

Breaking the Red Grip

India's Triumph Over Left Wing Extremism

May 17, 2025

"It is true that Maoist violence had stalled the progress of many districts in central and eastern India. That is why in 2015, our government formulated a comprehensive 'National Policy and Action Plan' to eradicate Maoist violence. Along with zero tolerance towards violence, we have also focused on a massive push to infrastructure and social empowerment to bring a positive change in the lives of the poor people in these regions."

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Introduction

Recently, in one of the biggest anti-Naxal operations in the country's history, security forces achieved a major breakthrough in the fight against Left Wing Extremism along the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border. Between April 21 and May 11, 2025, a massive operation was carried out in the **Karreguttalu Hill (KGH) region**, a known stronghold of Naxalite groups. Coordinated efforts by the **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)**, **Special Task Force (STF)**, **District Reserve Guard (DRG)**, and state police forces resulted in the neutralization of **31 Maoists**, including 16 women, with **no casualties** reported among security personnel. Following the success of the operation, **several new security camps** were established in the liberated areas, reaffirming the restoration of state control over territories that had long been under the grip of insurgents.

Our security forces achieved another major breakthrough in **Chhattisgarh's** insurgency-affected districts. In **Bijapur**, coordinated operations by **CoBRA commandos** and the **Chhattisgarh Police** led to the **arrest of 22 notorious Naxalites**, along with the **seizure of modern weapons and explosives**. Simultaneously, in **Sukma district**, **33 Naxalites surrendered**, expressing faith in the government's surrender policy. Notably, **11** of these surrenders occurred in **Badesetti Panchayat**, making it the first Panchayat in the region to be declared Naxal-free.

Left Wing Extremism (LWE), often referred to as **Naxalism**, is one of India's most serious **internal security challenges**. Rooted in socio-economic inequalities and fueled by Maoist ideology, LWE has historically affected some of the most remote, underdeveloped, and tribal-dominated regions of the country. The movement has aimed to undermine the Indian state through armed **rebellion** and **parallel governance structures**, particularly targeting security forces, public infrastructure, and democratic institutions. Originating from the **Naxalbari movement of 1967 in West Bengal**, it spread primarily across the "**Red Corridor**," affecting states like **Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Maharashtra, Kerala, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh**, and parts of **Andhra Pradesh and Telangana**. The Maoist insurgents claim to fight for the rights of the marginalized, particularly tribal communities, but their methods include armed violence, extortion, destruction of infrastructure, and recruitment of children and civilians.

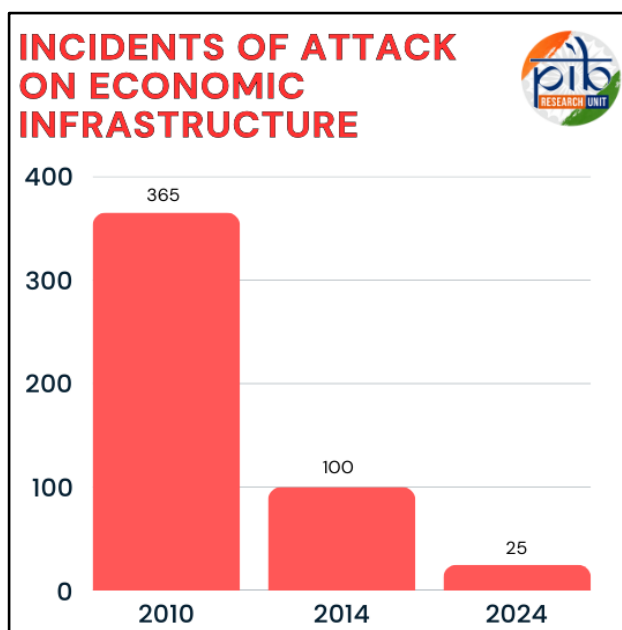
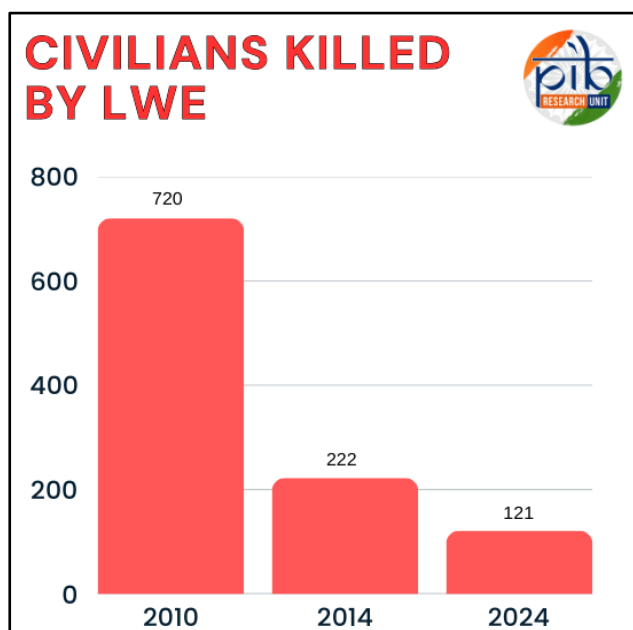
However, in recent years, India's **multidimensional counter-LWE strategy** - combining security enforcement, inclusive development, and community engagement - has delivered significant success. The movement has been **systematically weakened**, violence has **drastically declined**, and many LWE-affected districts are being **reintegrated** into the **national mainstream**. The government of

India is committed to **completely eliminate Naxalism by 31st March 2026**, since Naxalism is seen as the biggest obstacle in the development of remote areas and tribal villages, as it prevents education, healthcare, connectivity, banking, and postal services from reaching these villages.

The number of LWE affected districts reduced from **126 to 90** in April 2018, 70 in July 2021 and further to **38 in April-2024**. Out of total **Naxalism-affected districts**, number of most affected districts has been reduced from 12 to **6**, which include four districts from **Chhattisgarh** (Bijapur, Kanker, Narayanpur, and Sukma), one from **Jharkhand** (West Singhbhum), and one from **Maharashtra** (Gadchiroli). Similarly, out of the total **38 affected districts**, the number of **Districts of Concern**, where **additional resources** need to be intensively provided beyond the severely affected districts, has reduced from 9 to **6**. These 6 districts are: **Andhra Pradesh** (Alluri Sitarama Raju), **Madhya Pradesh** (Balaghat), **Odisha** (Kalahandi, Kandhamal, and Malkangiri), and **Telangana** (Bhadradri-Kothagudem). Due to persistent action against Naxalism, number of **Other LWE-affected Districts** has also decreased from 17 to **6**. These include districts from Chhattisgarh (Dantewada, Gariaband, and Mohla-Manpur-Ambagarh Chowki), Jharkhand (Latehar), Odisha (Nuapada), and Telangana (Mulugu). In the last 10 years, **over 8,000 Naxalites** have **abandoned the path of violence**, and consequently, the number of **Naxal-affected districts** has **reduced to fewer than 20**.

The **most affected Districts** and **Districts of Concern** are given **financial assistance of Rs. 30 crore and Rs. 10 crore, respectively**, by the Government of India under a special scheme, **Special Central Assistance (SCA)**, to fill the gaps in public infrastructure. Apart from this, special projects are also provided for these districts as per the need.

Incidents of violence by LWE which reached its highest level of **1936 in 2010** have reduced to **374 in 2024** i.e. a **reduction of 81%**. The **total number of deaths (civilians + security forces)** has also reduced by **85%** during this period from **1005 deaths in 2010** to **150 in 2024**.



State-wise details of LWE perpetrated violence (number of deaths recorded) in the last 3 years are as given under:

State	2022	2023	2024
Andhra Pradesh	3	3	1
Bihar	11	4	2
Chhattisgarh	246	305	267
Jharkhand	96	129	69
Kerala	0	4	0
Madhya Pradesh	16	7	11
Maharashtra	16	19	10
Odisha	16	12	6
Telangana	9	3	8
West Bengal	0	0	0
TOTAL	413	485	374

Government Strategy: National Policy and Action Plan (2015) and other Key Initiatives

The government of India has adopted a **zero-tolerance approach** towards left-wing extremism and with 100% implementation of government schemes, it seeks to fully develop the LWE-affected areas. The government had laid down **two rules of law** to fight left wing extremism. First, to **establish the rule of law** in Naxalism-affected areas and **completely stop illegal violent activities**. Second, to **quickly compensate** for the **loss** in those areas which were deprived of development due to the long Naxalite movement.

To address the LWE menace holistically, a **National Policy and Action Plan** to address LWE was approved in **2015**. It envisages a **multi-pronged strategy** involving **security related measures, development interventions, ensuring rights and entitlements of local communities etc.**

The Central Government **closely monitors the situation** and supplements and coordinates their efforts in several ways. These include providing the **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)**; sanction of **India Reserve (IR) battalions**, setting up of **Counter Insurgency and Anti-Terrorism (CIAT) schools**; **modernisation** and upgradation of the **State Police** and their **Intelligence apparatus**; **reimbursement of security related expenditure** under the Security-related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme; **providing helicopters** for anti-LWE operations, **assistance in training of State Police** through the Ministry of Defence, the **Central Police Organisations** and the **Bureau of Police Research and Development**; sharing of **Intelligence**; **facilitating inter-State coordination**; assistance in **community policing** and **civic action programmes** etc. On **development side**, apart from flagship schemes, Government of India has taken several specific initiatives in LWE affected States, with special thrust on expansion of **road network**, improving **telecommunication connectivity**, **skilling** and **financial inclusion**.

- **Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme:** This Scheme is being implemented as a sub-scheme of the umbrella scheme ‘**Modernization of Police Forces**’. Under the SRE Scheme, the Central Government **reimburses security related expenditure** for LWE affected districts and districts earmarked for monitoring. The reimbursement includes the expenditure relating to **training** and **operational needs** of security forces, **ex-gratia payment** to the family of

civilians/security forces killed/injured in LWE violence, **rehabilitation of surrendered LWE cadres, community policing, village defence committees and publicity materials**. The SRE Scheme aims at **strengthening of the capacity** of the LWE affected States to fight the LWE menace effectively. During **2014-15 to 2024-25**, **Rs. 3260.37 crore** has been released under this Scheme.

- **Special Central Assistance (SCA) for most LWE affected districts:** This Scheme was approved in **2017** and is being implemented as a sub-scheme of the umbrella scheme '**Modernization of Police Forces**'. The main objective of the Scheme is to **fill the critical gaps in Public Infrastructure and Services** in most LWE affected districts, which are of emergent nature. Till now, **Rs 3,563 crore** have been released since the inception of Scheme in 2017.
- **Special Infrastructure Scheme (SIS):** This Scheme is being implemented as a sub-scheme of the umbrella scheme '**Modernization of Police Forces**'. Under Special Infrastructure Scheme, funds are provided for **strengthening of State Intelligence Branches (SIBs), Special Forces, District Polices and Fortified Police Stations (FPSs)**. Under the SIS, **Rs. 1741 crore** have been sanctioned. **221 Fortified Police Stations** have been constructed under the Scheme.
- **Scheme of Fortified Police stations:** Under the scheme **400 Fortified Police Stations** have been constructed in **10 LWE affected States**. Put together **612 Fortified Police Stations** have been constructed in LWE affected areas in the last 10 years. This is in contrast to 2014, when there were only 66 fortified police stations.
- **Assistance to Central Agencies for LWE management Scheme:** This Scheme is being implemented as a sub-scheme of the umbrella scheme '**Modernization of Police Forces**'. Under the Scheme, assistance is provided to **Central Agencies (CAPFs/IAF etc.)** for strengthening of **infrastructure and hiring charges for Helicopters**. **Rs. 1120.32 crore** have been given to Central Agencies during the period **2014-15 to 2024-25**.
- **Civic Action Programme (CAP):** This Scheme is being implemented as a sub-scheme of the umbrella scheme '**Modernization of Police Forces**' to **bridge the gaps between Security Forces and local people** through **personal interaction** and bring the human face of SFs before the local population. The Scheme has been very successful in achieving its goal. Under the Scheme, funds are released to the CAPFs, deployed in LWE affected areas, for conducting various civic activities for the welfare of the local people. **Rs. 196.23 crore has been released to CAPFs since 2014-15.**
- **Media Plan:** The Maoists have been misguiding and luring the innocent tribals/ local population in LWE affected areas by their so-called poor-friendly revolution through petty incentives or by following their coercive strategy. Their false propaganda is targeted against the security forces and the democratic setup. Therefore, the Government is implementing this Scheme in LWE affected areas. Under the scheme activities like **Tribal Youth Exchange programmes, radio jingles, documentaries, pamphlets etc.** are being conducted. **Rs. 52.52 crore** have been released under the scheme since 2017-18.
- **Road Requirement Plan-I (RRP-I) for LWE affected areas and Road Connectivity Project for LWE affected areas (RCPLWE):** The RRP-I Scheme is being implemented by

Ministry of Road Transport & Highways for improving road connectivity in **Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh**. The RCPLWE scheme was launched in the year **2016** to improve the road connectivity in **44 worst affected LWE districts** and some **adjoining districts in 9 States**, viz. **Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh**. The scheme has twin objectives of **enabling smooth and seamless anti-LWE operations** by the security forces and also **ensuring socio-economic development** of the area. **17,589 km** of roads have been sanctioned under these two schemes. Of these, **14,618 km** have been constructed.

- **Telecom Connectivity:** 3 telecom projects, namely, **Mobile Connectivity Project Phase-I & Phase-II, Provision of 4G mobile services** in uncovered villages of Aspirational Districts and **Saturation of 4G mobile services**, are being implemented in LWE affected areas to improve telecom connectivity. A total of **10,505 mobile towers** have been planned, of which **7,768 towers** have been commissioned. The **entire Naxal-affected region** will be equipped with mobile connectivity by **December 1, 2025**.
- **Aspirational District:** The Ministry of Home Affairs has been tasked with the monitoring of Aspirational districts programme in 35 LWE affected districts.
- **Financial Inclusion:** For financial inclusion of the local populace in these areas, **1,007 bank branches** and **937 ATMs** in **30 Most LWE affected districts** and **5,731 new post offices** have been opened in LWE affected districts since April 2015. **37,850 Banking Correspondents (BCs)** have been made operational in Most LWE affected districts.
- **Skill Development and Education:** For Skill development **48 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs)** and **61 Skill Development Centres (SDCs)** have been made functional in LWE affected districts. For quality education in tribal blocks of LWE affected districts **178 Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs)** have been made functional in LWE affected districts. The **Skill Development Scheme** reached **all 48 districts**, and a **strong vertical** of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) was created. **1,143 tribal youths** were recruited into the security forces.

Since 2019, to fill the security vacuum, **280 new camps** have been established, **15 new Joint Task Forces** have been created, and **6 CRPF battalions** have been deployed to assist state police in various states. Along with this, an **offensive strategy** has been adopted by activating the **National Investigation Agency** to choke the financing of Naxalites, which has **resulted in a shortage of financial resources** for them. Multiple **long-duration operations** were conducted, ensuring that the Naxalites are surrounded, leaving them with no opportunity to escape.



October 2, 2024, PM Narendra Modi launched the ‘Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan’ from Jharkhand. This campaign will be a milestone in **providing personal amenities** for achieving full saturation in rural areas in **over 15,000 villages**, benefiting nearly **1.5 crore people** in **LWE affected areas**. The government is strengthening **3-C** i.e., **Road connectivity, Mobile connectivity and Financial connectivity** in the LWE affected areas.

Success Stories

In 2014, there were 330 **police stations** where **Naxal incidents** occurred, but now this number has reduced to **104**. Earlier **Naxal-affected area** was spread in more than **18,000 square kilometers**, now only span **4,200 square kilometers**. Between **2004** and **2014**, there were a total of **16,463** incidents of Naxal violence. However, during **2014 to 2024**, the number of violent incidents **decreased** by **53%**, dropping to **7,744**. Similarly, the **number of casualties** of **security forces** decreased by **73%**, from **1,851** to **509**. By **2014**, there were a total of **66 fortified police stations**, but over the past 10 years, their number has increased to **612**. In the **past 5 years**, a total of **302 new security camps** and **68 night landing helipads** have been established.

To **financially choke the Naxalites** and break their financial backbone, **National Investigation Agency (NIA)** and **Enforcement Directorate** were used, **seizing several crores of rupees** from Naxalites. Under the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)**, cases were filed, and those who funded the Naxalites were sent behind bars. To bring development to Naxal-affected areas, the **budget allocation** for these regions was **increased** by **300%**.

In **December 2023**, within a single year, **380 Naxalites** were **killed**, **1,194** were **arrested**, and **1,045** **surrendered**.

Conclusion

India's multi-pronged strategy against Left Wing Extremism has significantly weakened the insurgency, both territorially and operationally. The government's focus on a blend of security, development, and rights-based empowerment has transformed the landscape in previously affected areas. With sustained political will, administrative commitment, and people's participation, the vision of a LWE-free India is closer than ever.

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