



Mains Practice Question

Case Study

You are a young IAS officer recently posted as the District Collector of Dantewada, a remote and impoverished district in the state of Chhattisgarh. Dantewada has been the epicenter of the violent Naxal insurgency, a protracted conflict between Maoist rebels and security forces that has claimed thousands of lives over the past few decades.

The Naxalites, claiming to fight for the rights of tribal peasants and the oppressed, have established a parallel system of governance in large swathes of Dantewada's forests and villages. They run their own courts, tax civilians, and have targeted government infrastructure and security personnel through deadly ambushes and landmine attacks.

Despite the heavy presence of paramilitary forces, the district administration's writ barely extends beyond the district headquarters. Most development funds allocated for Dantewada have been siphoned off by corrupt officials or remained unutilized due to the precarious security situation.

The situation in Dantewada is highly volatile, with regular incidents of violence disrupting governance and development efforts. As the senior-most civilian authority, you are under pressure to find an effective strategy to resolve this long-standing conflict.

In the above scenario:

1. What are the major ethical dilemmas involved in this issue?
2. What would be your priorities and action plan as the District Collector to restore administration and deliver development in this conflict-affected region?
3. Reflecting on this case study, what policy measures would you recommend for resolving protracted insurgencies through a comprehensive approach combining development, security, and grievance redressal?

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Approach

- Briefly introduce the context of the case study.
- Examine the ethical dilemma involved in the case study.
- Delve into priority areas and the required action plan.
- Suggest policy measures for resolving insurgencies.
- Conclude Suitably.

Introduction

Dantewada, nestled in Chhattisgarh, serves as a microcosm of India's protracted insurgencies. The Maoist insurgency in this region challenges governmental authority, leading to violence and impeding development. The District Collector shoulders the responsibility of navigating complex security threats,

addressing social grievances, and fostering progress.

Body

1. What are the major ethical dilemmas involved in this issue?

- **Humanitarian vs. National Security:** Balancing civilian safety and rights with the need for national security measures in a conflict zone.
- **Transparency vs. Security:** Balancing transparency and accountability in governance with operational security in a conflict zone where information leaks can endanger lives and ongoing operations.
- **Rule of Law vs. Parallel Governance:** Upholding the rule of law while addressing the challenge of Naxalites establishing a parallel system of governance in the region.
- **Cultural Preservation and Mainstreaming:** Respecting the cultural and traditional rights of tribal communities while promoting their integration into the mainstream.

2. What would be your priorities and action plan as the District Collector to restore administration and deliver development in this conflict-affected region?

Priorities and Action Plan:

Priority Areas	Action Plan
Public Safety and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen checkpoints and patrols in vulnerable areas.• Deploy Quick Response Teams in vulnerable areas to swiftly respond to any security threats.
Restoring Essential Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ensure uninterrupted provision of healthcare, education, and utilities.▪ Collaborate with NGOs for relief efforts in affected communities.
Immediate Development Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Prioritize infrastructure projects with immediate benefits.▪ Engage stakeholders to identify key development priorities.
Emergency Response and Crisis Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Establish a robust emergency response system.▪ Train local law enforcement and responders in crisis management.
Building Community Trust and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Conduct outreach and town hall meetings for community connection and trust-building.▪ Collaborate with local leaders and civil society for development participation.
Communication and Information Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Establish a dedicated communication strategy to disseminate accurate information, updates, and advisories.▪ Provide training on responsible reporting to media and leaders.

3. Reflecting on this case study, what policy measures would you recommend for resolving protracted insurgencies through a comprehensive approach combining development, security, and grievance

redressal?

▪ **Development with Equity:**

- **Land Rights Protection:** Fast-track land titling processes and establish grievance redressal mechanisms for land disputes.
- **Sustainable Livelihood Programs:** Promote income generation opportunities through skill development in agriculture, forestry, and handicrafts.
 - The **Think-B Incubator Program** in Bastar District of Chhattisgarh by **IAS Rajat Bansal** can be a prime model.
- **Education and Healthcare:** Investing in quality education through Eklavya Model Schools and healthcare facilities in tribal areas, with a focus on local languages and cultural sensitivity.
- **Decentralized Power:** Empower local village councils (Gram Panchayats) to participate in planning and decision-making processes related to **micro-development projects**.
 - The success of the **Naxal Management Policy in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana**, which combined development initiatives with firm security measures can be a prime model.

▪ **Security with Sensitivity:**

- **Security Assessment:** Regularly assess the effectiveness of security operations and minimize civilian casualties. Implement stricter rules of engagement for security forces with a focus on de-escalation tactics.
- **Community Policing:** Develop community policing initiatives where local police work collaboratively with villagers to improve security and build trust.
- **Rehabilitation and Reintegration:** Revitalizing programs for the **rehabilitation and reintegration of former insurgents** into mainstream society, providing them with alternative livelihood opportunities and support services.
 - **Example:** The successful rehabilitation and reintegration of former **LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) cadres** in Sri Lanka after the end of the civil war.
 - Also, the Indian government's "**Cheetah Mitra**" program aims to rehabilitate dacoits by offering them incentives and support to reintegrate into society.

▪ **Grievance Redressal and Dialogue:**

- **Grievance Mechanisms:** Establish accessible and transparent grievance redressal mechanisms for villagers to address their concerns with local authorities.
- **Focus on Genuine Issues:** Address legitimate grievances raised by Naxalites, such as **land dispossession or environmental degradation**, through policy changes and legal reforms.

Conclusion

By upholding ethical principles, prioritizing immediate concerns, and implementing long-term strategies with a comprehensive policy framework sustainable peace and development can be realized in insurgency-affected districts like Dantewada.