

AFSPA can become a deterrence for Act East policy. In light of recent events in the North East justify the demands for repeal of AFSPA.

Answer

Since coming to power in 2014, the Indian government under PM Narendra Modi has rebranded the **Look East Policy as the Act East Policy (AEP)**.

This policy shift seeks both to **bring structure to New Delhi's foreign policy** and to achieve its domestic **developmental goals specifically within India's North Eastern region**.

However, AFSPA can become a deterrence for Act East policy due to the following reasons

- **Violent protests** such as the recent one in Nagaland affects the **rule of law situation** and hampers **ease of doing business**.
- The Act provides the security personnel with **absolute powers without being accounted for**. This leads to various atrocities and **human rights violations** by the security agencies.
- AFSPA violates the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the Convention against Torture (India is a signatory, but it has not ratified it).
- **BP Jeevan Reddy** committee examining it in relation to the Northeast in 2005, and the **Veerappa Moily report of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission of 2007**, recommended that the **Act be repealed**.
- The reports of the **Justice Verma Committee (2013)** and the **Justice Hegde Commission (2013)** supported the need to address the abuses committed **under the AFSPA and end** the effective impunity enjoyed by security forces.
- The Supreme Court appointed Hegde Commission (2013) found that all seven deaths in the six cases it investigated were **extrajudicial executions**, and also said that the AFSPA was **widely abused** by security forces in Manipur.

Way Forward: Putting an end to AFSPA

- AFSPA **should be amended** to make it more **comprehensive**, with elaborate rules with respect to the **manner of investigations of alleged human rights violations** to reduce the possibility of it being abused.
- The **Army** should view human rights violations as the **biggest threat to its credibility** and its stellar record in fighting insurgencies over the last 62 years. It must **re-establish the credibility of its legal system to deal with the problem.**
- The Army should put in public domain **details of all court-martials held with respect to human rights violations.** It must sincerely carry out fresh investigations into all alleged cases of human rights violations in Manipur and elsewhere.
- Government should try to resolve the long running insurgency in North-eastern states **through dialogue with insurgent groups.**
- **Development deficit** in the North-east region is also said to be **major reason for insurgency**, Government thus should take urgent steps to create new avenues of growth through Industrialization and Infrastructural development.