainu	maybe	2 6		Naray anpur HQ	06.12 .2014	CPI- Maoist cadre	niticent ral.com	

78	Guddu Salam	yes	24		Naray anpur HQ	06.12 .2014	CPI-Maoist cadre	niticentral.com	
79	Ajay	yes	21		Benur PS, Narayanpur H	23.05 .2013	Member of Kudur Local Operating Squad	Zee News	
80	Bharat	maybe	22		Benur PS, Narayanpur HQ	23.05 .2013	Member of Kudur Local Operating Squad	Zee News	
81	Vinod	yes	32		Benur PS, Narayanpur HQ	23.05 .2013	Chinahri Sarkar Raksha Sakha	Zee News	
82	Sudha	yes	23		Benur PS, Narayanpur HQ	23.05 .2013	Kohkam eta Platoon no. 1	Zee News	
83	Naveen	yes	35		Naray anpur HQ	31.05 .2013	Divisional Committee Member, Madh Division	The Times of India	Active in Nelnaar Area of District since 2002
84	Joga Naresh Markam		28		Naray anpur PS	17.12 .2013	Maoist Troop in Bijapur District	The times of India	
85	Fagni Mandavi		35	Female	Naray anpur	17.12 .2013		The time of India	
86	Ramdai	yes		Female	Naray anpur HQ	20.08 .2012	Working with Platoon no. 17	nosedive.com quoting ANI	Joined Maoists three years ago

Appendix- VI

Similar to the list above, while documenting/tracing local surrenderers, there were reports of mass surrenders. These were a peculiar phenomenon, which was frequently recorded. It was openly acknowledged, that this when police camps moved into new parts of the maad forest, they would organise camps where the entire village would surrender, and they would be promised a sum of 500 INR (5 Euros approx..) as compensation. The officials agree, that these villagers are made to surrender collectively, since many of these villages were under the Janata Sarkar, this symbolic surrender confirms the strengthening of the state. This data is from incident mapping data base of SATP available online.

S. No	Date	Police Station	No. of Surrenders	Female	Minor	Affiliation	Other Details	Source
1	15.04.1985	Kukdajhor, Narayanpur	5			Jan Militia Members	In touch with police for 1 year	The Hindu
2	15.04.1985	Kukdajhor, Narayanpur	18	5		CPI (Maosit) Aides		The Hindu
3	26.04.2018	Narayanpur HQ	60	20	2	Jan Militia Commander/DAK MS/Jantana Sarkar	Hailed from Kanagan, Kohkmeta, Irakbheti, Kachhapal, Ikmata, Piddilpar	The Hindustan Times
4	30.06.2018	Narayanpur HQ	10	2		Militia Members		The Pioneer
5	3.10.2018	Narayanpur HQ	3	1				Newsnair
6	6.12.2018	Narayanpur HQ	62				Active members of Tumera di Jantana Sarkar under Kutul	India TV

							Area Commit tee	
7	29.01. 2017	Naraya npur District	195	24		Jantana Sarkar	Belongi ng from 24 villages: Gumiya beda, Okpaad, Mohndi, Nelnaar , Ikpaad, Murnaa r, Niramet a and Kodkan ar	Decca n Chroni cle
8	16.03. 2017	Naraya npur District	11			CPI (Maoist) cadre	Surrend ered under 'Police Mitra' progra mme at Ognaar village, Benoor	The Times of India
9	25.08. 2017	Naraya npur HQ	7			CPI (Maoist) cadre		India Today
10	22.12. 2017	Naraya npur District	7			CPI (Maoist) cadre	Surrend ered in Bastar Division , Kistara m Police Station, Sukma District	Indian Expres s
11	19.01. 2016	Naraya npur District	8	2		CPI (Maoist) cadre		The Hindu
12	08.02. 2016	Naraya npur District	34			CPI (Maoist) cadre	active in Benur and Kiskod area of District	The Pione er

							as Local Operating Squad Members	
13	13.08.2016	Benur, Narayanpur	41	3		CPI (Maoist) cadre		The Hindu
14	08.09.2016	Narayanpur district	72			CPI (Maoist) cadre	Turned up at Kursuniar Police Station on their own. 10 were grass root level workers; 3 Local Guerrilla Squad; 8 members of Chetna Natya Manch; 4 Jantana Sarkar members	The times of India
15	26.11.2014	Narayanpur District	63			Maoist Frontal Org.	Affiliated with Jantana Sarkar, Janmilitia, CNM, DKMS, Krantikari Adivasi Mahila Sangh (KAMS),	The Pioneer

16	26.06. 2013	Naraya npur District	2			Kohkameta Area Committee/Raogh at Area Commander	N.A
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