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Q9

Case study. With a multipronged strategy of the Central and State Governments, the naxalite problem has been resolved to a large extent. However, there are a few pockets where it still persists. Rohit is posted as SP (Special Operations). He established an excellent intelligence network. Leading a contingent, he got a message that about ten hard core naxalites were hiding in a particular village. His team overpowered all the naxalites along with their automatic weapons. Meanwhile more than five hundred tribal women surrounded the village demanding immediate release of the insurgents. Two of those apprehended were hard core top insurgents with prize money of ten lakhs on their heads. If he did not release them, the situation could get out of control. (a) What are the options available with Rohit to cope with the situation? (b) What are the ethical dilemmas being faced by Rohit? (c) Which of the options, do you think, would be more appropriate for Rohit to adopt and why? (d) In the present situation, what are the extra precautionary measures to be taken by the police in dealing with women protesters?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2024 · GS IV · 20 marks · Ethics Case Studies

Case Studies on above issues.

Core demand of the question

- (a) List Rohit's options in full sentences after capturing ten naxalites amid 500 tribal women
- (b) Name dilemmas: law versus crowd, prize versus peace, women as shield, tribal trust
- (c) Pick hold-the-arrests with de-escalation and why
- (d) Extra precautions when the protesters are women

Revision summary

Rohit's options are full release, partial trade, forceful dispersal, patient extraction with dialogue, mediation, or freeze.

Dilemmas include law versus crowd safety, prize incentive, women used as a ring, and tribal trust versus past killings.

The justified course is to keep all ten, refuse a siege bargain, and de-escalate with women police, a local mediator and a planned corridor.

Firing into the ring would lose the district; release would teach that a crowd can open a jail.

- **Precautions:** **women in the first line**, no trophy video, medics, no collective punishment, watch for a second ambush.

Introduction

The **naxalite** map has **shrunk**, but **pockets remain**. Rohit, **SP (Special Operations)**, has just **overpowered ten hard-core cadres** and their **automatic weapons**. **Two** carry a **ten-lakh prize**. **More than five hundred tribal women** now **surround the village** and **demand release**. If he **does not release**, the crowd **may explode**. If he **does release**, the **State's word** and the **dead of earlier years** become a **joke**. This is **force, gender, tribe and law** in one afternoon.

Body

(a) Options available to Rohit

First, he can **release all ten** to **buy the road out**, which **saves his team today** and **returns rifles to the forest tomorrow**. **Second**, he can **release the eight** and **keep the two prize cadres**, a **bargain** that still **teaches the crowd that a siege works**. **Third**, he can **order a forceful dispersal** with **lathi and perhaps fire**, which may **open a corridor** and may **leave women dead** on a **success story**. **Fourth**, he can **hold the arrests**, **move the prisoners in a tight box** toward a **pre-planned LZ or road**, **call additional force to a perimeter** not **through the women**, **open a loudspeaker and a woman officer's channel**, and **wait the crowd's hunger and night** while **not humiliating anyone**. **Fifth**, he can **invite a trusted local mediator** - a **teacher, a priest, an elected tribal woman** - to **explain that the men will face a court, not a forest execution**. **Sixth**, he can **freeze**, which **hands the clock to the loudest**. The live options are **three, four and five**; **one and two** are **capitulation** dressed as **tribal sensitivity**.

(b) Ethical dilemmas

Duty to law (arrest of persons with **automatic weapons**) versus **duty to life** of **five hundred women and of his own constables**. **Unique role of SP (Special Operations)** versus **replaceable tactical pride**. **Prize money** as a **perverse incentive to hold at any human cost**. **Women as a human shield** - some **voluntary**, some **pushed by the party** - versus **seeing every woman as a combatant**. **Tribal historical wound** (CRPF camp, **fake encounter memory, lost land**) versus **the two prize men who may have killed a teacher**. **Transparency versus operational security**. **Gandhi's talisman** (the poorest woman in the ring) versus **Kautilya's need to not let a siege become constitution**. **Integrity of means**: a **secret release to look like an escape** would be a **lie**.

(c) Most appropriate option

The appropriate course is **to keep every arrested person in custody, not to fire into the ring, to extract along a prepared corridor with shield and patience, to put women police and a local woman interlocutor in front, to film the prisoners' safety** so a **rumour of torture** cannot **ignite the night**, and **to ask the District Magistrate to own the civil face** (food, a **promise of fair trial, no collective punishment of the village**). **Why**. Release **rewards the tactic** and **endangers the next patrol**. A **massacre of women** **loses the district for a decade** and **fails distinction**. **Patience plus lawful custody** honours **both the dead of the past and the living women who are not the rifles**. **Prize money** is **not a moral reason to kill**; it is a **reason not to trade**. **Aristotle's courage** is the **mean** between **rash fire** and **cowardly release**.

(d) Extra precautions with women protesters

Assume presence of children and pregnant women. Women police in the first line; male hands off except to prevent a weapon. No sexualised abuse, no filming of faces for trophy. Lathi only as last shield, not as a lesson. Water, shade, a medic. Do not cut the village's water as collective punishment. Loudspeaker in the local language. Watch for a second ambush using the crowd as cover. Body-worn cameras if they exist, for the police as much as for the crowd. Separate any armed male who infiltrates the ring. After extraction: no revenge search that burns a house; record injuries; let the DM hold a mahila sabha. International humanitarian **distinction** is not only a war law; it is why a republic does not win a village by breaking its women.

Flow diagram

Ten in custody -> Dilemma
 500 tribal women -> Dilemma
 Dilemma -> Keep arrests
 Dilemma -> No release no massacre
 Keep arrests -> Women police mediator corridor

Conclusion

Rohit should not trade the ten for a quiet road, and he should not clear the ring with fire. Hold the arrests, talk through women officers and a local mediator, extract with patience, and leave the village unpunished. The women are a crowd with a history, not a free-fire target.

Facts & figures

SP Special Operations

A police command tasked with armed left-wing extremism; the SP still remains bound by criminal procedure and human rights.

Prize money

A State bounty on named cadres; it is a tool of identification, not a licence to kill or to refuse de-escalation.

Human shield problem

A crowd, especially of women, may be mobilised to block extraction; ethics still forbids treating the crowd as combatants by default.

Distinction

The duty to separate those who fight from those who stand; a republic that skips this repeats the insurgent's contempt for civilians.

Women in the first line

A standard crowd-care practice: women police for women protesters, to reduce sexual violence and humiliation.

District Magistrate's civil face

The DM can promise fair trial and no village punishment; the SP should not try to be both the arresting officer and the only politician.

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