

**ABSTRACT****RECRUITMENT OF CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICT: THE NAXALITE VIOLENCE****\*SHUBH CHANDRIKA RATHORE**

Children are chandeliers of diamonds dripping with prismatic lustre. A child's journey from being unborn to legitimately announcing her / his arrival and claiming the indispensable right to life, is an extraordinary one. But, every child's beginning and upbringing are not similar to another's. Financial stability draws the gap between the profligate breeding of affluent families and the vulnerable upbringing of the poverty ridden citizenry. The largest set of social losers in the world's largest democracy is none other than the innocent children who have lost their innocence, invulnerability, certainty, and cheeriness because they have been domineered into catastrophic penury. In such grim life conditions in an armed conflict, poverty ridden children are coerced by the Left Wing Extremists to become one of their kind. In India, the Naxalites have been recruiting innocent children into their force, Bal Dasta/ Bal Sangh/ Bal Sangham.<sup>1</sup> The children are oftentimes threatened, kidnapped or forcefully dragged away<sup>2</sup> from their families to train as militants. The children are exposed to deadly weapons, bombs and IEDs; they are mentally, physically and sexually abused<sup>3</sup>, and are used as human shields to protect the militant commanders during cross firings<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Ramana, P.V. (Aug. 06, 2015) *Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses: Children in Indian Maoist Ranks*, Available at: [http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/ChildreninIndianMaoistRanks\\_pvramana\\_060814](http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/ChildreninIndianMaoistRanks_pvramana_060814) (Accessed: Apr. 27, 2016, 1.46 P.M.).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Haque, Saiful (Jun. 9, 2013, 01:12 GMT.) *Mail Online India: Former Naxal commander who was raped and tortured by comrades reveals the culture of brutal misogyny in the Maoist movement.*, Available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-2338122/Former-Naxal-commander-raped-tortured-seven-years-comrades-reveals-culture-misogyny-violence-women-Maoist-movement.html> (Accessed: Apr. 27, 2016, 1.49 P.M.).

<sup>4</sup> ETV Bihar/Jharkhand (Oct. 16, 2015, 08:16 AM IST.) *Naxals using children as human shields to save themselves in encounter: Dumka DIG*, Available at: <http://english.pradesh18.com/news/jharkhand/naxals-using-children-as-human-shields-to-save-themselves-in-encounter-dumka-dig-823197.html> (Accessed: Apr. 27, 2016, 1.54 P.M.).

A grave violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Optional Protocols to the CRC (2000/2012), the Geneva Conventions (1949), the Optional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions (1977), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), and the Rome Statute (2002), violence against children in armed conflict is an issue that prevails in ten states of India along the east coast. This paper aims to elucidate the major issues and examine the implementation of child laws and welfare schemes in India.