Security Camps – The Game-Changer in the Maoist Fight

Mains: *GS-III – Internal Security | Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security.*

Why in News?

Recenlty, Maoism in India has been significantly curbed and the dip in Maoist-related violence, especially over the last two years, has restricted the insurgency to few pockets in the Bastar division of Chhattisgarh.

What is Maoism?

- **Maoism** – It is a ***form of communism*** developed by Mao Tse Tung.
- **Principle** – It is a doctrine to capture State power through a combination of *armed insurgency, mass mobilization and strategic alliances.*
- **Mechanisms** – The Maoists also use *propaganda and disinformation* against State institutions as other components of their insurgency doctrine.

What is the status of Maoism in India?

- **Sharp reduction in violence –** Maoist-related incidents have dropped significantly, with government data showing a ***90% decline*** from 2010 to 2025.
- **Decline of LWE-affected districts** – The Left-Wing Extremism (LWE)-affected districts fell from *126 in 2018 to 11 in October 2025.*
- **Cadre surrenders** – Many Maoist leaders and cadres have surrendered, weakening organizational strength.
- **Current hotspots** – Only three districts - ***Bijapur, Narayanpur and Sukma***, in south Bastar — are categorised as most affected.

To know more about *Maoism in India*, click here

What are the factors responsible for expansion of Maoism?

- **Geographical remoteness –** Maoism thrived in inaccessible forested and hilly areas, away from state presence.
- **Rugged terrain –** Dense forests and difficult landscapes provided natural cover and safe havens for guerrilla warfare.
    - **Example –** The dense forests, difficult terrain, and location spanning Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Telangana made the Dandakaranya Region (DKR) an ideal base for the Maoists, with Bastar as their main hub.

- **Marginalised tribal inhabitants –** Tribals faced poverty, displacement, and lack of basic services, making them vulnerable to Maoist mobilization.
- **Exclusive tribal belts policy –** Official restrictions on outside intervention reinforced isolation, limiting development and governance outreach.
- **Governance deficit –** It was the most crucial factor that enabled the Maoists to expand and establish their parallel government.
- **Political & structural factors –** Land alienation, corruption, and stalled reforms deepened discontent and widened the governance vacuum.

What are the key factors contributing to the decline of Maoism?

- **Civil administration inroads –** The setback to Maoism is linked to the civil administration entering remote areas once controlled by Maoists.
- **Establishment of security camps** – The game-changing initiative of the government has been the establishment of security camps in the remote areas, regions of erstwhile Maoist domination.
- **Resistance & Acceptance** – Initial attempts to establish camps did face local resistance, however, local resistance subsided following the benefits (security, services, development) that accrued to the local population.

What are advantages of establishing security camps in affected areas?

- **Enhanced the security footprint –** Security camps increased police presence in remote areas, a boost in police to population ratio prevented the Maoists from operating with impunity.
- **Reduced reaction time –** The security forces can now respond to emergencies much faster, forcing the Maoists onto the defensive and boosting the forces' confidence and higher motivation morale.
- **Psychological advantage –** The local population witnessed the security forces gaining an upper hand, which was also a psychological setback to the Maoists.
- The local population is more assured now that the wherewithal for their welfare and development is with the government and not with the Maoists.
- **Improved Human Intelligence (HUMINT) –** The cascading effect of the advantages gained by security forces improved the HUMINT scenario for the forces in a zero-sum manner.
- **Infrastructure development** – The camps have also seen the construction of roads, and erection of mobile towers, thereby transforming the local lifestyle.
- **Civil administration support –** The governance has expanded by relying on security camps in remote areas.
- **Direct outreach –** Local people is now seeing officials (collector, tehsildar, patwari) reaching out to them.
- **Consolidated progress –** Security camps have enabled sustained development and administration, making the future promising.

- **Outcome –** Maoist influence has weakened considerably, with their capacity to recruit, acquire arms, and secure funding greatly diminished.
- Numerous cadres and leaders have surrendered or been neutralised by security forces, suggesting that the physical presence of Maoism is nearing its end.

What are the challenges in addressing Maoism?

- **Structural issues –** Sustainable resolution requires tackling deep-rooted socio-economic and governance deficits.
- **Emergence of rights-based issues –** As local communities come out of isolation, issues of land, livelihood, and tribal rights will gain prominence.
- **Shift in Maoist leaders' approach –** Several surrendered leaders, declaring their intent to continue the tribal struggle through democratic means.
- **Government's responsibility –** The state faces a complex task that demands transparent, sensitive, and mature handling to prevent resurgence.

What lies ahead?

- **Implementation of Constitutional guarantees** – The acts like the Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) and Forest Rights Act (FRA) should form the basis of future policy.
- **Strengthening civil administration** – Civil administration, in most of the areas that had minimal governance, has to start from scratch.
- **Long-term planning (Vision 2047)** – Establish a dedicated task force with a roadmap till 2047 under the Viksit Bharat vision.
- **Acknowledging role of security forces** – They have worked, made sacrifices and managed the conflict well, giving a platform to the government to carry forward the mission for sustainable peace.

References

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