Mains Practice Question

Q. Discuss the linkages between development and extremism in India. How can the government address the root causes of violent movements that challenge the internal security of the country? Illustrate your answer with suitable examples. (250 words)

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Approach:

- **Introduction:** Introduce by defining the terms - development and extremism and giving a brief overview of the different forms of extremism.
- **Body:** Discuss the linkages between development and extremism and also discuss how the root causes of such violent movements can be addressed.
- **Conclusion:** Summarize the main points and give your opinion.

Introduction:

Development and extremism are interlinked in a complex manner. Development refers to the improvement of people's social and economic well-being, while extremism refers to the use of violence or radical means to achieve political or ideological goals. In India, there are various forms of extremism, such as left-wing extremism (LWE), religious extremism, ethnic extremism and secessionist movements. These pose a serious challenge to the internal security of the country.

Body:

Linkages between Development and Extremism:

- **Socioeconomic disparities:** Developmental challenges create fertile ground for extremist ideologies to take root. Marginalized sections of society may become susceptible to radicalization.
- **Regional disparities:** Regional imbalances in development exacerbate the problem. Neglected areas become breeding grounds for extremist activities. Unequal distribution of resources and lack of inclusive development contribute to alienation and resentment.
- **Identity-based conflicts**: Diverse society is characterized by various religious, ethnic, and linguistic identities. If these identities are not adequately recognized and accommodated in the developmental process, it can fuel tensions and lead to extremist movements.
- **Lack of social cohesion:** Developmental initiatives alone may not counter extremism if social cohesion is lacking. Prejudices, discrimination, and communal tensions undermine efforts to build a united society. It is crucial to promote inclusive development that fosters social integration and addresses the grievances of marginalized communities.

Measures to address the Root Causes of Violent Movements:

- **Political dialogue:** The government can engage in political dialogue with extremist groups willing to renounce violence. Other stakeholders such as civil society organizations, media, and academia can facilitate dialogue and build trust. The government can address political grievances and demands of extremist groups within the framework of democracy and federalism.
- **Socio-economic development:** The government can pursue inclusive and equitable

development that reaches out to marginalized sections. Development benefits should be distributed fairly. The government can create opportunities for livelihoods, education, health, empowerment, and participation for those affected by or involved in extremism.

- **Security measures:** The government can strengthen the security apparatus to prevent and combat extremism. Coordination and cooperation among different security agencies should be enhanced. Intelligence gathering and sharing mechanisms should be improved. The government should ensure respect for human rights and rule of law while dealing with extremists.
- **Social integration:** The government can promote social integration among different groups and communities. Communal harmony and tolerance can be fostered through dialogue, education, and cultural exchange. Civil society organizations, media, and academia can create awareness, sensitization, and solidarity among people.

Some examples of how development and extremism are linked in India are:

- **LWE or Naxalism:** LWE is a far-left extremist ideology that originated in Naxalbari, West Bengal in 1967. LWE spread to other parts of eastern India where tribals, dalits, and landless laborers felt exploited and neglected. LWE affects development by creating instability and insecurity. The government has adopted security and developmental measures to deal with LWE.
- **Insurgency in Northeast India:** Insurgency is a secessionist movement that seeks autonomy or independence based on ethnic identity. Insurgency emerged in Northeast India due to various factors such as historical legacy, cultural diversity, and economic backwardness. Insurgency challenges internal security by engaging in armed conflict with security forces. Insurgency affects development by creating instability and insecurity.
- **Religious Extremism**: Religious extremism is a radical ideology that justifies violence or intolerance. It affects development by creating instability and insecurity. The government has adopted security, legal, and social measures to deal with it.

Conclusion:

The linkages between development and extremism in India are undeniable. Socioeconomic disparities, identity-based conflicts, and lack of social cohesion contribute to extremism. The government must prioritize inclusive development, strengthen governance, engage communities, promote education and awareness, and strengthen the security apparatus to address these challenges and effectively address the root causes of violent movements.