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Education under Attack 2010 - India

Attacks on education have been reported in a number of states affected by the Naxalite (Maoist) conflict, most notably Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. In addition, there have been reports of incidents in the north-eastern states of Assam, Manipur and Meghalaya, where separatist movements are active, as well as in several other states where armed criminal gangs are operating or where there has been religious or caste-related violence. In some states, more than one of these factors may be at work.

In the Naxalite conflict, between January and July 2009, at least 11 schools in Jharkhand and nine schools in Bihar were blown up, and at least 37 schools were occupied at some point by security forces in Jharkhand, according to Human Rights Watch. Over the whole of 2009 at least 50 schools were attacked in Jharkhand and Bihar.⁴²⁹ Maoists torched the house of a parateacher in Chowka, Jharkhand, and beat him up.⁴³⁰ In April 2009, a boy in Mandar, Jharkhand, was reported to have been tortured for refusing to join the Naxalites' children's brigade.⁴³¹ In Bihar, four schools were blown up and a generator was seized from one of them.⁴³² In Chhattisgarh State, a 15-year-old student was shot three times and stabbed by Maoist guerrillas in front of his teacher and classmates after finishing an examination in March 2009.⁴³³

Unrelated to the Naxalite conflict, on 30 October 2009, a schoolboy, Ayush Ankit, aged nine, was kidnapped by unidentified armed men on his way to school at Awa More, Gopalganj, Bihar.⁴³⁴ On 16 October 2009, a class 11 schoolgirl was abducted on her way home from private tuition in Maida District, West Bengal.⁴³⁵ On 14 September 2009, Shresth Sanjay (Shreya), a class 1 student of Christ Church School, was kidnapped at gunpoint by three armed men on his way to school in Patna, Bihar.⁴³⁶ In Mangalore, Karnataka, a Catholic teacher was attacked and beaten by Hindu extremists in January 2009.⁴³⁷

On 17 July 2008, the Manipur state government made it mandatory for all children aged 10 to 16 to be accompanied by parents, following increasing reports of missing children and after parents had stopped sending children to school for fear of abduction by armed opposition groups for the purpose of forced recruitment. A survey by the All Manipur Elementary School Teachers' Association found that attendance in primary and junior high schools, both government and private, had dropped from 80 per cent to 40 per cent since students started disappearing across Imphal Valley.⁴³⁸

Armed groups were also targeting schools and universities for extortion. On 19 June 2008, the KCP (MC) Lanchanba group demanded that six teachers from Manipur University pay Rs100,000 each. On 1 July 2008, the authorities decided to close the school due to other extortion demands from other armed groups including the Kuki National Army and Naga National Council.⁴³⁹

On 22 October 2008, the Supreme Court of Orissa asked the state government to provide

compensation to every school and college damaged during attacks on Christians in August that year.⁴⁴⁰ On 28 October 2008, the headteacher of St George School, Ryingku, Meghalaya, was allegedly tortured by personnel of the Border Security Force.⁴⁴¹ On 19 November 2008, Khukul Khatun, a 17-year-old student, was shot by Border Security Force personnel on her way home from school at Hatkhola, Nadia District, West Bengal, after she refused his attempts to molest her.⁴⁴²

In the Naxalite conflict in 2008, two schools were blown up by Maoists in Jharkhand. In the same state, around 40 schools were occupied as paramilitary camps in rural areas. Several had been occupied for 20 years. On 30 November, suspected Maoists blew up a school building in Paki block, Palamau District, and left a pamphlet at the scene of the incident, which said the building was destroyed to prevent security forces using it in future. On 9 July 2008, Ramesh Singh Munda, a member of the legislative assembly, was shot dead by suspected Maoists while attending a programme at a school near Ranchi. A 17-year-old student was also killed. On 2 January 2008, two teachers were killed in Sikri village, Chatra District, for refusing to make payments to the rebels.⁴⁴³

In Chhattisgarh, Maoists were reported to have used children under 12 "in droves". Children, aged 6 and above, were indoctrinated and trained as informers; then, from age 12, were recruited into the ranks and trained to use arms and explosives. Government-backed Salwa Judum vigilantes have used children to attack Naxalite-influenced villages, and state police have used child recruits for anti-Naxalite combing operations.⁴⁴⁴ In Machkandna, West Midnapore District, West Bengal, on 22 February 2008, Maoists dragged Karamchand Singh, a headteacher, from his chair, shot him, and smashed his head with a stone in front of his students.⁴⁴⁵

Unrelated to the Naxalite conflict, in 2008 in Assam, an eight-year-old boy was kidnapped by suspected militants near his school, Tangla English Medium High, Tangla, Udalguri District on 25 August. Rahul Roy, age six, was kidnapped from his school in Diphu on the same day.⁴⁴⁶

On 15 August 2008, in Maharashtra State, MNS (a far-right group) damaged a school in Pune for allegedly failing to celebrate Independence Day.⁴⁴⁷

On 6 August 2008, an MBA student, Pratibha Anand, was kidnapped on her way home from dropping fees off at her college, Zakir Hussein Management Institute, Patna, Bihar. The kidnappers demanded a ransom.⁴⁴⁸

In Charkhi Dadri, Haryana, on 17 July 2008, a 17-year-old Dalit student was abducted from outside her school, bundled into a car, threatened with murder and raped by four people.⁴⁴⁹

On 6 July 2008, in Manipur State, the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) abducted four boys in two incidents. Two were released. The others were said to have voluntarily joined the group.⁴⁵⁰

On 15 March 2008, nuns from St Mary's School, Sangoti, Raigad District, Maharashtra, were attacked by a mob who claimed they were converting adivasis (indigenous people) to Christianity.⁴⁵¹

In January 2008, in the north-east, security forces tortured Majab Ali, headteacher of Dhula High School, Mangladai, Assam. He had been assaulted by a group of army personnel.⁴⁵²

During the Naxalite conflict in 2007, in December, village teachers in Kannaiguda said they had stopped going to school because Salwa Judum members beat them for allegedly assisting Naxalites.⁴⁵³

On 25 October 2007, Maoists blew up a school building used to house security personnel in Sobaranpur Giridih District, Jharkhand.⁴⁵⁴

It was reported in July 2007 that 25 schools had been converted into police camps in Jharkhand, and many education facilities remained closed due to both the military occupation of schools and the targeting of schools by Naxalites. In some cases, children were forced to learn their lessons in the open air while security personnel lived in school buildings.⁴⁵⁵ A report, in June 2007, said 250 schools had been blown up in Chhattisgarh over the previous two years.⁴⁵⁶

On 10 April 2007, Maoists blew up a middle school and a high school in Munger, Bihar, which previously housed a CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force).⁴⁵⁷

In March 2007, Maoists killed 55 police officers in a full-scale attack on a police outpost attached to a girls' residential school in Rani Bodli village.⁴⁵⁸

In the first three months of 2007, the Jharkhand government converted 25 schools into police camps.⁴⁵⁹ Human Rights Watch reported that 20 schools were deliberately destroyed in Chhattisgarh before February 2007 to prevent police from using them for their operations.⁴⁶⁰

In February 2007, the Chhattisgarh government claimed that more than 250 schools had been blown up in recent months by Maoists and announced that it would move many schools to the vicinity of police stations or Salwa Judum camps.⁴⁶¹

In January 2007, the Asian Centre for Human Rights was told that 250 schools and ashrams (adivasi resident hostels that often include residential schools) were being used by security forces in Dantewada District. The government acknowledged that 150 schools/ashrams were in the possession of security forces.⁴⁶²

Away from the Naxalite conflict in 2007, four Christian missionaries from the Don Bosco High School, Mumbai, were attacked and injured on 19 December, reportedly by Hindu activists.⁴⁶³

On 26 October 2007, in Assam, Rajen Das, a headteacher at Ulubari IP School, was allegedly tortured and died in police custody.⁴⁶⁴

On 19 October 2007, teacher Abid Rashid Mir was tortured and later shot dead in army custody in Whokibal, Kupwara District, Jammu and Kashmir.⁴⁶⁵

On 28 August 2007, Nandakumar Sharma, the suspended Joint Director of the Board of Secondary Education, Manipur, was shot in the knee reportedly by KyKI (Kanglei Yawol Kunna Lup, an armed group in Manipur) on charges of corruption. He had been suspended by the state government for his alleged involvement in the illegal appointment of teachers.⁴⁶⁶

On 7 June 2007, armed militants kidnapped schoolboy Rjat Agarwalla, 12, on his way to school in Sonari, Sivsgar, Assam. ⁴⁶⁷

On 14 May 2007, Tabassum Noor, a student from Mandoora Tral High School, Jammu Kashmir, was seriously injured after being allegedly beaten on the head and back with rifle butts by CRPF troops on her way to school.⁴⁶⁸

On 6 April 2007, Dr Iboton Singh, principal of the Central Academy School, Mantripukhri, Manipur, and teacher Mohammed Janabuddin were shot in their legs by suspected KyKI cadres for allegedly running the National Open School, which had been banned by the armed group.⁴⁶⁹

On 26 February 2007, schoolteacher Tuhin Samata was shot dead during a political clash over the election of the governing body of the Chanduli Higher Secondary School, Latwa, Bardhaman District, West Bengal.⁴⁷⁰

On 6 February 2007, Tapswar Hazarika, a staff member of Goreswar HS School, Baksa District, Assam, was arbitrarily arrested.⁴⁷¹

Between November 2006 and January 2007, the Adivasi National Liberation Army kidnapped one school student, Sourav Bhoumik, of Borsing Memorial English School in Sarupathar, Assam; a teacher, Keshob Sahu; and Anil Keketa, the general secretary of the students' union at Sarupathar College.⁴⁷²

In the Naxalite conflict in 2006, Maoists blew up three schools – a primary school, a middle school and an ashram school – at Koitpal District in Dantewada, and two schools in Kanker District, all in Chhattisgarh during October.⁴⁷³

In May 2006, Naxalites in Jharkhand were reported to be destroying all buildings that could shelter security personnel, including schools.⁴⁷⁴ One primary school in Herhang, Lathehar District, was hit three times in the same year.⁴⁷⁵

In March 2006, the Asian Centre for Human Rights called on the state government to vacate 250 schools and ashram schools being used by security forces and Salwa Judum, and to conduct an inquiry into the recruitment of child soldiers among the Special Police Officers. It also called on the Communist Party of India (Maoist) to stop recruiting children for hostilities and ban Bal Mandal, its Children's Division.⁴⁷⁶ The districts of Dantewada and Bijapur, in Chhattisgarh, reported that 40 per cent of children aged 6 to 16 residing in Salwa Judum camps were not attending school in 2005.⁴⁷⁷

There was a reported increase in the recruitment of children by Maoists between 2005 and 2007. Children aged 14 and 15 were reportedly recruited into armed squads in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. Some were taken from school without their parents' consent. Similarly, other armed opposition groups in Jammu and Kashmir were said to be actively recruiting children as young as 13 or 14 from schools and mosques.⁴⁷⁸

In December 2007, villagers in Kannaiguda and Mukudtong, Dantewada District, also said that students stopped going to school when Salwa Judum began operating in the area because they abducted children.⁴⁷⁹

[Refworld note: The source report "Education under Attack 2010" was posted on the UNESCO website (www.unesco.org) in pdf format, with country chapters run together. Original footnote numbers have been retained here.]

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