



Mains Practice Question

Case Study

You are posted as a District Magistrate. You come to know about a situation in the village under your jurisdiction where the population is suffering from Anaemia. An initiative was taken to provide fortified rice to villagers in order to provide nutrition to them but villagers deny to eat them as they have the misconception of the rice being the plastic rice. On the other hand, the village is also influenced by the Leftist movement and you get to know that Naxalites are using this public perception for their own benefit, making it more difficult for the government to reach the people.

An alternate initiative was taken by providing iron tablets to people but it created another misconception among villagers that these tablets lead to more weight of babies in pregnant mothers leading to delivery complications. Thus, it also ended in failure.

(a) What are the various issues involved in the above case study?

(b) How will you change the perception of the people in the backdrop of the spread of misinformation by the Naxalites? (250 Words)

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Approach:

- Mention the stakeholders involved
- Enumerate the various issues involved in this case
- Give an appropriate approach to change the perception of people in the backdrop of spread of misinformation by the Naxalites

Answer:

Stakeholders:

Various stakeholders, in this case, are as following-

1. **Villagers:** Those who are suffering from anemia, pregnant women and also the general populace who is misled by the Naxalites.
2. **Naxalites:** They are using the misconceptions among the villagers for their own benefits and making it difficult for the government to reach to the public for solving the prevailing problems.
3. **District Authorities:** District authorities which find it difficult to help the villagers because of various issues at hand.

Development in India is marred by many factors e.g. Poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, malnutrition, etc. Naxalism is another dimension that adds fuel to such problems. The above case study is linked with the chain of the problems arising out of the conflict hit areas due to Naxalism. In this case, a “misconception” about the use of iron tablets has changed the belief of the locals and that has become worrisome for the

district authority because Naxalites are also involved.

The issues involved in this case are:

A. The misconception of rice being the plastic rice: Villagers are suffering from anemia and to solve this problem, they were provided with fortified rice which they mistook as plastic rice.

B. The misconception of Iron tablet leading to delivery complications in pregnant women: Somehow villagers believe that the Iron tablet which is provided to the anemic population in the village is causing bulginess in the babies and it is causing complications in the delivery.

C. Naxalites using misconceptions to their advantage: Naxalites are misleading locals in various ways through ideological persuasion and social pressure.

Changing the perception of the people in the backdrop of spread of misinformation by the Naxalites: Misinformation must be replaced with 'Right Information'. So, for providing the right information to the villagers about the benefits of fortified rice and Iron tablets following steps can be taken-

Mass awareness campaign: For this, small camps can be organised at relevant places, video lectures can be provided publically or through social media etc. The use of Nukkad Natak can also be done for this purpose.

Social persuasion: Persuasion must be picked as a tool to mend people's belief.

Public private partnership: Different NGO and private players must be involved to spread awareness among people about the different policies of the government (e.g. National Nutrition Mission).

Educating school children: about the benefits of fortified rice and Iron tablets so that they can spread awareness in their own families and bring attitudinal change about its usage.

Trust building mechanism: This could be perceived that there is a trust deficit between locals and state authority. Hence, it is important to fill the trust gap through constant contact, communication and interaction.

Dealing with Naxalism overall will also contribute to helping the government. This can be achieved by modernising the Police force, proper enforcement of land ceiling laws, utilisation of the funds provided by the government to the maximum benefit of the Naxal affected areas.

Small incentives in the form of extra food grains or monetary benefit can be provided to those who use the iron tablet and fortified rice which can also be an instant solution to deal with this problem

Apart from the above measures, support of local Panchayats, Aanganwadis, Self Help Groups, and tribal leaders can be taken to guide the locals in the right direction so that they can make the right choices in their life and grow individually and collectively and become free from such misconceptions in the long run.