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**DAILY EDITORIAL
ANALYSIS**

TOPIC

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bulwark against Maoists

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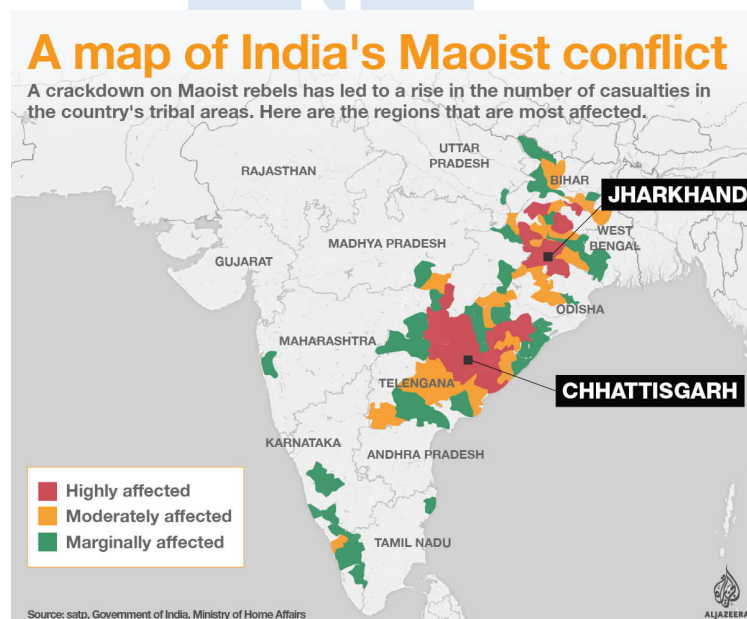
GRASS-ROOT DEMOCRACY AS A BULWARK AGAINST MAOISTS

In Context

- The dismal polling turnout in the Maoist-affected areas of Chhattisgarh is a pointer that democracy needs to be strengthened at the grassroots.

Left-wing Extremism(LWE)/Maoism in India

- **About:**
 - ♦ **Left-wing extremists**, popularly known as **Maoists** worldwide and as **Naxalites/Naxalism in India**, have been a major threat to India **since the 1960s**.
 - ♦ The **Maoist guerrillas seek to capture state power** through a people's war, and their military strategy is based on the **teachings of Mao Zedong**.
 - ♦ Andhra Pradesh witnessed the first seeds of the radical Marxist movement being sown just after India's independence.
- **Threats & violence:**
 - ♦ It has been identified as the biggest threat to India's internal security and the **periodic Naxal violence** is seen in India's tribal belt, also **called the "Red Corridor"** spread across Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal.
 - ♦ The Naxalites have frequently **targeted tribal, police and government workers** in what they say is a fight for **improved land rights and more jobs** for neglected **agricultural labourers and the poor**.



- **Maoism in Chhattisgarh & Electoral challenges:**
 - ♦ Maoist insurgency in the country presently thrives in the **tribal regions of Chhattisgarh**, particularly in **Bastar**.
 - ♦ **Tribals form the main cadre base** of the movement.
 - Equations in the context of tribal votes did matter immensely in the calculations of each political party, given the proportion of the tribal population in the State.
 - As in the politics of Chhattisgarh, it is said that the party with which the tribal voter goes forms the government in the State **as tribal voters have a 34% of the vote share** in the State.
 - ♦ Elections in these Maoist strongholds, that are **Schedule Five areas**, have always been **affected by violence** in the backdrop of boycott calls by the Maoists. And this year was no different.

Issues & challenges

- **No resolution against Maoists:**
 - ♦ There are several issues on which political parties contested the election in these tribal areas. However, no single issue addressed the challenge of resolving the Maoist conundrum.
 - ♦ This has discouraged mass participation in the democratic process.
- **Maoists' election boycott calls:**
 - ♦ If analysed from the Maoists' perspective of boycotts, it may be added that the **insurgents who claim to fight the state** for the cause of the people, force these very people to shun the most effective tool towards empowerment, i.e., by not participating in the democratic process.
 - ♦ This calling out is essential so as to establish that 'Maoists are for the people's cause'.
- **Tribal Discontent:**
 - ♦ **The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980** has been used to target tribals, who depend on forest produce for their living.
 - ♦ **Massive displacement of tribal population** in the Naxalism-affected states due to development projects, mining operations and other reasons.
 - Also, poor implementation of FRA, **eviction of the land ceiling**.
- **Governance-related issues:**
 - ♦ Government measures its success on the basis of the number of violent attacks rather than the development done in the Naxal-affected areas.
 - ♦ Absence of **strong technical intelligence** to fight with Naxalites.
 - ♦ **Infrastructural problems**, for instance, some villages are not yet connected properly with any **communication network**.
 - ♦ **No Follow-Up from Administration:** It is seen that even after police take hold of a region, the administration fails to provide essential services to the people of that region.
- **Non implementation of PESA:**
 - ♦ The Act envisions the empowerment of gram sabhas as the sole authority to govern various aspects of the socio-economic lives of the tribal community in the respective jurisdiction.
 - The intent behind the Act was to bring people at the grassroots level face to face with the government, and was aligned to the tribal way of life in historical and traditional terms.
 - ♦ Although a few of the political parties in the field came up with the issues concerning complete implementation of the **Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA)**, modalities to execute the same were **not brought out in a clear manner**.
 - ♦ In spite of the PESA Act being passed in 1996, not one of the State governments concerned has **implemented the same in the correct spirit**, by issuing policy directives.
 - ♦ This gap has been exploited by the Maoists to foster their agenda and by having their writ run in their **strongholds through 'jantana sarkar'**.

Way ahead

- **The PESA Act**, given its potential, could be commandeered as the greatest enabler to mainstream the tribal community by accommodating their aspirations.
 - ♦ Its implementation is highly do-able, in the mid and long run. This could **render the Maoists, whose influence is receding, irrelevant**.
- **Tribal leadership** needs to be nurtured by acknowledging them and giving them a voice.
- The resolution to the challenge posed by the Maoists is **not only about security and development** but is also about **looking beyond**, by enabling democracy at the grassroots — something that recognises tribal aspirations and calls out the ulterior intentions of Maoists.

SAMADHAN doctrine

- It is the **one-stop solution for the LWE problem**. It encompasses the entire strategy of government from short-term policy to long-term policy formulated at different levels. SAMADHAN stands for-
 - ♦ **S**- Smart Leadership,
 - ♦ **A**- Aggressive Strategy,
 - ♦ **M**- Motivation and Training,
 - ♦ **A**- Actionable Intelligence,
 - ♦ **D**- Dashboard Based KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and KRAs (Key Result Areas),
 - ♦ **H**- Harnessing Technology,
 - ♦ **A**- Action plan for each Theatre,
 - ♦ **N**- No access to Financing.

DAILY MAINS QUESTION

How can a Grassroots democracy act as a bulwark against the challenge of Left-wing Extremism to India? Examine the role of the Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) in this regard.

