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From Negative Peace to Positive Peace in Bastar

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From Negative Peace to Positive Peace in Bastar


The Indian Express 16 June 2026 **GS3**

Source: ujjyari.com — researched, fact-checked & UPSC-mapped



INTERVIEW ANGLE

"When an insurgency ends militarily, what is the difference between a region that is quiet and a region that is genuinely at peace?"

Source: [Original editorial](#)  [The Indian Express](#)


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WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

India's **Maoist-free declaration (March 31, 2026)** and the wave of surrenders that followed have transformed the security picture in **Bastar**. For an aspirant, this is a GS3 internal-security case, best read through **Johan Galtung's negative and positive peace** framework, which separates the absence of conflict from the presence of justice.

THE CRUX IN 60 WORDS

After the **Maoist-free declaration** and mass surrenders, Bastar has **negative peace**, the absence of armed conflict. But the grievances that fed the **insurgency** (<https://ujjyari.com/vocab/insurgency/>), **land alienation**, **displacement**, **denied forest rights and weak services**, persist. Lasting **positive peace** needs justice, inclusion, equitable (<https://ujjyari.com/vocab/equitable/>) governance and community participation. Security clears the ground; only justice makes the quiet durable.

THE ISSUE, DECODED

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ELEMENT	WHAT IT IS	WHY IT MATTERS
Negative peace	Absence of direct violence	What the declaration has achieved
Positive peace	Presence of justice, no structural violence	The durable goal still to be built
Structural violence	Embedded inequality and deprivation	The root that fed the insurgency
Community participation	Local agency in governance	Prevents peace imposed from outside

THE ANALYSIS: WHY THE GUNS FALLING SILENT IS NOT THE END

- 1 **Galtung's distinction.** Negative peace is the mere absence of violence; positive peace requires justice and the removal of structural inequality.
- 2 **Grievances persist.** Land alienation, displacement, incomplete forest rights and weak service delivery remain even after the fighters surrender.
- 3 **The vacuum risk.** If development does not follow security, the space can be refilled by alienation and unrest.
- 4 **Consolidation** (<https://ujjiyari.com/vocab/consolidation/>) **is developmental.** Rights enforcement, services and accountability convert a security win into a lasting peace.

DATA AND INSTITUTIONS VAULT

Johan Galtung, peace scholar, who distinguished **negative peace** (absence of direct violence) from **positive peace** (presence of justice, absence of structural violence). **Milestone:** India's declaration that the country is **Maoist-free (March 31, 2026)**, with mass surrenders in the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh. **Rights frameworks:** **Forest Rights Act, 2006**; **PESA, 1996** (Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas); **Fifth Schedule** (<https://ujjiyari.com/terms/fifth-schedule/>) governance. **Concepts:** structural violence, left-wing extremism, development deficit, hearts-and-minds approach.

THE DEBATE

Argument for the security-first view: Restoring the writ of the state and basic security is the decisive achievement, and development will follow once violence ends.

Argument for the structural view: Military success without justice leaves the root grievances intact, so the same vacuum can be refilled if rights and services do not follow.

The balanced verdict: Security is necessary but not sufficient. The end of conflict is a real gain, but lasting peace depends on enforcing rights, delivering development and including communities in governance.

HOW TO THINK ABOUT THIS (TRANSFERABLE SKILL)

After any conflict ends, ask whether the achievement is the absence of violence or the presence of justice. The two are different, and durable stability requires the second. Use the negative-versus-positive-peace lens to judge whether a settlement addresses symptoms or root causes.

DIAGRAM-IN-WORDS

Maoist-free declaration + surrenders -> negative peace (no violence) -> but structural grievances remain -> rights + development + participation -> positive peace (justice present) -> durable stability

THE WAY FORWARD

- 1 **Enforce rights.** Implement the Forest Rights Act and PESA so land and forest grievances are addressed.
- 2 **Deliver development.** Provide health, education, connectivity and livelihoods across the region.
- 3 **Ensure justice.** Hold accountable past abuses on all sides to build trust.
- 4 **Build participation.** Make governance community-led, not imposed from outside.

THE TAKEAWAY BOX

*Internal security in Bastar through the negative-versus-positive-peace framework and the development-rights link. **Lift line:** "Security clears the ground; justice makes the quiet durable." **Prelims hooks:** Johan Galtung; negative and positive peace; Forest Rights Act 2006; PESA 1996; Fifth Schedule.*

Ethics/Interview angle: The state's duty, after a military victory, to deliver justice rather than merely impose order. **PYQ linkage:** UPSC has asked on left-wing extremism, the development deficit in affected areas, and the role of rights. **Connects to:** Tribal rights, mining and displacement, Fifth Schedule governance, post-conflict reconstruction.

Sources: *Indian Express* (<https://indianexpress.com/section/opinion/>), *PIB* (<https://pib.gov.in/>)

Source: From Negative Peace to Positive Peace in Bastar — Ujyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Editorial Analysis

KEY ARGUMENTS AT A GLANCE

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With India's Maoist-free declaration and mass surrenders, Bastar has achieved negative peace, the absence of armed conflict, but lasting positive peace requires justice, inclusion, equitable governance and community participation to address the structural conditions that fed the insurgency.

 **SUPPORTING**

- Johan Galtung's distinction holds that negative peace is merely the absence of direct violence, while positive peace is the presence of justice and the removal of structural violence.
- The grievances that fuelled the Maoist movement, land alienation, displacement, denial of forest rights and weak service delivery, persist even after the guns fall silent.
- Surrenders and security gains must be consolidated through development, rights enforcement and local participation, or the vacuum can be refilled.

 **COUNTER**

Some argue that restoring the writ of the state and basic security is the decisive achievement, and that development will follow naturally once the violence ends.

 **WAY FORWARD**

Implement forest and land rights, deliver health, education and connectivity, ensure justice for past abuses, and build genuine community participation in governance to convert negative peace into positive peace.


MAINS ANSWER FRAMEWORK

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QUESTION

"The end of armed conflict in Bastar is necessary but not sufficient for lasting peace." Examine using the framework of negative and positive peace. (250 words)

INTRODUCTION

The silencing of guns in Bastar is a real achievement. Whether it becomes a lasting peace depends on what fills the space the conflict leaves behind.

BODY

Johan Galtung drew a distinction that is exactly suited to Bastar. Negative peace is the absence of direct violence; positive peace is the presence of justice and the absence of structural violence, the embedded inequalities and deprivations that make conflict likely.

India's declaration that the region is Maoist-free, accompanied by mass surrenders, marks the achievement of negative peace. That matters: ordinary people in Bastar have endured decades of violence from both the insurgency and the response to it, and the end of armed conflict is a genuine relief.

But the conditions that gave the movement its foothold have not vanished with the fighters. Land alienation, displacement from development and mining projects, the slow and incomplete recognition of forest rights, and the long absence of health, education and connectivity were the structural grievances on which the insurgency fed.

If the state treats military success as the end of the story, the same vacuum can be refilled. The consolidation of peace therefore has to be developmental and rights-based: enforcing the Forest Rights Act and PESA, delivering services, ensuring accountability for past abuses on all sides, and building real community participation rather than governance imposed from outside.

Security clears the ground; justice and inclusion build on it.

CONCLUSION

Bastar has earned its quiet. The task now is to make that quiet durable by turning the absence of conflict into the presence of justice, the move from negative to positive peace.


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