



Mains Marathon

Day 38: With more and more insurgent groups joining peace talks with the government, the Northeast region is witnessing a drastic decline in insurgency in the last 5 to 6 years. Discuss the reasons for decline in insurgency in Northeast India. (250 Words)

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Approach / Explanation / Answer

- Introduce by stating about the decline of insurgency in northeast in the recent past.
- Discuss the historical reasons for insurgency in Northeast.
- Explain the reasons for decline in insurgency.
- Conclude suitably.

Answer:

According to a Home Ministry's data released in 2019 reveals that **insurgency in the Northeast region has been declining since 2014**. There are over a hundred ethnic groups in the Northeast. There is a strong sense of identity in each of these different communities. They want to retain this uniqueness in their political and social orientations as well. Insurgency is essentially rebellion against the political organization when the ethnic communities **feel that they are not properly represented**. There is a sense that their interests have been neglected, this gave rise to violent moments. Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (**KLO**), United Liberation Front of Asom (**ULFA**), National Democratic Front of Bodoland (**NDFB**), National Socialist Council of Nagaland - Khaplang (**NSCN-K**) etc., are some of the insurgency groups in Northeast.

Historical Reasons for Insurgency

- **Most of the states except Plains of Assam** were deliberately excluded from **mainstream government administration of Britishers** and categorized as excluded areas in **Government of India Act 1935** and the ethnic people were called backward tribes.
- **British deliberately** made them believe that **they were a British Crown Colony and not part of any province in India**. For example, Naga Hills was governed by Assam province but later on they were excluded and many of the parts of the administration were directly governed by the Chief Commissioner.
- **A sentiment was always propagated that more or less they are independent** so after independence the groups nursed the ambition of becoming an independent state. **Nagaland National Council was first to assert their Independence from India for nationhood**.

Reasons for decline in violence in the last few years

- **Cutting off external support:** Earlier the insurgent groups used to take refuge in countries adjoining the North East states. **The insurgents cannot survive and cannot function effectively until and unless they use the Bangladesh or Myanmar territories** and also get their supplies of weapons and ammunition from there. Improved security relationship with Myanmar and Bangladesh have cut off these supports.
- **Engagement in talks:** A lot of insurgent groups were engaged in talks due to which the violent incidents declined over the last few years. For example, **Naga talks** were going on from 1997 however in 2015 actual terms of agreement were negotiated and signed between the **National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM) and the Union government.**
- **Fatigue Factor:** The fatigue of continuous engagement of insurgents in conflicts has been building for years and thus the moments lost its intensity gradually. Local population got fed up with the violence going on for years and the popularity of the leaders of insurgent groups also declined with time.
- **Disagreements among insurgent groups:** Government forces and its intelligence units have been able to play one group against the other and dismantle the unity of insurgent groups. Splintered groups are comparatively small groups and don't have so much revenue and resources and hence have no other option other than coming to the negotiation table.

Way Forward

- **Enhancing Connectivity:** Comprehensive geographical connectivity is key to the development of Northeast states. For this transit arrangement to connect to Indian mainland through **Bangladesh and India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral highway** should be completed.
- **Continuing vigilance:** India should not lower its guard thinking insurgency has ended it should continue to be vigilant. The Centre and the state government should identify all the groups small and big and deal with them so that the insurgency doesn't spring up again.
- **Addressing people's aspirations:** There is a need to address the aspirations of the people by establishing continuous dialogues with them.
- **Ending corrupt nexus:** Election results in the North East have often been determined by which groups the political parties pay their allegiance to. Thus, the vicious cycle of corruption involving the state legislature and these underground groups should be ended.
- **Forward looking policy:** A structured counterinsurgency policy is needed in which all the factors should be considered by the government by consulting all the stakeholders to comprehensively deal with such insurgency in future.
- **Greater integration:** A sense of belongingness should be encouraged among the local population and a sense of pride should be inculcated in them for their contributions made to India such as the Kohima war during Indian freedom struggle.

The sense that political aspirations could be achieved through violence has to be continuously discouraged. For this the political empowerment of the Northeast States has to be done and the good governance should penetrate to the grass root levels.

Care should be taken that the aspirations of people should be fulfilled, bringing overall development of the region.

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