

Women in Maoism

Why in news?

Women who join the Maoist movements in the hope of bringing about a revolution are often subject to the same structural violence that they are supposed to fight.

What is Maoism?

- Maoism is a form of communism developed by Mao Tse Tung.
- It is a doctrine to capture State power through a combination of armed insurgency, mass mobilization and strategic alliances.
- The Maoists also use propaganda and disinformation against State institutions as other components to further their agenda.

Mao called this process, the '*Protracted Peoples War*', where the emphasis is on military line to capture power.

Who are the Indian Maoists?

- The largest and the most violent Maoist formation in India is the *Communist Party of India (Maoist)*.
- The CPI (Maoist) is an amalgamation of many splinter groups, of which the two most important groups are:
 - The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist),
 - People War and the Maoist Communist Centre of India.
- The CPI (Maoist) and all its frontal organizations have been banned under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967.



What is the participation rate of women in Maoist movements?

- Women constitutes *35-40% of the total cadre*.
- Higher representation of women helps Maoists in establishing better connections with tribals and also in hiring more young people.
- Despite their higher participation, the number of women in top echelons of their leadership are negligible.
- There is only one woman in the, more than 20 member, Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Maoist).
- Their representation in the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC) is also negligible.

What are the causes for high women participation?

- **Coercion** and threats from Maoists.
- **Gender inequality** and the Maoist's commitment towards women rights.
- **Police brutality** and atrocities against Scheduled Caste/Tribe (SC/ST)
- **Marginalization** from the rural economy and the perception of Maoism as relief from poverty and unemployment

What are the struggles faced by women in Maoist movements?

- **Sexual exploitation** - Though Maoists profess discipline and integrity, exploitation of women prevails in the party.
- The party has a code of conduct for solemnising marriage but no code for issues of divorce and polygamy.
- **Reproduction** - Male cadres are forced to undergo vasectomy either before marriage or immediately after marriage.
- In case a woman cadre gets pregnant, she has to undergo abortion.
- **Health challenges** - Loin cloths are still used as sanitary napkin.
- It is also limited and to be shared by two women.
- Women are not permitted to liberally use water and is considered taboo to use water from streams or ponds for washing.
- The food they provided for women has *low nutritional values*.

How to address the challenges?

- **Woman specific policies** - State has to address women's ground realities in the region that push them toward radicalization.
- **Utilize the opportunity** - State policies should focus on the disadvantageous position that they face in the party.
- **Welfare measures** - The current State schemes mostly focus on hard-power security responses and not the welfare demands of the populace itself.
- **Infrastructure** - To provide infrastructure in the Red corridor region.
- **Economic inequality** - Mainstreaming of Maoists by providing basic amenities and reducing economic inequalities.

References

1. [The Hindu|Battles Of Maoist Women](#)
2. [Livemint |Women Participation in Maoism](#)
3. [Ministry of Home Affairs | Maoism](#)