

JHARKHAND

Operation NGO Hunt

Gladson Dungdung

Jharkhand government has launched a new operation in the state, which can be called the "Operation NGO Hunt". In its latest discovery, the Jharkhand Police have found that 1300 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are sympathisers of the Naxalites though nobody knows the parameters of being a 'sympathiser'. However, the way state is behaving with these organizations, it is very clear that anyone who raises questions against the violation of the rights of the people residing in the Red Corridor is a sympathiser of the Naxalites. In fact, these NGOs, Human Rights Groups and Mass Organizations are empowering the villagers, mobilizing them and fighting to protect their constitutional rights in the Red Corridor but the state is determined to suppress them. Therefore, the government has ordered an inquiry against these NGOs. The Superintendent of Police (Intelligence Department) and the Deputy Commissioners of the concerned districts are investigating the matter. According to the Intelligence Department, some NGOs are involved in unlawful activities; several organizations have direct links with the Naxalites and many organizations have protested against the government in the street. The Police Headquarter has also identified these NGOs and the Home Department has sent a list of these NGOs to the Deputy Commissioners. It seems from the State's action that no one has the right to protest against the state under any circumstances. If so, why do people have constitutional rights? Are Indians really living in a democratic country, where only the Naxalites and the Maoists have the right to protest?

The Director General of Police (Jharkhand), Neyaz Ahmad is known for his revelations of baseless information. Earlier, he had told the people that 'operation Saranda' is the biggest operation against the Maoists and the police will clear the land. However, nothing came out of it as of date. Similarly, he had attempted to propagate fake information about the Independent People's Tribunal against Operation Green Hunt held in Ranchi on 25-26 September, 2010 saying that it was funded by the Maoists, which was completely baseless. Ironically, instead of apologising for his baseless revelation, he keeps saying that NGOs are supporting the Naxalites.

According to Ahmed's latest discovery, several NGOs have organized protests in support of the Naxalites; they protest in the city and speak in favour of the Naxalites. Therefore, the Police are strictly watching their activities. He is absolutely right when he says that many organizations have protested in the street, and of course, that is expected to happen in a democratic country. However, it is baseless to say that these protests were in support of the Naxalites. The question that arises here is, if the Police had the correct information of NGOs, Human Rights Organizations and Mass Organizations protesting in the street in support of the Naxalites then who had stopped them from arresting the Naxalite supporters from the street? Why are the police afraid of the NGOs, Rights Organizations and Mass Organizations who merely carry banners, placards and handbills in the street, while protesting against the State?

In these circumstances one can easily understand how intelligent are the Intelligence Department and the Police Department, who do not even understand the difference between NGOs, Human Rights Organizations and Mass Organizations. They call all kinds of organizations as NGOs following the theory of the World Bank. Ironically, they get information only after everything is over. The biggest question is how can they fight with the 'Maoist menace' when they only have baseless information?

However, the big boss of the Home Department (Jharkhand) the Home Secretary, Rajbala Verma is simply in the dark. She does not know what her Department is doing.

According to her auspicious words, "I don't know whether any investigation is going on against the NGOs". How is it possible? Perhaps, it's a part of her strategy to 'hunt and keep quiet' and if anyone asks about it, deny the fact and act ignorant. Consequently, the operation can continue without any obstacle and delay. Indeed, the main reason behind the State's victimization of the NGOs, Human Rights Organizations and Mass Organizations in Jharkhand is that these organizations expose the state, when the police and paramilitary forces organize fake encounters, rape women in the forest, tortured the innocent, book villagers in false cases and humiliate them. These kinds of cases are brought into light only because of courage of the NGOs, Human Rights Organizations and Mass Organizations. These organizations are exposing the rampant human rights violations in the Red Corridor regularly.

Though the Media was also reluctant to report on rampant human rights violations committed by the Police and Paramilitary Forces in the Red Corridor, the joint intervention by many organizations in forms of the Independent People's Tribunal, where presence of the noted writer Arundhati Roy, Ex-DGP (IPS) K S Subramanian and the Supreme Court Lawyer Prashant Bhushan has made a huge difference. The Jharkhand police and paramilitary forces were exposed. As a result, there was a hue and cry in the police department. The DGP of Jharkhand started behaving like a wounded lion, when the information appeared in the public domain, which reported that some senior police officers had questioned the so-called 'anti-Naxal operations' especially on the issues of victimization of the innocent Adivasis during the so-called anti-naxal drive.

Secondly, the State is fully aware of how the NGOs, Human Rights Groups and Mass Organizations are mobilizing the villagers against the so-called development projects. For instance, the State government is not even able to develop "Birsa Munda Airport" due to people's protest against the land acquisition. The Airport Authority has requested the government for 378 acres of land and it has sanctioned Rs 1,63,85,87,469 as compensation for the land. Whatever may be the compensation package, the landowners are not ready to surrender their lands. Consequently, the money is lying in the Banks for more than a year. Similarly, 411 projects are halted, including road, dam, steel, mining and power projects. The major obstacle for these projects is people's protest. The major argument of the ruling elite is that India has to move and the natural resources are highly required for it but the Adivasis and other agro-forest based communities do not want to surrender their land, forest and water anymore for the corporate sharks. Therefore, the state sees the Adivasis as the biggest obstacle in the growth of India. Consequently, the state has been attempting to suppress the decent voices by branding them as Naxalites, Maoists or their supporters.

In the case of Niyamgiri, international NGOs like *Survival International*, *Action Aid* and many local Organizations exposed the foul play of the Vedanta, which led to closing down of the mining project of the Vedanta. Of course, the Jharkhand government has also learnt from it. Needless to say that the government has signed more than 104 MoUs and most of them are in halt due to the mass protest against the land acquisition. In these circumstances, the first priority of the present BJP-JMM government is to materialize all the MoUs and they see the NGOs, Human Rights Organizations and Mass organizations as the biggest obstacle for it. Therefore, they have started hunting them.

Ironically, the Home Ministry has a list of the corporate houses funding the Maoists and other Naxal groups. But instead of taking action against them, the state justifies their acts and protects them. However, in the case of other groups, the state is playing the role of a butcher. If any NGO's involvement in unlawful activities is found it must be punished. However, it is un-constitutional on part of the State to brand 1300 NGOs as sympathisers of the Naxalites without any proof. If the NGOs, Human Rights Organizations and Mass Organizations are raising questions against the State, instead of suppressing them by police action, the State should come up with the rational answers, which can lead to the protection of the constitutional rights of the people and also pave the way of an inclusive growth of all living beings rather than exclusive growth of merely the human beings.□

[source : www.sanhati.com]