2012 Anti-Naxal Encounter Findings

Why in news?

The Justice V.K. Agarwal judicial enquiry commission gave its observations over the June 28-29, 2012 “anti-naxal encounter” in 3 villages in Bijapur and Sukma districts of Chhattisgarh.

What were the security forces’ claims?

- It was claimed by the security forces in Chhattisgarh that the 17 people who died in the “encounter” were “Naxalites”.
- In the official narration, two teams led by a DIG marched into the forests to outflank the extremist groups in a meeting only to be surprised by gunfire.
- On the next day, 17 Naxalites lay dead, and six uniformed personnel hurt.

What are the commission’s findings now?

- The commission found no evidence of a gunfight, and held that firing had been one-sided from the beginning to end.
- The postmortem reports showed that injuries on 10 of those killed were on their backs.
- This was not consistent with the security forces’ claims that the firing had been in self-defence.
- Instead, the nature and location of the injuries suggested that they were fired upon while fleeing, and in no position to pose a threat.
- There were bullet shots on some of the heads, evidently from close quarters.
- There were injuries on the upper torsos caused by the butt of guns or rifles, which were signs of physical assault.
- There were also signs of manipulation in the timing of injury and post-mortem reports in at least one case.
- More worse, the commission concluded that injuries sustained by the uniformed personnel were more likely caused through friendly fire.
- The cataloguing and managing of the evidence relating to the armaments such as guns and detonators allegedly carried by the “Naxalites” suffered from imprecise documentation.

What does this indicate?

- The findings reveal how truth can be subverted and buried by the very

officers who are supposed to enforce the law.

- The findings make it clear that the entire operation was substandard from the start.
- There was poor intelligence, inadequate training, lack of communication, and hasty reaction.

What are the recommendations made?

- Training should be imparted to improve the mental fabric of the security forces.
- This is to make them more balanced so that they act with equanimity.
- Security forces must be trained to desist from panic responses while dealing with extremists.
- There is a crucial need now to find ways to initiate action against the officers involved in the unfortunate operation and its heinous subversion and cover up.

Source: The Hindu

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