

# MAINS MATRIX- Integrate Your Knowledge, Ace the Exam

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#### 1. The way forward on Katchatheevu, Palk Strait disputes

##### 1. Introduction & Historical Context

- India has a history of shaping regional diplomacy through:
  - Panchsheel principles
  - Non-Aligned Movement
  - SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation)
  - "Neighbourhood First Policy"
- This stance has generally promoted peace in South Asia.
- **Unresolved issues with Sri Lanka** challenge this:
  - Fisheries crisis in the Palk Strait
  - Sovereignty of Katchatheevu Island
- PM Modi's 2025 visit to Colombo revisited these issues, emphasizing a **"humane approach"** that balances livelihoods with conservation.

##### 2. The Core Problem: Livelihood vs. Conservation

- **The Conflict:** Centuries-old shared fishing grounds are now a zone of dispute.
- **Root Cause:** Indian vessels using **mechanical bottom trawling** in Sri Lankan waters.
  - Banned by Sri Lanka in 2017 for being destructive.
  - Damages coral beds, shrimp habitats, and depletes fish stocks.
- **Internal Conflict in Tamil Communities:**
  - **Trawler Operators:** Business interests pursuing profit.
  - **Artisanal Fishers:** Use traditional, sustainable methods but are forced into contested waters as trawlers deplete their near-shore resources.
- This is not just an international territorial clash but also an internal livelihood conflict.

### 3. Proposed Solutions for the Fisheries Issue

- **Differentiate** between artisanal fishers and trawler operators. Empathy should be for the former, not the latter.
  - **Dialogue & Quotas:** Indian and Sri Lankan fisher organizations should dialogue to work out:
    - Regulated access or quotas for Tamil Nadu's small fishers.
    - Limited fishing rights on specific days/seasons until India's fish stocks recover.
  - **Community Sensitization:**
    - Sri Lankan Tamil MPs and media should highlight the hardships of Northern Sri Lankan fishermen (e.g., lost decades of income during the civil war).
    - They should be portrayed as fellow victims, not aggressors.
    - Recall the compassion shown to Tamil refugees in Tamil Nadu during the conflict.
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### 4. Clarifying the Katchatheevu Issue

- **Myth:** Katchatheevu is the root of the fisheries dispute.
  - **Reality:**
    - It is a tiny, barren islet (less than 0.5 sq. mi.) with a church visited by Indian fishermen for a festival.
    - The **1974 India-Sri Lanka Maritime Boundary Treaty** placed it in Sri Lankan waters.
    - This treaty is **legally binding** under international law (pacta sunt servanda - agreements must be kept).
    - Unilateral repudiation would undermine the global order.
  - **Historical & Legal Basis:**
    - India weighed historical evidence and found Sri Lanka had a stronger claim (administrative control since Portuguese/Dutch rule and Jaffna kingdom).
    - **International Precedents:** The Minquiers and Ecrehos case (ICJ, 1953) and the Ram of Kutch Arbitration (1968) show sovereignty is awarded based on administrative control, not just historical claims.
  - **Key Conclusion:** Fishing rights are a **distinct matter** and are **not linked to sovereignty** over Katchatheevu.
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### 5. The Legal Concept of "Historic Waters"

- The Palk Strait is recognized as "**historic waters**" under both Indian and Sri Lankan law.
- In such waters, sovereign rights are stronger than in normal territorial seas.

- No "right of innocent passage" or third-state fishing rights without explicit consent.
- This was judicially recognized in India as early as 1904 (Annakumar Pilati vs Muthupayal And Ors.).
- India's 1974 acceptance of the boundary was legally consistent with this historic precedent.

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## 6. Models for Joint Cooperation & Management

- **UNCLOS Article 123** encourages cooperation in semi-enclosed seas like the Palk Bay.
- **Model:** The Baltic Sea Fisheries Convention (Latvia, Poland, EU) shares quotas to conserve resources.
- **Proposed Frameworks for India & Sri Lanka:**
  1. Equitable quotas for fishing days and catch.
  2. A **joint research station** on Katchatheevu for marine biologists to monitor resources and suggest sustainable practices.
  3. **Promote deep-sea fishing** in India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to reduce pressure on near-shore waters and illegal crossings.

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## 7. The Way Forward: A Multi-Level Approach

To be symbolic of cooperation, the issue requires:

1. **Government-to-Government Talks:** To retain trust and uphold treaty obligations.
2. **State/Provincial Engagement:** Involving Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka's Northern Provincial Council.
3. **Community Dialogue:** To encourage people-to-people empathy and overcome media distortions.

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## 8. Overall Conclusion

- India and Sri Lanka share deep cultural, religious, and kinship ties.
- **Fisheries Issue:** Requires fairness, prioritizing artisanal livelihoods and ecological sustainability.
- **Katchatheevu Issue:** Is legally settled and should not cloud the real resource management problem.
- The path forward is **collaboration:** a joint fisheries regime, investment in deep-sea fishing, and respect for historical legal agreements.
- The goal is to move from confrontation to cooperation, ensuring peace, prosperity, and mutual respect in South Asia.

**HOW TO USE IN UPSC MAINS**

## GS Paper II: Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice & International Relations

This is the most directly relevant paper.

- **B. International Relations: India and its Neighborhood**
  - **India-Sri Lanka Relations:** This is a classic case study for this topic.
  - **Challenges:** Use it to discuss challenges in India's "Neighbourhood First" policy – historical baggage, economic asymmetries, and domestic political pressures in both countries.
  - **Fisheries Dispute:** Exemplifies a non-traditional security issue affecting bilateral ties.
  - **Diplomatic Tools:** Show how dialogue, joint mechanisms, and adherence to international law (UNCLOS) are tools for conflict resolution.
- **Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests**
  - How domestic politics in Tamil Nadu (concern for fishermen) influences India's foreign policy towards Sri Lanka.
  - The role of populist rhetoric vs. quiet diplomacy in managing complex international issues.
- **Important Aspects of Governance**
  - **Implementation Gap:** The article mentions unimplemented government resolutions. This connects to the general problem of policy implementation in India.
  - **Inter-State Council/ Centre-State Relations:** The need for the Central government to coordinate with the Tamil Nadu government on a foreign policy issue that directly impacts the state.

## 2. To build roads is to build peace

### Core Thesis:

Roads in India's conflict-affected tribal regions are not just infrastructure; they are the physical manifestation of the state, crucial for establishing governance, displacing insurgent influence, and building lasting peace.

### 1. The Problem: Governance Vacuum & Extralegal Actors

- **Absence of State:** In remote tribal and Maoist-affected areas, formal state institutions are barely visible.
- **Filling the Void:** Insurgent groups (like Maoists/Naxalites) step in to create parallel governance systems.
  - **Examples:** Informal courts (jan adalats), taxation, rudimentary medical aid, and welfare activities.

- **Strategic Purpose:** These services are not charitable but strategic, aimed at gaining legitimacy and control, underpinned by the threat of violence.
- **Nature of Extralegal Governance:** It is often opaque, arbitrary, punitive, and lacks due process, accountability, or constitutional safeguards (e.g., summary punishments and executions).

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## 2. The Solution: Infrastructure as a Stabilizing Force

- **Roads as Emissaries:** A new road often marks the first tangible arrival of the state and formal governance.
- **Documented Benefits:** Research shows road development is strongly associated with:
  - Improved electricity access and employment opportunities.
  - A decline in crime and increased access to services.
  - Reclaiming governance from non-state actors.
- **International Perspective:** Studies show violence is consistently higher in poorly connected areas, highlighting that infrastructure is political, not just functional.

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## 3. The Contrast: Formal vs. Informal Governance

Formal State Institutions	Informal/Extralegal Systems
Operate within a framework of laws shaped by democratic consensus.	Operate without constitutional safeguards or democratic principles.
Are subject to electoral oversight, bureaucratic accountability, and legal restraint.	Are unaccountable and reflect entrenched power hierarchies (e.g., patriarchal norms).
Provide a system accountable to citizens (in principle) – the <b>rule of law</b> .	Lead to arbitrary practices like vigilante justice and collective punishment – <b>rule by fiat</b> .
Bring schools, police stations, clinics, and courts that offer structured services.	Provide services strategically but are underwritten by coercion and violence.

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## 4. Important Caveats and Safeguards

- **Infrastructure Alone is Not Enough:** Roads can become symbols of control and repression if not accompanied by institutional safeguards.
- **Essential Safeguards:**
  - Justice mechanisms and access to healthcare.

- **Community consultation and participation:** "A road should not simply be laid through a village but built with the village."
- **Addressing Other Informal Norms:** Development must also challenge exclusionary local norms (e.g., khap panchayats, caste councils) that enforce rigid social codes through shame or violence.
- **The Ultimate Goal:** To integrate **pluralistic, rights-based governance** rooted in India's constitutional values, not just to replace insurgent authority.

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## 5. Conclusion & Key Message

- Road development is a critical first step in a broader effort to extend justice, dignity, and opportunity.
- The physical presence of the state via infrastructure signals that "the state has come in, and is here to stay."
- The ultimate goal is not merely movement but **belonging**.
- **Therefore, to build roads is to build peace.**

## HOW TO USE IN UPSC MAINS

### GS Paper III: Internal Security & Disaster Management

This is the most direct and high-value application.

- **Linkages between development and spread of extremism:**
  - This is the **core** of the article. Use it to explain the "grassroots" strategy of Maoists—how they fill the "**governance vacuum**" by setting up parallel administrations (jan adalats, taxation).
  - **Answer Structure:**
    - **Problem:** State absence → Maoists provide basic governance → gain legitimacy.
    - **Solution:** Roads are the first physical symbol of the state, enabling the formal justice system, police, and administration to reach these areas.
    - **Example:** Cite the documented benefits mentioned (decline in crime, improved access to services).
- **Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security:**
  - While focused on non-state actors (Maoists), you can use the article's framework to discuss how their influence is a direct result of the state's absence.
- **Challenges in Internal Security:**
  - Use the "Formal vs. Informal Governance" table as a brilliant comparative tool to argue why the state's system, despite its flaws, is superior to extralegal rule. This shows deep analytical ability.

- **Security forces and their role in border management and internal security:**
    - Roads are **force multipliers** for security agencies. They enable faster mobilization, logistics, and access, reducing the tactical advantage of insurgents in difficult terrain.
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## 2. GS Paper II: Governance, Constitution, Polity

- **Welfare Schemes for vulnerable sections:**
  - Discuss how the lack of infrastructure (like roads) is the biggest bottleneck in the delivery of government schemes (health, education, PDS) to remote tribal populations.



**MENTORA IAS**

**“YOUR SUCCESS, OUR COMMITMENT”**