



CURRENT AFFAIRS



Argasia Education PVT. Ltd. (GST NO.-09AAPCAI478E1ZH)
Address: Basement C59 Noida, opposite to Priyagold Building gate, Sector 02,
Pocket I, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, 201301, CONTACT NO:-8448440231

Date -07- January 2025

EMPOWERING TRIBAL COMMUNITIES: THE IMPACT OF THE PESA ACT

WHY IN THE NEWS?

This event is in the news because it highlights the significant role of women, particularly from Scheduled Tribes, in governance and community development through Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The meeting between the President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu and the women's representatives mark an important step in recognizing and empowering women in rural India. The President's address underscores the importance of PRIs in strengthening democracy at the grassroots level and their contribution to women's empowerment. Additionally, the mention of 14 lakh women serving as elected members of PRIs, constituting 46% of total elected representatives, along with states increasing reservation limits to 50%, demonstrates a commitment to ensuring greater female participation in political decision-making.



WHAT IS PESA?

The Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) of 1996 extends the provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, which governs Panchayati Raj, to tribal areas under the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. These areas, called Scheduled Areas, are primarily inhabited by tribal communities and are found in ten states: Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Telangana. PESA was introduced with certain exceptions to respect the distinct cultural and social characteristics of these communities.

KEY FEATURES AND GOALS OF PESA:

- 1. Self-Governance for Tribal Communities:** PESA empowers Gram Sabhas (village assemblies) to govern local affairs, ensuring that tribal communities manage their resources, such as minor forest produce, minerals, and water bodies, according to their customs and traditions.
- 2. Decentralized Decision-Making:** The Act gives significant decision-making powers to Gram Sabhas and Panchayats, enabling them to oversee local development, select beneficiaries for government schemes, and approve projects based on community priorities.
- 3. Control Over Local Resources:** PESA guarantees that tribal communities retain control over vital resources, protecting them from exploitation and displacement caused by large-scale development projects or land acquisition.
- 4. Implementation of Traditional Knowledge:** The Act acknowledges the value of traditional knowledge systems, allowing them to guide development priorities and ensuring that the approach is culturally appropriate for tribal areas.
- 5. Protection of Tribal Rights:** PESA acts as a safeguard against the erosion of tribal rights and access to resources, especially in the face of external development pressures.
- 6. Recognition of Local Customary Laws:** The Act respects tribal customary laws and practices, making them an integral part of governance and conflict resolution within the communities.
- 7. Inclusive Development:** By placing the decision-making power in the hands of local tribal populations, PESA aims to facilitate inclusive development that is aligned with their unique needs and aspirations, promoting sustainable and equitable growth.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PESA:

- 1. Local Representation:** PESA ensures Gram Sabhas (village assemblies) and Panchayats provide tribal communities with decision-making power over local resources and development.
- 2. Special Provisions for Tribal Areas:** It adapts laws and policies to tribal customs, allowing local control over resources like forests, water bodies, and minor minerals.
- 3. Women Empowerment:** In certain states, one-third of Panchayat seats are reserved for women, promoting gender equality in tribal governance.
- 4. One-Third Representation in Panchayats:** PESA mandates one-third reservation for women in Panchayat elections, ensuring their participation in governance.
- 5. PESA Outside Tribal Areas:** The principles of self-governance and resource management under PESA can be applied in non-tribal areas for broader governance reforms.
- 6. Regular Elections:** PESA ensures regular elections in Panchayats, strengthening democratic governance and accountability in tribal regions.

ISSUES RELATED TO PESA:

1. Lack of Institutional Support: There is insufficient infrastructure and institutional backing to implement PESA effectively. Many tribal areas lack the administrative framework and resources needed to fully support the Act's provisions.

2. Lack of Awareness: A significant challenge is the lack of awareness among tribal communities about their rights under PESA. This limits their ability to engage with and benefit from the self-governance mechanisms the Act offers.

3. Bureaucratic Hurdles: Bureaucratic delays and resistance at various levels of government often slow down the implementation of PESA. Administrative red tape, insufficient coordination, and lack of political will can prevent timely and effective enforcement.

4. Delay in Framing PESA Rules: Many states have been slow in formulating PESA Rules, which are essential for the detailed implementation of the Act. Without these rules, local governance structures struggle to function properly.

5. Limited Empowerment of Gram Sabhas: While PESA empowers Gram Sabhas, in practice, local bodies often lack the authority or capacity to make impactful decisions. External influences and the persistence of traditional power structures undermine their autonomy.

6. Inconsistent Enforcement: Enforcement of PESA provisions is inconsistent across states, with some states failing to align their laws with the Act. This leads to mismatches in policy implementation, reducing its effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO EMPOWER PESA FOR REAL PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS (PRIS) DEVELOPMENT:

1. Capacity Building: Governments should focus on training Panchayats to enhance their ability to plan and respond to citizens' needs effectively.

2. Devolve Power: State leaders must devolve more authority to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), as mandated by the Constitution.

3. Build Planning and Evaluation Capacities: PRIs should be empowered as planners and evaluators, not just implementers of projects.

4. Elected Leaders Demand Control: Local leaders should unite with communities to demand greater autonomy and control over local governance.

5. Form Centres of Excellence: The Ministry of Panchayati Raj should create Centres of Excellence in universities to support PESA's implementation with specialized training and research.

6. Participatory Planning: The People's Plan Campaign should focus on participatory planning, resource convergence, and using advanced technologies for rural development.

7. Empower Women: The 73rd Constitutional Amendment ensures one-third representation for women in Panchayats, promoting gender equality and women's involvement in decision-making.

CONCLUSION

PESA is a milestone legislation in India's legal framework aimed at empowering tribal communities and ensuring inclusive governance. The key to its success lies in protecting its sanctity by implementing its provisions in both letter and spirit. This will ensure the achievement of its goal of inclusive development and empowerment, fostering democratic participation and safeguarding tribal rights and resources in India's Scheduled Areas.

PRELIMS QUESTION:

Q.Consider the following statements

1. The Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996, extends the provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment to tribal areas in India.
2. The Act empowers Gram Sabhas to govern local affairs and manage resources such as forests, water bodies, and minerals.
3. PESA mandates a one-third reservation for women in Panchayat elections in tribal areas.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- A. Only one
 - B. Only two
 - C. All three
 - D. None
- Answer: B**

MAINS QUESTION:

Q. Discuss the significance of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996, in empowering tribal communities in India. What challenges does the implementation of PESA face, and what measures can be taken to ensure its effective implementation?

(250 words, 15 marks)

Ritik singh

LEFT-WING EXTREMISM: A PERSISTENT THREAT TO INDIA'S INTERNAL SECURITY

WHY IN THE NEWS?

On January 6, 2025, in one of the deadliest Maoist attacks in recent years, eight District Reserve Guard (DRG) personnel and one civilian driver were killed when insurgents detonated a powerful 70 kg IED under their vehicle in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district. The attack occurred near Aranpur village in the Kutru police station area around 2:15 PM, targeting DRG personnel returning from an anti-Maoist operation in their Scorpio vehicle.



ORIGIN OF LEFT-WING EXTREMISM

Beginnings (1967): The movement began in Naxalbari, Phansidewa, and Khoribari in West Bengal's Darjeeling District, led by Charu Majumdar, Kanu Sanyal, and Jangal Santhal from the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Early Revolt: It started as a peasant revolt.

Formation of CPI (M-L) (1969): Two years later, the Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist) was established.

Spread: Initially in West Bengal, the movement expanded to rural areas in southern and eastern India, including Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh.

Current Groups: Most Naxal groups trace their roots to CPI (M-L). The Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) was formed in 1975 and merged with the People's War Group in 2004 to create CPI (Maoist).



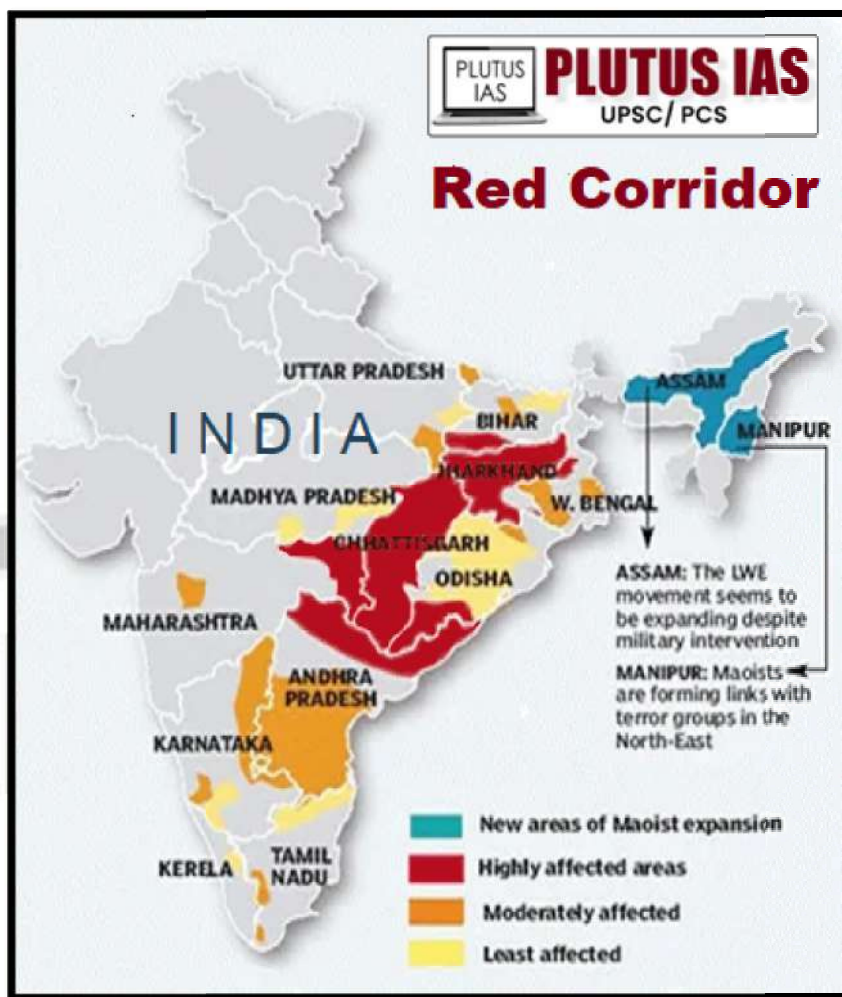
PREVALENCE OF MAOISM IN INDIA

History: Maoist attacks, or Left-Wing Extremism, have been present in India for about 50 years.

Casualties: Approximately 15,000 lives have been lost due to Naxal violence in the last 25 years. Early Movement: The movement started in the 1960s, led by Charu Mazumdar. It seemed to wane after he died in 1972.

Revival: Despite setbacks, the People's War group formed in 1980 kept the movement alive. The merger of the People's War and MCC in 2004 led to the formation of CPI (Maoist), which revived and spread the movement.

Current Status: As of February 2019, Maoist extremism affects 90 districts across 11 states in India, known as the Red Corridor.



FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RISE OF LEFT-WING EXTREMISM (LWE)

Tribal Dissatisfaction: The Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980 restricted tribes from using forest resources crucial for their livelihoods, leading to dissatisfaction.

Displacement: Development projects, mining, and other initiatives have displaced tribal populations in LWE-affected areas.

Exploitation of Vulnerable Individuals: Those without sustainable support are more likely to join the Naxalite movement, which recruits them by offering weapons, money, and resources.

Socio-Economic Gaps: The government often measures success based on reduced violence rather than focusing on long-term developmental efforts in affected areas.

Lack of Technical Intelligence: Ineffective strategies against Naxalism result from insufficient technical intelligence and information.

Poor Post-Control Administration: After police regain control, essential services often fail to reach local populations, leaving them unsupported and vulnerable.

Confusion in Approach: There is a lack of consensus on whether Naxalism should be addressed as a social issue or a security threat. State governments often view it as a central government responsibility, leading to insufficient local proactive measures.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES TO FIGHT LWE:

Scheme/Initiative	Details	Success/Impact
Operation Green Hunt	Large-scale deployment of security forces in Naxal-affected areas.	Reduced insurgency in some regions but faced criticism for collateral damage and lack of long-term impact.
Aspirational Districts Programme	Rapidly develops districts lagging in health, education, and infrastructure.	Improved HDI indicators in many districts but challenges in sustaining development remain.
SAMADHAN Doctrine	Comprehensive strategy focusing on leadership, intelligence, technology, and cutting financing.	Enhanced coordination among agencies and targeted operations, but requires deeper focus on socio-political roots.
ROSHNI Initiative	Trains and places rural youth from 27 LWE-affected districts under a skills development program.	Empowered youth through job placements, reducing vulnerability to Naxal recruitment.
Road Connectivity	Sanctioned 17,462 km of roads; 11,811 km completed.	Improved access to remote areas, boosting economic opportunities and security operations.
Mobile Connectivity	Installed 2,343 mobile towers in the first phase; 2,542 towers planned for the second phase.	Strengthened communication in remote areas, improving governance and reducing isolation of communities.
Ekalavya Residential Schools	245 schools sanctioned in 90 LWE-affected districts; 121 operational.	Provided quality education and infrastructure for tribal children, fostering better opportunities.
Financial Inclusion	Opened 1,258 bank branches, 1,348 ATMs, and 4,903 post offices in worst-hit districts.	Increased financial access for marginalized communities, promoting economic inclusion and reducing extortion reliance.

ISSUES LIMITING THE ELIMINATION OF LEFT-WING EXTREMISM (LWE) IN INDIA

1. Expansion and New Developments

Spread to New Areas: Naxal groups are extending their influence to previously unaffected regions, complicating containment efforts.

Increased Militarization: Enhanced weaponry and tactical sophistication pose a significant challenge to security forces.

Targeted Killing of Informers: Systematic elimination of suspected informers disrupts intelligence gathering.

Propaganda and Engagement: Heightened use of civil society groups, social media, and urban networks to propagate their agenda.

Urban Penetration: Efforts to infiltrate urban centers and mobilize working-class movements.

Over-Ground Organizations: Creation of legitimate-seeming organizations to support extremist objectives.

Use of Technology: Advanced communication and propaganda methods hinder interception efforts.
Large-Scale Extortion: Industries and contractors in Naxal-dominated areas are frequently extorted, funding insurgent activities.

2. Challenges in Government Measures

Intelligence Gaps: Traditional intelligence methods, such as police receivers, are inadequate against evolving Maoist tactics.

Large Troop Operations: Despite deploying larger forces, recent attacks reveal operational vulnerabilities.

Trust Deficit: Cultural differences and perceived indifference by security forces erode trust with local populations.

Protection of Informers: Failure to protect informers leads to fear, reduced cooperation, and loss of critical intelligence.

Overemphasis on Security Measures: Excessive focus on militarized responses neglects the socio-economic and political causes fueling extremism.

Political Support: Covert backing from local politicians undermines anti-LWE efforts and fosters insurgency.

WAY FORWARD

Peace Agreements: The government and Maoists should negotiate peace agreements similar to the Mizo Accord.

Comprehensive Development: Ensure all-round development of Naxal-affected areas.

Local Engagement: Employ more local personnel in administrative roles to bridge the trust deficit and involve civil society in supporting tribal communities.

Small-Scale Operations: Use small, efficient teams like the Greyhounds for better results.

Careful Policy Implementation: Implement policies that provide indirect benefits, such as the Forest Rights Act, of 2006, with careful consideration.

IED Prevention: Develop innovative measures to prevent IED-related incidents.

Capacity Building: Focus on capacity-building and modernization of local police forces.

Surrender Policy: Rationalize surrender policies to reintegrate individuals caught in LWE into mainstream society.

Focused Approach: Adopt a time-bound approach to eliminate LWE groups and ensure comprehensive development of affected regions.

Youth Unemployment: Address the youth bulge and unemployment issues to prevent internal security threats.

Synchronized Efforts: The Centre and states must work together to eliminate radicalization and support affected populations.

CONCLUSION:

Effectively addressing LWE requires a holistic approach, focusing on socio-economic development alongside security measures. Tackling poverty and tribal grievances undermines extremist ideologies, while infrastructure development counters Maoist propaganda and fosters growth. In a democracy with legitimate grievance redressal mechanisms, violence-based ideologies are unsustainable. A balanced strategy integrating development and security is vital for lasting peace and stability.

PRELIMS QUESTION:

Q. What was the main objective of the Operation Green Hunt initiative?

- A. Training rural youth in skill development
- B. Large-scale deployment of security forces in Naxal-affected areas

- C. Promoting financial inclusion in tribal regions
- D. Building educational infrastructure in LWE-affected districts

Answer: B

MAINS QUESTION:

Q. Analyze the effectiveness of government initiatives in tackling LWE and suggest measures to address its socio-economic and political roots.

(Answer in 150 words)

Munde Dhananjay Navnath

UPSC CSE 2025-26

PSIR

Political Science and International Relations

BATCH STARTING  **01:00 PM**

27th JANUARY 2025

[Click to Know More](#)

 2nd Floor, Apsara Arcade, Karol Bagh Metro Station
Gate No. – 6, New Delhi 110005

OUR CENTERS Delhi | Chandigarh | Shimla | Bilaspur

 info@plutusias.com  **8448440231**  www.plutusias.com

By Dr. Bijendra Jha
Ph.D (Pol Sci.) JNU

Admission Open

ONLINE BATCH AVAILABLE AT CHANDIGARH

PLUTUS IAS
UPSC / PCS