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After Maoism, The Next Battle Is for Adivasi Trust

THE HINDU

4 June 2026

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After Maoism, The Next Battle Is for Adivasi Trust

 **The Hindu**

4 June 2026

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EDITORIAL SUMMARY

Following India's declaration as **Maoist-free since March 2026** — after decades of Left Wing Extremism in the Red Corridor — *The Hindu* argues that military and police success against the CPI (Maoist) insurgency has not resolved its root causes. The editorial distinguishes between “**negative peace**” (absence of armed conflict) and “**positive peace**” (presence of justice, inclusion, and rights) and warns that without the latter, the conditions for re-emergence of extremism remain.

BACKGROUND: THE MAOIST INSURGENCY AND ITS DECLINE

The **Naxalite-Maoist insurgency** has been active in India's central and eastern tribal belt since the 1960s, with its most intense phase in the 2000s–2010s across the **Red Corridor** covering Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Maharashtra, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh.

Why Adivasis Joined the Maoist Movement

- 1 **Land alienation** — large-scale displacement by mining and dam projects without consent or fair compensation
- 2 **Forest rights denial** — forests officially classified as government land; adivasis criminalised for collecting forest produce
- 3 **Lack of governance** — absence of schools, hospitals, roads, and courts in remote tribal areas
- 4 **PESA non-implementation** — Panchayati Raj Extension to Scheduled Areas (1996) required self-governance through gram sabhas, but states routinely bypassed gram sabha consent for land acquisition

THE DECLARATION AND ITS LIMITS

India's declaration of being **Maoist-free** refers to the absence of CPI (Maoist) as an effective armed force — primarily due to:

- Elimination of top CPI(M) leadership in security operations (Bastar, 2024–25)
- Surrender of ~1,500 cadres over 2023–25 under state **rehabilitation** schemes
- Breakdown of supply and communication networks in Bastar forests

However, the editorial argues:

- **Security success ≠ development delivery** — roads, schools, hospitals have not reached interior villages
- **Gram Sabha rights under PESA** — states like Chhattisgarh have not enacted conforming PESA rules in full
- **Mining pressures continue** — Bastar’s iron ore, coal, and bauxite deposits are under intense commercial pressure; displacement concerns persist
- **Rehabilitation is incomplete** — surrendered cadres face social stigma and lack economic opportunity

PESA 1996 — KEY PROVISIONS AND GAPS

PROVISION	WHAT IT REQUIRES	REALITY
Gram Sabha consent	Required before any land acquisition or mining in Fifth Schedule areas	Often bypassed or manipulated
Community forest rights	Gram Sabha to manage minor forest produce	States have granted individual rights but limited community rights
Money-lending regulation	Gram Sabha authority over usurious lending	Largely unimplemented
Minor minerals	Gram Sabha to give recommendations for minor mineral leases	Revenue departments routinely ignore
Self-governance	Habitation-level gram sabhas as units	Most states use revenue village as unit (larger, more diluted)

The editorial’s core argument: PESA implementation is the litmus test of whether India treats Adivasi trust-building as a priority or an afterthought.

WHAT POSITIVE PEACE REQUIRES

- 1 **Full PESA rule enactment** — all Fifth Schedule states must pass PESA-conforming rules; Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh have dragged their feet
- 2 **Forest Rights Act implementation** — community forest resource rights (CFR), not just individual pattas
- 3 **Consultative infrastructure projects** — Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) for all projects in tribal areas
- 4 **Accountability for security excesses** — documented cases of civilian casualties in anti-Maoist operations need independent inquiry
- 5 **Economic inclusion** — tribal cooperatives, NTFP (non-timber forest produce) value chains, SHGs

UPSC RELEVANCE

Prelims

- PESA enacted: **1996** (Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act)
- Fifth Schedule: Protects tribal areas in 10 states
- India declared Maoist-free: **as of March 2026**
- Red Corridor states: Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Maharashtra, Telangana, AP
- FRA (Forest Rights Act): **2006**

Mains Angles

- 1 **GS2 — Tribal Rights and Governance:** Critically analyse the implementation of PESA in Fifth Schedule states. What structural reforms are needed for meaningful tribal self-governance?
- 2 **GS3 — Internal Security:** Examine the relationship between development deficits and Left Wing Extremism. Was India's anti-Maoist strategy overly securitised?
- 3 **GS2 — Social Justice:** Distinguish between negative peace and positive peace in the context of post-conflict tribal areas. What does sustainable peace require beyond security operations?

FACTS CORNER

FACT	DETAIL
India declared Maoist-free	Since March 2026
PESA enacted	1996
FRA enacted	2006
Fifth Schedule states (10)	Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, HP, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, MP, Odisha, Rajasthan, Telangana
Key demand	PESA gram sabha consent for land/mining
Core editorial argument	Negative peace (no guns) ≠ Positive peace (rights + justice)

Source: After Maoism, The Next Battle Is for Adivasi Trust — Ujyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Editorial Analysis

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