

# NAZARIYA

## Land Struggles in India

### HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

GREEN REVOLUTION:  
IMPERIALISM'S NEW LEASE OF  
LIFE

WOMEN IN LAND STRUGGLES:  
HOLDING UP HALF THE SKY

BOGUS LAND REFORMS AND  
FEUDALISM'S OFFENSIVE

### POLEMICS

SAMIR AMIN'S CARDINAL SINS  
AGAINST THE TOILING MASSES

UTSA PATNAIK AND THE FEAR  
OF MAKING THE CALL FOR  
REVOLUTION

### PRESENT SITUATION

DEVELOPMENT OF  
PRODUCTIVE FORCES IN INDIA

UNCHANGING CHANGE:  
LOANS AND CREDIT IN  
AGRICULTURE

BRAHMANISM'S CHAINS ON  
THE LAND STRUGGLE

MAALIKANA HAQ: BONDAGE  
IN AGRARIAN RELATIONS


## ISSUE EDITORS

*Ramnit Kaur*  
*Shriram Rishi*

## TEAM

*Val Varshri*  
*Devika Menon*  
*Nishant Anand*  
*Aditi Kumar*  
*Mukundan*

## CONTACT US

 +918800424105,  
+919999945765

 [nazariyamagazine@protonomail.com](mailto:nazariyamagazine@protonomail.com),  
[nazariyakalka@gmail.com](mailto:nazariyakalka@gmail.com)

 @nazariyamagazine

 @nazariyamagazine

 @nazariyamagazine

 <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100087619034383>

To contribute to Nazariya Magazine, use



UPI ID: shriramrishi@okicici

FOR PRIVATE  
CIRCULATION ONLY

Minimum Contribution Rs.  
40/-

# INSIDE

<i>Editorial Note.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Brahmanism's Chains on the Land Struggle.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Women in Land Struggles: Holding Up Half the Sky....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Maalikana Haq: Bondage in Agrarian Relations.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Green Revolution: Imperialism's New Lease of Life.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Bogus Land Reform and Feudalism's Offensive.....</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>Development of Productive Forces in India.....</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Unchanging Change: Loans and Credit in Agriculture... </i>	<i>52</i>
<i>Samir Amin's Cardinal Sins Against Toiling Masses.....</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>Utsa Patnaik and the Fear of Making the Call for Revolution.....</i>	<i>67</i>



## EDITORIAL NOTE

Dear Reader,

It is well worth remembering the historic Kisan Andolan of 2020-21 as we move ahead with this issue on land struggles in India. We understand that many of our readers may feel that the issue of land and agrarian struggles are not issues pertinent to their lives. This feeling is precisely what we want to argue against. While the Kisan Andolan directly had little to do with the land issues in India, the general crisis of agriculture and the peasantry can very well be understood by evaluating the various historic struggles for land in India. In our first issue, we dealt with the subject matter of imperialism and its role in Indian society, be it urban, rural, social, political, cultural and economic. But Indian society's woes can only be partially explained through a serious scientific evaluation of imperialism.

For the pro-people and democratic-minded person who wishes to understand and deal with the issues within Indian society, this observation then brings us to the theme, that of the land question in India. Majority of Indian peoples are engaged in agriculture and its related activities, India is predominantly an agrarian society. The old stories of oppressive zamindars and their brutalities towards landless peasantry, the sharp caste dynamics within these relations, for the urban reader such subject matters have systematically been reduced to history books and films. This issue is an attempt to combat the idea that the feudal relations prevalent in agrarian society have somehow disappeared. Instead, we centre our issue on the history and the present situation of the people's struggle for land in India. Through this issue, we attempt to throw light on how the so-called Indian modernity is veiling the same-old brutalities, oppressions and exploitations of the feudal past. We write of mythical babas and dharmgurus

who become landlords in the new rural reality, of the state agents who grab land directly through law and dispossess the poor farmer and we write of struggles of the women, Dalits, Adivasis, landless peasants, the barely-surviving landed peasants and countless others who partake in the fight to gain ownership of land for their basic subsistence and democratic rights. As the past and present coalesce in our writings, we hope to highlight the essential need of the land struggle in democratizing Indian society.

One may ask, why the struggle for land in particular? Why the question of land to the tiller, of land to the landless? No society can transform into a democratic one without shattering the old system that it wishes to replace. India's old society, premised on zamindari and colonization, required radical breakdown of the old land ownership system for the Indian farmer to be brought to a democratic reality. Yet, as per the government's own findings, 5% of the Indian landlords hold an astonishing 32% of land within their own hands. All of this without including the fact that most landlords name their lands after their wives and daughters. Without empowering the impoverished and landless farmer through land redistribution, the institutions of caste, patriarchy and feudalism itself will continue to perpetuate within Indian society, hindering its democratic development.

It is with this understanding that we bring to you this issue. The slogan of land to the tiller is a fundamental demand for all democratic-minded people. We talk not only of the oppression and exploitation of people but the valiant struggle they wage for their democratic rights. We hope that this spirit also takes hold of you, dear reader, that you bridge the gap between city and village to partake in people's struggles.

# BRAHMANISM'S CHAINS ON THE LAND STRUGGLE

by Samyuktha Kannan

**The enduring impact of the caste system in India, which aims to enforce predetermined social positions, continues to cause significant disruption in present times. Caste acts as both a base and a superstructure because it plays a pivotal role in shaping both the modes of production and the distribution of power.**

The degree of influence caste exerts in the superstructure is contingent upon its strong organization at the base. In India, it is evident that every institution is intricately woven into the fabric of caste's control over social and economic relationships. Its far-reaching effects are particularly evident in the governance and understanding of land relations in India. In contemporary India, the caste system persistently intervenes in the transfer of land, orchestrating, subverting, or energizing processes of social conflict, and influencing the manner in which land claims contribute to the restructuring or reimagining of caste identities.



It is in this light that certain instances of brutal violence against people of the 'lower caste' can be contextualised. The Khairlanji massacre, which occurred on September 29, 2006, in the village of Khairlanji, Maharashtra, was a brutal caste-based attack on the Bhotmange family, who belonged to the Dalit community.

Around 40 individuals, mostly from the dominant Kunbi caste launched the assault which resulted in the

tragic deaths of four family members, including two women. However, it is not only the act but also the motive behind this unfortunate event that underlines the propertied nature of caste relations in India. The Bhotmanges owned a small piece of land that some members of the Kunbi caste coveted. The simmering tension over the land ownership escalated into a violent confrontation, resulting in the horrific massacre of the Bhotmange family. The motive behind the attack was deeply rooted in caste-based discrimination and the struggle for control over land resources. A similar nature of violence was meted out in the Kilvenmani massacre which unfolded on December 25, 1968, in the village of Kilvenmani, Tamil Nadu. There was a brutal assault on landless agricultural laborers who were demanding fair wages and improved conditions. Armed landlords and their associates set fire to the laborers' huts, claiming the lives of 44 men, women, and children. This not only exposed the deep-rooted caste-based oppression and exploitation in rural India, it also ignited national outrage.

The intricate interplay between land relations in India and caste-based power dynamics has bolstered the endurance of Brahmanical hegemony. The Brahmin caste, historically wielding substantial authority, has predominantly controlled land ownership, enjoying exclusive access to agricultural resources and mastery over land distribution. Consequently, this has perpetuated socio-economic inequalities by systematically

marginalizing and dispossessing lower castes, particularly Dalits and other marginalized communities. Brahmanism as an ideology, in itself, asserts violence against Dalits. The Karamchedu massacre, that occurred on July 17, 1985, in the village of Karamchedu in Andhra Pradesh, was another instance of caste based discrimination meted out by members of the dominant caste against Dalit community members who sought to assert their rights by demanding an increase in wages for their labour.

### **Historical Dispossession of the Lands of Dalits and Adivasis**

It is exactly these instances of caste-based violence against demands of poor and the landless Dalit peasantry that ensure that land struggles do not materialize as a matter of right. They also bring to the fore the historical dispossession of the land of Dalits and Adivasi. This is a deeply entrenched issue that has its roots in colonial rule and subsequent socio-economic structures. Historical land dispossession of Adivasis and Dalits in India is a consequence of the capitalist mode of production and the exploitative relations of power inherent within it. The accumulation of capital is driven by the exploitation of labour and the expropriation of natural resources, including land. In the context of Adivasis and Dalits, historical land dispossession can be seen as a result of the capitalist class's drive for profit and the establishment of private property rights. Here, there must be an emphasis on the role of the state

as an instrument of class domination. In the case of land dispossession, the state has often served the interests of the capitalist ruling class, facilitating land transfers and enforcing policies that favour the dominant economic elites. The state's involvement in resource extraction projects, infrastructure development, and land acquisition for commercial purposes further reinforces the interests of capital over the rights of the Dalits and Adivasis. According to the Manusmriti, the Shudras were historically denied property rights. This resulted, for example, in regulations that prohibited Dalits from purchasing agricultural land in regions like Punjab prior to the enactment of the Land Ceiling Act.

### **Caste Violence Materialising against Women**

Apart from this manifestation, caste violence also materialises against women in the most brutal of ways. From the gangrape and assault of the Surekha and Priyanka Bhotmange in the Khairlanji murders and the rape of three Dalit women in the Karamchedu violence to the Hathras rape case in 2020, these cases cannot be seen as mere sexual crimes when there is an aspect of historical caste-based discrimination attached to it. The 'subservience' of women has been clearly laid down in the Manusmriti. The constant emphasis on 'faithfulness', 'perfection', 'beauty' of women makes the Manusmriti not only inherently misogynistic, but also a kind of guide that a 'Good woman' and 'Good

Wife' should follow. The text propagates the idea that women should have no freedom and are thus the properties of men. This not only dehumanises them, but it also makes sure that women never get the right to hold property by themselves. In this context we can see how the Manusmriti looks at both Dalits and women as persons who cannot own property or deviate from any roles that were defined for them.

### **Nexus with Comprador Bourgeoisie**

Imperialism in India led to moribund capitalism that did not have any progressive nature and had allied with feudalism to sustain itself. In fact, the British themselves often acted as landlords. When they entered India, they were given zamindari rights by the Mughals and other local rulers across India. The merchants, Banias and Diwans had helped the Britishers expand their control and depose rulers like the Nawab of Bengal and Mysore state. This led to them increasing their wealth. The wealth was used to purchase landlord rights. The Indian landlords and the Brahmins acted as the agents of imperialism and propagators of imperial culture. The system placed the landlords as servants of British interests. The feudal zamindars were used to collect land revenue for the British. The ownership of the land was provided to the zamindars and in turn the zamindars would collect revenue from the tenants and a fixed sum would be transferred. Feudalism was introduced in areas like the

Santhal Parganas, where the landlords acted as intermediaries of the British, making the Santhals bonded labourers so that they could increase exploitation. Indigo cultivation which would not create any food for the Indians, but would create profits for the Britishers, was given an impetus by the landlords. The British were able to amass vast amounts of profits by engaging inn stocking businesses with semi-feudal character extracted by force and fraud. The landlords brutally exploited to ensure that their masters, the Britishers, gained great profits. Another example of this nexus can be seen in Travancore where the landlords used to sell Dalit Pulayas and give them on loan to the British estate owners who ran cash crop plantations. The feudal princely states made it easier for the British to set up their plantations, giving them land for cheaper prices. The role of landlords as agents of imperialism continued after the transfer of power in 1947. The landlords would help in expansion of imperialist capital which was happening through the intermediaries of imperialism, the comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie class. The comprador bourgeoisie is dependent on foreign capital for its survival and helps in the expansion of foreign capital. In Chhattisgarh, to help this expansion, militias were set up under the landlord class in the form of Salwa Judum, which arm-twisted Adivasis to leave the villages and committed genocide so that the land can be used for exploitation.

The ideology of Brahminism has become a tool of imperialist exploitation. The soft Brahminism of Congress under Mohandas Gandhi, ensured that revolutionary movements were defanged to aid collaboration with the British imperialist. The Congress was not anti-imperialist in nature and was trying to ensure transfer of power to compradors who are the agents of imperialism. Similarly, the Hindutva fascist ideology of RSS also ensured subservience to British colonial rulers. Savarkar glorified colonialism by saying that the glory of the British empire is great. Golwalkar had openly expressed his disdain for national independence. The ideological nature of Brahminism being idealistic in nature also helps in the sustenance of imperialism. Its anti-scientific nature and the idea that the study of the material world wouldn't lead to moksha leads to no independent development of technology in India. It leads to dependence of technology from imperialist capital. Brahminism has also been serving the interests of imperialism by providing an ideological framework for the emergence of a market across the Indian subcontinent. The Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram is a program to reinforce Brahminism, co-opt Adivasi traditions into Brahminism and bring Adivasi tradition into the Brahminical fold. Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram spreads Brahminical practices in the Adivasi areas. These Ashrams would have classes with religious practices like the Saraswati vandana and Gayatri mantra. It is



mandated that the children offer salutations to Bharat Mata. Iconography is used to create a sense of common history. Syama Prasad Mukherjee, Deen Dyal Upadhyay, Rana Prathap and Lord Ram who have nothing to do with Adivasi history are being cultivated as the icons of Adivasis. Alongside this, the 'divine status' of cows is being taught to children. Such Brahminical practices have not been prevalent among the Adivasis and are part of a religious order that devaluates the existence of Adivasis and Dalits through its caste system. Lord Ram is said to be the protector of Varnashram Dharma, a social system based on the exclusion of Adivasis. They are trying to feed the idea that Adivasis are part of the Hindu religion, the same religion that justifies the marginalisation of Adivasis. They are also trying to spread this idea of Hindutva cultural nationalism among the national minorities in India like the Nagas. Hindutva glorifies Rani Gaidenliu as a national icon of this cultural Hindutva nationalism. They have tried to create a section of 'Hindu' Nagas who follow Rani Gaidenliu as being part of the same cultural identity. Similarly, Lachit Borphukan has been portrayed as a 'Hindu' leader who was fighting against the Mughal invasion. Here, we can see an attempt to cultivate a fake cultural identity of a 'Hindu', to integrate the nationalities and communities who have been marginalised historically by the same 'Hindu' Sanatana Dharma. This provides legitimacy to the ruling class' claim over the jal,

jangeel and zameen of such communities. This integration leads to a common market for the comprador bourgeoisie which serves imperialism. Thus, Brahminism and the Hindu cultural identity serves the interests of imperialism and attempts to give ideological legitimacy for the exploitation of the land by foreign powers through their intermediaries, the comprador bourgeoisie.

### **Godmen as the Neo Landlords**

Land grants system started during the Satvahana Age, when the kings started giving lands to Brahmins to expand their agrarian land and Brahmanical culture. Along with it, the Brahmanical religion was taking a new shape where the importance of Brahmins as middle men between gods and people was losing its relevance. The temple formation, idol worship and Bhakti movement gave a new turn in the emergence of a neo-Brahmin religion and temples turned as centres for new city formations. Temples started getting huge land grants from kings. Brahmins got settled in temples along with vintis (free bonded labor) to serve the priest and their lands. This whole process hardly hindered history. 12th century temple Shree Jagannath of Puri too is moving to digitize its land records and said that it possesses over 60,000 acres across seven states. In south, Tirupathli Balaji Trust has recently revealed that they are possessing 8800 acres of land all over India, including 1792 acres of agrarian lands. In the South, Tirupathli Balaji Trust has recently revealed that they

are possessing 8800 acres of land all over India, including 1792 acres of agrarian lands. In 2015, Lord Balaji opened his own DEMAT account to receive stocks and bonds. Temples as a new comprador, taking aids and purchasing shares from the companies.

### **Direct State Nexus With Temples**

The endowment bodies of these temples are private and have never revealed their account. Interestingly, thousands of temples are running under direct state control. A recent example is of Ayodhya Ram Mandir Trust, where an IAS has been appointed as trustee. This practice is very prominent in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. Through this way, the government has possessed massive land in this country, where a plethora of landless peasantry forcefully migrated towards the city as cheap labor. When we talk about state it's not just about the machinery which functions directly for the protection of the current dominating form of fascist state, but it includes all the superstructure elements to strengthen it. Recently, our magazine team visited villages of Sonipat, Haryana for a survey. We found that most of the Panchayati lands are being tilled by Jaat landlords. Dalits of the villages hardly get any land for cultivation. An interesting phenomenon was found in Rindhana village of Sonipat, where a Baba has occupied the chamar's Chaupal (common place for public gathering) and its land. The dominating Jaats have direct connections with babas

(godmen) and their agents. The unquestioned authority of god's men in the Indian society strengthens the superstructure of semi- feudal relations.

### **Godmen: Feudal Dominance Over Toiling People**

After the advent of the Bhakti movement in India, the importance of saints and godmen increased. After the transfer of power, the values and positions of god's men were never challenged in society and by the state. State has always been close to the babas because of its Brahmanical Hindutva character. Babas like Ramdev, Jaggi Bapu, Gurmit Baba Ram Rahim Singh Insaan and so on have emerged as new landlords of the country, where people are doing free wage labour in the name of *seva*. Brahmanism has hegemonized the idea of charity to get rid of all sins. So, they expanded the forms of *danas* (donations) particularly as *mulya dana* (money) and *shram dana* (labour). These feudal hurdles never give space to people to prepare for the struggle of their land rights. Passive idea of Brahmanism is based upon the individual karma and sins. The modern day babas are now becoming the life coaches of people, giving lessons to people on what they should do and what they should not. They perpetuate feudal ideology among people who come to them to deal with their sorrows. This serves the state structure to atomise and individualize the problems of the people. Nowadays, these godmen are the leading propagators of Hindu

Rashtra, preaching in the name of religious purity and propagating anti-Muslim attitude. People like Bagheshwar Baba have emerged as star campaigners for Hindu Rashtra. Because of a lack of democratic aspiration and scientific temperament, the toiling masses of India turn themselves against Muslims. India lagging behind on social and economic development is not a surprising phenomenon that came out of nowhere. State has always tried to protect their base through this semi-feudal structure and propagating the absurd reasoning of 'Gau-Mutra pranali'. This is the fault line where the Brahmanical Hindutva Fascist state reproduces itself.

### **Brahmanical Propaganda of Development Against Muslims**

We often see that people are saying that because of the Muslim population our country is economically weak. The debate of population and development is a historical debate between capitalism and socialism. But in the era of Brahmanical Hindutva Fascism, particular Muslim populations are being targeted to camouflage the dominance of monopoly capital and Comprador Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie. In India, Muslim are 15% of the total population of the country and hold only 11% of the country's land. Majority of the Muslim population (almost 65%) is self employed and lies in the semi-proletariat class. Destitution is at its high but the king is not ready to think

a bit. Muslims in India are at the verge of destruction, after the demolition drives started all over India, especially BJP governed states. Thousands of houses of Muslims have been razed by the state in the name of illegal construction. Muslims of Delhi, who have been living there since time immemorial, have been displaced forcefully. In Dwarka, Gujarat, the government has ordered to demolish the illegal construction of the area. One notice has been sent to the Lord Shankar Temple. The lord Shankar Temple was the only structure which survives after the whole demolition drive in Dwarka.

This forceful dispossession of Muslim population from their property will eventually support the Brahmanical state, which has been historically serving imperialism. Recent land data shows that net land holding of Muslims has reduced. The maximum land growth happened in the OBC community, who are the emerging neo-landlords in village areas. In an interview with a broker in Bihar, he said that most land is being purchased by Baniyas, money lenders, bureaucrats, politicians, Yadav and Kurmi communities. The historical landlords like Rajputs and Bhumiars have lost their land. But that does not mean their hegemony has reduced. This whole process of dispossession is strengthening the abled section of the society, which is the ruling class or aspiring ruling class -caste. Demolition of shops, redis, the targeted killing of Muslims in the name of Hindu Rashtra, all are in the interest of ruling class-caste of

of India who continue to oppress Dalits and the economically destitute for their narrow interests.

## Conclusion

Brahminism works as an ideology to maintain the existing exploitative conditions within India. The semi-feudal conditions of India are justified by this ideology. The Brahminical Manu Smriti had prescribed that Dalits should not have land and this in turn helped to ensure the survival of feudal hierarchy in India. The nature of the ideology is such that unity among the oppressed and exploited is restricted. The small peasant who lives in penury doesn't form class unity with the landless labourer although they both have to face feudal exploitation. Instead, the small peasant unites with the zamindar on the basis of caste identity. Similarly, through Brahminism, neo-landlords have emerged like the Godmen who were able to seize the land of the exploited sections. The state has also been using Brahminism as a tool to deny the Muslims in the country their land. Through demolition drives, they are able to acquire the land of Muslims. Brahminism also works to ensure the survival of imperialism within the country. Through the creation of a false Hindu identity, Brahminism has been attempting to integrate the different nationalities and marginalised communities of the country and seize their land for the sake of comprador capital. The historical role of Brahminism is very similar to that of Confucianism in

China before the revolution. It legitimised the semi-feudal nature of China and ensured the backwardness of the nation. This idealism of Confucianism was countered by the materialism of Marxism. This led to revolutionary struggle that ensured the progress of China. Similarly, in India it is essential that we counter the idealism of Brahminism through the materialism of Marxism to ensure the revolutionary liberation of the oppressed and exploited classes of this country.



## Bibliography:

1. "Simply Put: Gods Must Be Wealthy but How Wealthy Are They?," *Business Insider*, September 30, 2022.
2. Tewari, Ruhi. "85% of Rural Landowners Are Hindus; Muslims Account for Just over 11%: Report." *The Indian Express*, September 23, 2015.
3. Murali, K. *Critiquing Brahmanism: A Collection of Essays*. Paris: Foreign Languages Press, 2021.
4. NewIndianXpress. "Tirumala Temple Owns 8,088 Acres of Land in Country." *The New Indian Express*, November 29, 2020.
5. "Chitrakoot's Holy Men Have Private Armies, Guns and Land Worth Crores." *India Today*, November 2, 2012.
6. Ananth, V Krishna. "Uncovering Caste-Based Violence: The Khairlanji Massacre and the Story of Its Coverup." *The Polis Project*, October 29, 2021.
7. G, Ambica. "What Do We Know Today about the Keezhvenmani Massacre?" *Feminism in India*, December 27, 2019.
8. Sodadasi, Sharyl. "It Began with a Woman- a Massacre That Ignited a Dalit Movement." *Youth Ki Awaaz*, March 2023.
9. Swamy, Stan. "The Sad Story of Dispossession and Criminalisation of the Adivasis of Central India." *Sanhati*, August 10, 2010.
10. Macwan, Martin. "The Lay of the Land." *The Indian Express*, March 20, 2018.
11. TK, Smitha. "Manusmriti: The Problematic Guide to Being a 'good Woman' & 'Good Wife.'" *The Quint*, August 12, 2022.
12. Angad, Abhishek. "Hul Diwas: Remembering the Santal Rebellion against the British." *The Indian Express*, July 3, 2023.
13. (Ajith), Murali. *Bhoomi, Jathi Bhandanam*. Kochi, Kerala: Kanal Press.
14. Ghose, Dipankar. "Is the Salwa Judum Back?" *The Indian Express*, May 24, 2018.
15. Bhattacharya, Snigdhendru. "How One-Teacher Ekal Schools Helped the Spread of Hindutva in Rural West Bengal." *The Caravan*, October 10, 2020.
16. Longkumer, Arkotong. "The Many Lives of Rani Gaidinliu." *The India Forum*, April 8, 2022.

# WOMEN IN LAND STRUGGLES: HOLDING UP HALF THE SKY

by Ramnit Kaur



More than half a decade ago, the Naxalbari struggle began with the martyrdom of women. 11 people, out of which 8 were women (and 2 were suckling babies tied to their mother's back), were killed due to police firing on 25 May 1967. Hence, the struggle demanding for land to be given to the tillers, for an end to the oppression and exploitation of the landless peasants by the landlords who are working in nexus with the state structure, started with the active participation and sacrifices of women.

## Women's Role in Agricultural Production Relations

Women play an indispensable role in rural production relations. According to NITI Aayog, the workforce participation for rural women is 41.8%- 80% of these "economically active" women are employed in agricultural and allied activities, 33 percent constitute agricultural labour force and 48 percent are self-employed farmers. According to Oxfam (2013), around 80 per cent of farm work is undertaken by women in India. However, their recorded ownership in land is only 13%. It's also important to note that even this data may be exaggerated, as in reality, a lot of the recorded female ownership of land may actually be benami transactions where the

ownership actually lies with the men in the family. Whether as female agricultural labourers, farm widows or tenant farmers, women's participation in the relations of production in the agricultural sector is paramount. They not only work in the fields and engage in cattle rearing, animal husbandry, collection of fodder etc.; but they also often hold the sole responsibility for performing the unpaid domestic labour that runs the household. Women peasants from the families of landless agricultural labourers are also made to do domestic work in the landlord's house for negligible payment in kind. This exploitation of women labourers in what is a subtle form of begar was unearthed by Ajay Kumar in his investigation into production relations in Haryana. Household work is extracted from the agricultural labourer's family in what is basically a continuation of the jajmani system in that the labourer's entire family is considered to be attached to the land of the landlord.

### **Exploitation of Landless Women**

Women peasants face feudal exploitation by the landlords. They face economic exploitation in the expropriation of their labour power for the benefit of the landlords (the wages given to women agricultural labourers are also lower than the men's). They face sexual violence at the hands of the feudal landlords who are driven by their caste-based sense of entitlement to the lower-caste peasant woman's body. They also face domestic oppression in the form

of a double burden of labour in having to engage in domestic labour that runs the household, alongside the agricultural and related work, and because of patriarchal customs and practices.

Firstly, women peasants have to face domestic oppression in their households and communities, given the semi-feudal base of Indian society which reproduces brahmanical patriarchy. Women agricultural labourers, small and landless peasants not only participate in the productive relations in agriculture, but they also perform invaluable domestic labour such as cooking, cleaning, taking care of children etc. without any pay. Speaking of common forms of patriarchal oppression of women in tribal societies in Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, Amit Bhattacharya explains how despite the value of their labour in running the household, customs and traditions often demean women. Import of Brahmanical ideas of purity within these cultures has led to long-standing practices such as restriction of women from entering the main granaries of the household.

Domestic oppression of landless peasant women presents itself in practices followed during menstruation. Due to the import of Brahmanical ideas surrounding purity and pollution, women from landless, tribal, and poor families even in Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand were traditionally segregated, and forced to live in separate huts during menstruation.

They weren't even allowed to enter the main granaries to get foodgrains for themselves, the men handed over the grains to them. In some villages, such ideas of purity are intensified to the extent that once they attain puberty, women are not allowed to eat within the household until their marriage. They have to cook for themselves and cannot consume the food prepared for the family. Their eating practices are governed by superstitions- in Telangana, it is believed if women eat anything but the middle part of meat, the crop yield will suffer. Unscientific ideas are attached to women's diet- for example, an inability to give birth was linked to women eating eggs in Telangana. Feudal domestic customs also include the prevalence of child marriages and forced marriages of women.

Added to this, women also face brutal feudal oppression at the hands of the landlords. The most shocking of this is the widely prevalent sexual exploitation. Landlords, due to their caste-class nature, feel a feudal sense of entitlement to the lower-class, lower-caste peasant women's bodies. Once rape of a woman whose family is engaged in agricultural labour for the landlord occurs- she is left with no recourse- while the legal structures and state will already be biased to the landlord due to their class-caste nexus, the woman can't even approach them as the survival and income of the entire family depends on the little income derived from the landlord. The practice of the landlord raping landless women is

ritualised in many contexts. In Bihar, landlords have the right to "first night" with the newly married wives of the peasants employed in their land. This feudal practice legitimises the rape of women and asserts the caste superiority of the landlord by asserting his ownership over even the bodies of the women peasants. The husband and the families are left helpless and unable to protect the women of their families as their survival is entirely dependant on the landlord. Due to feudal notions of the worker being "attached to land", debt traps and lack of alternate sources of income, the peasant family does not even have the option of leaving this exploitative structure. In the tribal regions, Adivasi women face sexual exploitation at the hands of truckdrivers, businessmen and forest officials who are now taking over land that has belonged to the Adivasi communities for generations. The law enforcement forces are complicit in the rapes of Adivasi women. In fact, women who go to the police stations to seek help or are arrested and taken there due to their involvement in the land struggle, often face heinous sexual abuse by the police officers supposed to be there for the protection of the "citizen". Which "citizen" the police and army deployed in these tribal regions, such as Dandakaranya, seek to protect is very evident - they rape, kill and displace Adivasis from their generations-old forest land to create space for "development" that will only serve comprador-bourgeoisie interests.



Faced with such brutal feudal exploitation, and given their active role in production relations, it is to be expected that with the coming up of movements demanding an end to the feudal systems of land relations, women will be at the forefront.

### **Women's Historic Role in The Land Struggle**

The material conditions of landless women across India demand class struggle. The exploitation that these women are faced with is specific to their class nature and their status as non-owners of productive forces in the relations of production in villages. In Adivasi areas, this exploitation is directly related to the State's imperialist project of overtaking Adivasis land for comprador-bourgeoisie interests. The exploitation is linked to the caste-class position of these women- its cause lies in the economic base of society, the reason being that the production relations are organized in a semi-feudal, semi-colonial mode of production that relies on such exploitation for its survival. Thus, women's liberation in this context can only be achieved through class struggle. Women from across India have participated in the struggle for land in large numbers as this class struggle is the only way forward to achieving liberation from the feudal landlords and the imperialistic state.

Women in Srikakulam in 1958 displayed the power that women hold in the revolutionary struggle for land when they were attacked and fired

upon by a landlord's goons while on their way to a meeting. This started a movement that turned into an armed struggle for land rights- not only did women participate in the guerrilla movement against the landlord-state nexus, even ordinary women joined in with brooms to attack the police. This struggle arose after Adivasi land was taken over by landlords, they lost their right to shifting cultivation and were forced to become landless labourers. As equal participants in production relations, women had as much stake in the struggle for land as did men. In the struggle for land in Northern Telangana as well, women were equal participants.

Some land struggles specifically took up the exploitation of women. The movement for land in Bihar for example, took up the issue of the landlord's right to "first night" with the labouring peasant women- putting an end to the exploitative practice. In places such as Dandakaranya, the movement recognized the specific exploitation of women within their communities. The movement led campaigns to rectify this- incorporating cultural revolution as an essential part of their political struggle. This led to an end of superstitious practices such as women not being allowed to use bow and arrows or eat eggs.

### **Change in Women's Conditions Due to their Participation in These Struggles**

As is evident, a lot of the movements for land that involved women

simultaneously took up the specific gendered exploitation of women. This presented itself materially- in the Northern Telangana movement, parchas to the land were handed out equally to men and women, thus recognizing the equal role of women in production relations. Separate mass organizations of women, some with a revolutionary nature, such as Nari Mukti Sangh (NMS) in Jharkhand and Bihar, Adivasi Viplava Mahila Sangham in Andhra Pradesh, and KAMS in Telangana, came up. Some of these addressed specific cultural practices that were affecting women- for instance, in Jharkhand and Bihar, the NMS succeeded in bringing down child marriages, ending the landlord's "right of first night", and bringing down the practice of forced marriage and dowry. They even conducted inter-caste and inter-religious marriages as a progressive measure. They formed panchayats to address women's problems within the families.

In this way, the movement for land has affected positively not only the toiling women's ownership in land but has uplifted their position within their communities. It has battled gendered oppression while also battling feudal exploitation-as the two go hand-in-hand.

## Conclusion

The exploitation of landless women is class and caste- based. The liberation of women, hence, lies in class struggle and their liberation is



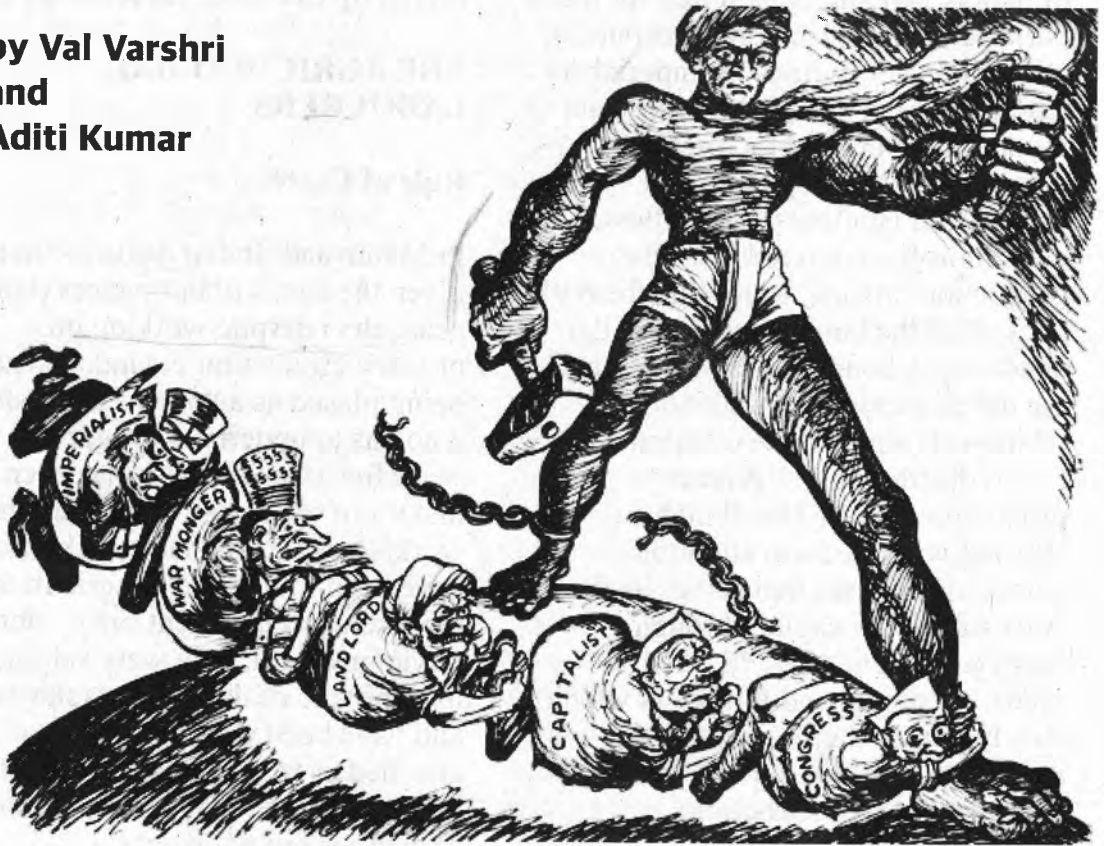
linked inextricably to the struggle for land. Women's liberation lies within the larger class struggle- with the struggle for democratizing the mode of production and transferring land to the tiller, alongside cultural revolution which is an essential part of the revolutionary movement- women will attain true liberation.

## Bibliography:

1. Anuradha, B. "Women's Liberation – Class Struggle – Naxalbari Path". *Towards a New Dawn*. <https://toanewdawn.in/womens-liberation-class-struggle-naxalbari-path-b-anuradha/>
2. Bhattacharya, Amit. *Storming the Gates of Heaven*. Setu Prakashani (2016)
3. Patel, Neelam, and Tanu Sethi. "Rural Women: Key to New India's Agrarian Revolution." *NITI Aayog*, March 2022.
4. Pachauri, Swasti. "The Invisibility of Gender in Indian Agriculture." *Down to Earth*, February 2019.

# MAALIKANA HAQ: BONDAGE IN AGRARIAN RELATIONS

by Val Varshri  
and  
Aditi Kumar



Whether it be the scorching sun on bare backs, or droplets of rain running down an overworked body, whether it be in sickness or health; the bonded labourer is shackled to their role of servitude. In agriculture, this situation is dire with NSO reporting that there are over 50% agricultural households which are in debt, with 2016-2021 seeing a rise in farm debt by 58%. It was further noted that the average outstanding loan per household was at Rs 74,121 in 2018-19 compared with Rs 47,000 in 2012-2013, the survey noted.

Agricultural debt is the leading cause of bondage in India, as these workers depend on credit for their mere

survival, and repayment for the same is crucial for availing a second loan, without which they will starve. In such a situation, the landless and poor peasantry is forced into servitude to please his master, and to ensure not only their own but their family's survival as one cycle of debt ends only to start a fresher, and heavier, vicious cycle.

This debt may be attributed to India's semi-feudal, semi-colonial nature which inhibits agricultural productivity. Under the influence of the ruling class of the feudal landlords and the comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie who exist in service to imperial capital and aim to

to advance its growth, the generation of national wealth is inhibited for the purpose of expropriation of resources and labour in servitude to imperialists in order for the dalaal classes to gain favour in the eyes of its foreign masters. Considering that most agricultural labourers are landless, even if profit is derived from the production process, it lines the heavy pockets of the landlord to whom the peasantry is bound. At the same time, the development of production relations is stunted due to colonial forces destroying indigenous productive forces. They build allyship with the rural and urban comprador classes that serves as the entry of foreign capital through imperialist technology like HYV seeds, pesticides and fertilizers which slowly poison the people's land, leading to soil degradation which further hampers productivity.

Due to not being able to generate enough surplus, combined with the rising cost of agricultural production, farmers do not have the minimum capital to invest in a second round of agricultural production, due to which they rely on loans. However, this cycle is repetitive with the farmer having to avail a fresh loan in each subsequent production cycle and therefore, labourers find themselves in a loop of an ambiguous, never ending debt. To be able to repay this debt farmers find themselves working in a bonded system in which they are being paid for their work in cash and kind, unable to move to better opportunities while facing violence based on caste and gender,

exuberated by the feudal relations driven by Brahmanical ideology.

## **THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS**

### **Role of Caste**

In Manuvaadi India, dalits are not given the status of cultivators (landed peasantry) despite working on primary production in land, instead being placed as a "partial cultivator" who has to undertake beggar i.e. work free of cost. There has been a history of oppressed caste sections working as bonded labour. Dalits have been in the role of agricultural labourers since ancient times- during Aryan invasion, they were subjugated into the role of dasa-dasya (slaves) and have been working as siris, attached or casual labour. Under the jajmani system, they were paid in cash crops but not wages.

Imperialism stunted the development of the artisans (guilds composed on castes lines due to its overlap with occupation) who were disfavoured from machines during industrialisation, thereby forcing them to work as agricultural labourers. Oppressed castes can also be found in jobs related to manual scavenging and hide related work along with agriculture; with landless, agricultural labourers belonging primarily to oppressed castes. In 2011, 71% of dalits were landless, agricultural labourers while only 29% were landed.

## **Role of Debt and Conditions of Work**

Due to feudal relations of production, agriculture is in debt. This may be traced to the fact that the landless peasantry (the oppressed castes) are reliant on rich landlords (upper caste sections) for credit, and to pay back their loans are forced to work as siris, or slaves in common parlance, thereby entrapping them in a caste-driven vicious cycle of indebtedness. Two classes of agricultural labourers are put to work- free labourers (khuli majdoori) and attached labourers (naukars).

The conditions of work for the naukars (usually a dalit) is a brutal form of bonded labour, with it being the last resort for the labourers. Naukars are those who tend to loan a lump-sum for a specific need, but are forced to keep borrowing money in order to meet their daily needs, usually through an informal contract for an "advance payment". Due to desperation, the naukars have to agree to unsecure terms of employment- it is at the whims and fantasies of the landlord to decide when and where the naukars are to work. Physical and verbal abuse is common. The wives of a Valmiki naukars are usually put to work in the households as domestic labourers. After being unable to accumulate profit, the naukars are given two options at the end of the debt cycle- continue working for the same landlord to repay the loan or borrow money from a second landlord. The end result is the same- entrapped as slaves caught up in a cycle of debt.

Khuli majdoori may be done either in urban or rural areas, wherein labourers agree to work at less than minimum wages in order to pay off their loans. However, what is astonishing is the role that semi-feudal relations play to stunt the growth of capital. Despite the Green Revolution ushering in the neoliberal age of economics and the weight of feudal social pressure, caste atrocities and difficulties of rural life, migration to cities is still low. This is because wages are more often than not paid in kind due to which labourers remain reliant on landlords for their day-to-day survival and are therefore stuck performing beggar.

## **Internal Migration and Bonded Labour**

The condition for migrant labourers is created by the duress in the feudal system. The peasantry is an indebted class, which means that the peasant is dependent on credit for their survival. Moreover, the wages earned through working in the cities is not enough, with studies showing how the goods procured by working under rich, landed peasantry is the main source of sustenance for large sections of the peasantry.

Nonetheless, the debt is paid back either through agricultural labour or through a contractor who puts the debtor to work in the cities in nexus with the creditor, or both. This situation, exacerbated by the feudal relations of the caste-class nexus in which caste networks play an

important role in India as contractors tend to pick labourers from the same caste, further solidified by familial nexus they have with the landlords so that the debt that is owed remains in the same family. This system takes form further with the predominance of early marriages and the joint family system, through which the woman is put to work to pay off debt in domestic work in either rural or urban areas. Due to this system of extra-economic coercion, bonded labour is a characteristic of migrant labourers as well. Therefore, there is a class of workers reliant on selling their free labour for survival who are called the semi-proletariat. This semi-proletariat forms a large chunk of migrant labour.

The semi-proletariat is in severe debt, but there are no jobs in the villages for them to avail. If they continue to stay in the villages, their families would perish with no source of income. Mounting debt and unemployment therefore creates a system of circular migration, in which there is fluid motion of people between the urban and rural areas as they move from one place to another in search of work. However, there are some families who settle in cities permanently- these are those peasants with no land, fully dependent on majdoori for survival (the proletariat, the worker).

As cities grow and industries rise, India's service-oriented economy demands cheap labour from rural areas. This cheap labour is readily available as middle/small and

landless peasants become migrants willing to take on any job at any rate, pressed into survival mode due to the crisis of agriculture. However, cities have been exclusionary for rural workers, with migration being of a circulatory nature as shown during the crisis of imperialism in the form of COVID-19 which saw large masses of people perish trying to return to their land.

However, there are two classes of semi-proletarians (those who own some means of production and are not totally dependent on selling their labour) who do migrant labour. The first is the small or middle peasant who owns some land, undertaking seasonal work in the cities to supplement the yield from their lands. The other is the landless peasant who is jointly dependent on migrant labour, as well as seasonal work, or a combination, for survival. Therefore, when peasants come from the rural areas to urban cities in search of job opportunities, there is a class of migrant labourers who are without any free choice, those who have no option but to work in alien cities for their own, and their families', survival while the other section of the semi-proletariat has some means of production (usually, land) to rely on for subsistence when the seasons turn. Though distinguishable, both peasants and workers are therefore exploited through common feudal land relations which help in the concentration of ownership of land in the landlords, aided through imperialism via the comprador

bureaucratic bourgeoisie who have a vested interest in aligning with the local state and therefore in maintaining feudal control over land.

### **Semi-Bonded Labour or Modern Slavery?**

The semi-feudal bondage of landless peasantry is normalised via the caste system. The Brahmanical ideology pushes the idea that oppressed castes are not deserving of land and are instead meant to be menial workers which reinforces the idea of dalits as labourers. Therefore, being bound as agricultural labourers is not a matter of choice, but a result of the extra-economic coercion which determines the occupation one is allowed to take up. This shatters even the illusion of choice that is created in a progressive society of "free relations", thereby resulting in "semi-bonded labour" or "semi-slavery" conditions of work. However, these two forms are both highly invisibilized and naturalised, and are therefore unlikely to be included in the metric calculation of what is called "bonded labour" or "modern slavery" in ILO Report 2022. This is because the terms of employment of the landless, agricultural labourer is said to be "one of choice", therefore failing to meet the requirement of "coercion" and "involuntariness" as laid out in the ILO Convention's definition of slavery, replicated in Article 23 of the Indian Constitution and the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976.

Beyond the parameters of coercion,

voluntariness and debt bondage, semi-feudalism also exists in the contradiction of extremely small contracted labour functioning as the dangling carrot for the vast majority of landless peasants who vie for those limited positions even though both the contracted and the uncontracted labour end up in similar positions in terms of their living conditions and their roles in production. Naturalized caste roles are also overlooked when determining coercion. For example, the lives of khetmajdoors or naukars fall close to the sphere of what these metrics consider bonded labour/forced labour yet would not be accounted for since entering into these terms of employment is considered 'choice-based'.

Therefore, while the ILO Report of 2022 might claim that it is "50 million in modern slavery", this number likely completely omitted from data calculations the conditions of semi-bonded labour which makes the number of bonded labourers much smaller than what it actually is.

### **THE QUESTION OF WOMEN IN BONDED LABOUR**

"In my dreams, I yearn for a day when my hard work finds true appreciation, and the dignity of my efforts is recognised," she said. "Until that day comes, I will persistently sweep away the shadows, clinging to the hope of discovering a glimmer of light amidst the prevailing darkness."

-Nisara, a Kashmiri sweeper.

According to a 2022 ILO Report on modern slavery, 42.75% of those who constitute modern slaves are females. Indian women live under a feudal, capitalist, imperialist and patriarchal oppression across various arenas, with bonded labour, caste oppression-exploitation and forced marriages being the main site of violence for female peasants. The ILO report further illustrates that females are more likely than men to be bonded in domestic labour (17% of women); that out of every 5 workers, 4 females undergo sexual exploitation and an estimated 14.9 million women amount to more than 2/3rd of the estimated number of people in forced marriages. Moreover, it was found that family members are primarily responsible for the same, with physical or sexual violence and threats of violence the next most used form of coercion to force a marriage (20%).

Through the bonds of caste and marriage, these women are usually put to work to pay off debt or dowry for their family - this is either as domestic help in rural areas, or through the landlord's contract in urban areas, or as agricultural labourers. Whether they be situated in rural areas or as migrants in urban areas, their situations remain dire. If the woman is from an oppressed caste, she is even more exploited- a Valmiki woman in Haryana has to do cleaning and washing work like cleaning stables, removing cow-dung or washing clothes, for which she might not even be paid properly. Moreover, women members of the

agricultural labourer's family perform beggar in the hope that this will make it easier to get loans for their own girl's marriage. This is still not enough- activists go to the extent of saying that there will be hardly any woman agricultural labourer who has remained free from any kind of sexual violence.

In cities too, women are severely exploited and oppressed- they're living in temporary bastis which are at constant threat of demolition by state authorities and lack basic amenities; at constant threat of sexual violence in both their homes and workplaces. Domestic labourers are part of the unorganised sector, usually through caste-class networks to pay off familial debt, which means that they do not have job/salary guarantee. Nonetheless, considering the constraints of feudal Brahmanical patriarchy in the class society, this is not the full and honest picture.

## CONCLUSION

The question of bonded labour is a serious one, which ties together the issues of both workers and peasants through land relations. This situation is further influenced with the dynamics of caste and Brahmanical patriarchy emerging from the prevalent semi-feudal conditions, with the assault of imperialism consolidating the "solution" (in terms of ILO reports and undemocratic laws) in favour of the ruling classes-castes. This reformist approach to bonded labour ensures that the peasant and worker is deprived of



land, which will lead to a cycle of debt bondage, eventually reproducing this system of modern slavery as peasants are coerced into working for minimal (or even no wages) for their very survival in both rural and urban areas.

As long as the masses are deprived of land, transformative change of society remains a pipedream- land reforms are necessary to increase the productive capacity of our masses. Land redistribution will allow for more equitable access to resources, thereby enhancing the productive capacity of masses which will allow for the generation of surplus for the tiller, for the labourer, for the peasant, without which the farmers will find themselves caught in a vicious cycle of exploitation and bonded labour. With the expansion of productivity, migrant labourers will benefit- security and surplus will allow them an opportunity to be self-sufficient, free from the debt bondages which create such pathetic working conditions for them. It is further important that women too join this class struggle, as their enemies are the same enemies which plague peasants and workers. For women, it is essential to confront the exploitative systems of feudalism, capitalism, and imperialism, which sustain patriarchy and lead to their oppression in tandem with the people's struggle.

By forging a strong class unity amongst peasants, workers and women, the struggle must take form for the democratisation of society; for

this change to last, it cannot be cosmetic, nor allow for reversal. While land struggles are a fundamental aspect of the revolution, only the establishment of a new democratic society attained through an unflinching people's struggle can allow for true transformation of society. Without the decisive defeat of feudalism and imperialism, the broad masses of people will remain shackled to a society which profits off their oppression and exploitation.

### **Bibliography**

1. Stevens, Harry. "Seven Decades after Independence, Most Dalit Farmers Still Landless." *Hindustan Times*, February 13, 2018.
2. Kumar, Ajay. "On Production Relations: Investigation in Haryana (Part 2)." *Towards A New Dawn*, April 2013.  
[http://toanewdawn.blogspot.com/2013/04/on-production-relations-investigation\\_25.html](http://toanewdawn.blogspot.com/2013/04/on-production-relations-investigation_25.html).
3. Datta, Amrita. *Migration and Development in India: The Bihar Experience*. Delhi: Routledge India, 2022.
4. International Labour Organization. Rep. *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage*, 2022.
5. Raina, Sajid, and Seerat Basheer. "In Kashmir, A Woman Was Paid Rs 25 A Month For 20 Years To Sweep A Govt School. Then, Her Wages Stopped, But She Keeps Sweeping." Article 14, June 16, 2023.
6. Ghandy (Janaki), Anuradha. "People's War Has Shattered the Hesitations of the Women of Dandakaranya!" *Marxists.org*, 2008.

# GREEN REVOLUTION: IMPERIALISM'S NEW LEASE OF LIFE

by Mukundan

The 1960s was dubbed the "Spring Thunder" of Naxalbari by The People's Daily of China to commemorate the outbreak of revolutionary fervour among the Indian masses. This was because an uprising in the small village of Naxalbari, Bengal led to similar revolutionary struggles in almost all the states of India. Naxalbari represented the dissatisfaction of the Indian masses with the failed promise of growth, development and prosperity of the Indian transfer of power in 1947, as well as sowed the seed for the blossoming of Communist sentiments in South Asia. Naxalbari was at the heels of the establishment of the communist

People's Republic of China which led to the exit of one of the largest reserves of sheer human labour in China from the entrapments of imperialism.

With the spread of the red, there was a growing and legitimate concern for the imperialist project of the United States of America. Not only was China lost, India is a huge market and liberation of India from the talons of the Eagle would have been a severe blow for imperialism. Thus, the imperialists designed the so-called Green 'Revolution' to deal with the hunger of the masses and as a counter to the red revolution of Naxalbari.



The focus of this article is therefore an attempt to study the Green Revolution and how it changed the conditions of the Indian masses, an attempt to check the veracity of the claims of revisionist parties who have categorised the green revolution as a progressive force.

### **An Incomplete Democratic Revolution: The Sustenance of Imperialism**

In order to understand the Green Revolution, one needs to analyse imperialism and its relationship with India. In the Western advanced capitalist countries, development of capital occurred by overthrowing the old feudal system in which surplus production would not occur. Instead, commodity produced is being exchanged for money which is again exchanged for the same number of commodities. The conclusion of the democratic revolution led to a new capitalist system replacing the old feudal system. In capitalist production, money is used for the production of commodities and the exchange of commodities is such that surplus value is obtained by the capitalist which can be used to produce even more and expand the market for the capitalist.

In India, this process of democratisation was incomplete after the advent of the Britishers, who had curbed the seeds of the development of capitalism when destroying India's handloom sections for their imperialist agenda of reducing India to its colony. When the British left,

they left within India a comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie (CBB) which was dependent on foreign capital for its very survival, through the nurturing of a feudal class that was loyal to imperialism in India. Due to this, India was wholly dependent on foreign capital for the running of its industries.

The capital for the industrial production in India came from the advanced capitalist countries, the labour would be done mostly by the Indian masses, and the value created from this labour would go abroad. This system of dependency on foreign capital continued even after the transfer of power- industrialists like Tata and Birla are an apt illustration of the same as they developed their industries without their own capital. The capital produced by such industrialists would go abroad and therefore, the nature of these big bourgeoisie is that of a comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie, as these are the agents of foreign imperialism in India, supported by the state machinery which would facilitate for the penetration of foreign capital in India through its policies, laws and regulations. Due to the fact that the Indian economy was based on reliance and therefore the prosperity and class position of the Indian bourgeoisie was deeply entrenched in the advances of imperial capital, the ruling class in India are agents of imperialism. In this production process, India is no longer a direct colony of Britain but still completely dependent on foreign capital, with its sovereignty subject to

the whims and demands of imperial capital for the economy's survival, thereby defining its semi-colonial nature.

State emerged as a product of class antagonism. Engels writes that "*the state arose from the need to hold class antagonisms in check, but because it arose, at the same time, in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is, as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class...*".

The Indian state is a tool of the dominant comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie (CBB). With no independent capitalist class emerging in India and the economy reliant on foreign capital, the state protects the interest of the imperialists as it is closely tied to its own class interests. A historical evaluation of the functioning of the state reveals its status as a glorified dalaal to its imperialist masters, wherein it has been complicit in taking away land from the broad masses to deliver it gift-wrapped to the imperialist and their agent CBB.

In India, this class is the feudal landlord who has historically protected the interests of the British imperialists. The Zamindari System placed landlords in service to British interests through the collection of land revenue, and this loyalty to imperialism persists even today as the landlord classes work in nexus with

the state machinery to exploit the Indian masses. Salwa Judum in Central India is an assertion of the feudal power of the landlord class, an independent and personal militia who spearheaded a brutal assault against Adivasis, attacking them and burning their villages. However, how is it that an independent state can exist within a state? The feudal classes are a state within a state, and Salwa Judum an "unofficially" sanctioned part of Operation Greenhunt. This semi-feudal character of the Indian political economy revealed itself again in the feudal caste oppression as the state closed its eyes to massacres perpetrated by these landlord classes against the Dalits such as the Kizhvenmeni massacre. The state is shameless in its assault against the masses of India, supplying the personal militias of landlords such as the Ranvir Sena with weapons. This undemocratic nature of the Indian state and the development of a parasitic comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie that brutally exploits the masses lead to great dissatisfaction.

As the promised liberation after the transfer of power did not occur, the Spring Thunder of Naxalbari roared in defiance to this betrayal. A movement inspired by the Chinese Revolution, Naxalbari was a response to the two main enemies of the Indian people- imperialism and feudalism, thereby creating fear amongst the imperialists and ruling classes reliant on them for their persistence. Fearing the consequences of the success of the people's movement, the

imperialist powers worked with the Indian state against Naxalbari, in tandem with the need to reduce the dissatisfaction of the masses for the continued exploitation under imperialism and feudalism.

The Green Revolution was a policy measure by the imperialist forces and their agents to reduce popular dissatisfaction against the state in semi-colonies. This policy was first introduced in Mexico in the 1940's. A team was sent to Mexico by the Rockefellers to study the conditions of Mexico, where nationalist sentiments and revolutionary consciousness against imperialism had developed. The purpose of the team was to create an agricultural strategy that would decrease the dissatisfaction of the masses. Simultaneously, a market for fertilisers, pesticides and farm implements from the advanced capitalist countries was also created. The imperialist powers saw the issue of the so-called 'third world' nationalism against imperialism, as a result of lack of food grains due to higher population. The solution to this problem was developed in China where collectivisation of agriculture had solved the problem of deficiency in food grains. The alternative that the imperialist powers put forward was the Green Revolution which involved the unsustainable use of natural resources to temporarily reduce the shortage of grains along with population control. The audacity of the oppressor nations was such that they forced the ruling class to enforce population control to reduce

the dissatisfaction. Population control measures included forcible sterilisation under Indira Gandhi thereby bringing into question the so-called independence of India which controlled its population at the behest of the imperialist powers.

In the 1960's the Rockefellers created the Agriculture Development Council (ADC) for the management of this programme in Mexico. A small team managing the entire program was no longer viable, therefore, a need emerged to train a section of the local population to serve the interests of the imperialists. This was handled by the ADC, which along with universities in the USA, developed the program further. Rockefeller went on a survey in the far east, where the threat of 'Asian communism' was developing. Encouraged by the successful results in Mexico the Rockefellers joined hands with the Ford Foundation to develop this program in the Philippines. This policy was thus implemented in India too where imperialist agencies such as IMF, Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller foundation joined hands with US AID to provide the capital and the technology for the program. The Indian agricultural sector along with the agricultural sector in several semi-colonies thus became a market for the imperialists.

### **Relations of Production**

Parliamentary left parties such as the CPM claim that the Green Revolution led to a change in the the social and economic relations in India

due to which feudal relations have ceased to function, claiming that Green Revolution brought a democratic revolution which led to the emergence of independent capitalism in India.

Haryana is considered one of the success stories of the Green Revolution, although the ground reality would reveal the persistence of feudal bonds through the example of the "naukar" system. The Naukars are landless agricultural labourers living as tenants, mostly belonging to the Dalit community, who have taken a loan in advance from the landlord and then have to work under the landlord in unfree conditions to pay back this loan. In a capitalist system, the labourer has a choice to the extent of who they decide to sell their labour to, a democratic choice unavailable to the naukar due to the extra-economic coercion of the caste system, as well as the persistence of usurious capital which set the limits to whom the labourer can work under.

The prevalence of Dalits as Naukars showcases how caste is influencing the relations of production as Dalits continue to be deprived of land and are prohibited from tenancy too. Further, the development of democratic consciousness within a capitalist system meant that there are set terms of employment- Sundays being a holiday, an 8 hour workday etc are conditions brought through the struggle of people. However, naukars do not even have this- there is no set time fixed for them to complete their work, being asked to

come to work any time, day or night. They usually get 12 days of holiday, and money is subtracted from their pay if they don't come to work. About 80-100 Rupees will be reduced from their account if they don't come to work on a specific day. This is based on the logic that some other worker has to be employed on the days in which the Naukar do not come. If the Naukar is from the Valmiki community then the wife of the Naukar has to do domestic work in the house of the landlord.

The relation between the exploited class and exploiter class in capitalism is such that the worker can 'choose' not to work under one capitalist. He does have to sell his wage labour to survive and cannot survive without exploitation, but he still has the "free choice" to choose who exploits him. In the case of the Naukar, this agency does not exist. This is a form of semi-bonded labour where the worker is forced to work under the landlord. The existence of close to 3 lakh Naukars in Haryana (according to conservative estimates) erodes the claim of the Parliamentary left that capitalist relations have emerged in agriculture. Even the free labour is not free, with the free labourers preferring to work in urban areas, but they continue to work in the rural areas because of the absence of employment in the industries. Thus, they also have limited agency as compared to a worker in a capitalist country. Moreover, over 65% of the workers get the payment in goods and cash and thus, they are not selling their labour for wages like a

worker in a capitalist system. Begaar or free of cost labour continues to exist in Haryana. In exchange for certain favours like help in court cases, money to settle family feuds, the labourers are expected to do labour. Similarly, they are to do labour within the household during marriages in the landlord's houses. Activists also claim that no woman labourer is safe from sexual harassment in these villages.

Therefore, it becomes clear that workers in Indian society are not free labourers like those which emerge in a capitalist society despite being more independent than the old feudal labourers. Choice, however severely limited, is seen in the increase of the chances of a labourer migrating to the cities. They have a greater agency to choose where they have to sell their labour. Thus the term semi-feudal is used to refer to them. The existence of caste and caste-based atrocities also point to the fact that these villages are semi-feudal.

The production of surplus value is inherent in capitalism. Money is invested by the capitalist and then this money is used to make commodities. The sale of the commodities will lead to profit. Thus, in a capitalist economy, the amount of money that the capitalist gets will always be greater than the amount he invests. In a feudal society, commodities are converted into money and this money is used to buy different commodities. Distorted capitalist production has led to the emergence of surplus, but this has not

been used to expand agriculture. When mode of production is fully capitalist, capital will be expanding as surplus produced is invested again. This expansion of capital is not occurring in India. Capitalist production is said to be distorted since the relations of production are still feudal. At the same time one cannot generalise that surplus value is produced everywhere. Thus, India is stuck in between feudalism and capitalism.

This further proves that agricultural production in Haryana is not capitalist. The claim of the parliamentary left parties that the mode of production has become capitalist, is a false claim which obfuscates the real nature of India. This is to justify their inaction and justify their claim that India is a capitalist democracy. There is an absence of democracy in a semi-feudal country like India. When there is a lack of democracy in the larger society and when the individual does not have the freedom that they have in a capitalist society, elections are a farce. Thus, the claim that the mode of production has changed after the Green Revolution is just one to justify their corrupted thirst for power. A true communist party would call out the farce of electoral democracy in India and boycott this arbitrary exercise that justifies the undemocratic ruling class of India.

### **Green "Revolution": An Onslaught of Imperialism**

The agents of imperialism in India

justify the Green Revolution as a method to end hunger in a backward country like India to obfuscate their fears of the red revolution of Naxalbari which created anxiety in the minds of the ruling class and the imperialists. Thus, they developed the strategy of the Green Revolution. High Yielding variety (HYV) seeds were introduced in India to deal with the shortage of grains. However, high yield is conditional as these seeds need a vast amount of fertilisers, water and pesticides. In parallel, imperialist technology through farm implements like tractors in agriculture was introduced. This created a new market for imperialists in India.

Despite the initial years of the Green Revolution boosting agricultural production, it has wrought destruction. For example, there was a threefold increase in food crop production in the first 20 years but the subsequent increase in fertiliser usage was 55,000%, which was culpable in depletion of organic soil matter. Monoculture resulted in depletion of silt and organic carbon content in the soil, leading to increased fertiliser usage. The unsustainable usage of fertilisers resulted in higher content of toxic heavy metals like cadmium, lead and arsenic in the soil. The HYV seeds require a high amount of pesticides along with the intensive use of fertilisers. This destroyed the useful soil pathogens in the soil and changed the PH level of the soil. A study in Haryana detected that water logging, salinity, brackish water and

alkalinity will affect food security in the coming years.

The use of fertilisers and pesticides have also meant higher health risk for the Indian masses. Most of the pesticides used are harmful organophosphorus organochlorine, carbamate, and pyrethroid. This has severely affected the immune system, the nervous, endocrine and reproductive systems. Continuous exposure to these toxic chemicals from several sources has meant that sometimes the amount of toxins in the body is beyond the limits of its detoxification mechanisms. These chemicals also affect the farmers who are forced to use this indiscriminately due to the intrinsic nature of the imperialist policy of Green Revolution. The exposure to harmful chemicals has affected women and has created an increased rate of birth defects.

The Green Revolution led to the creation of a cancer endemic in Punjab. The usage of chemicals has polluted the soil and poisoned the masses living in Punjab. The soil has become poor in organic matter and micronutrients and the Green Revolution has led to a situation where crops cannot be cultivated without the unsustainable usage of fertilisers. The chemicals used here are classified as the most toxic and carcinogenic chemicals. From the soil, through the crops, they enter the bloodstream of the people and create cancer.

The Malwa region has seen the



highest usage of fertilisers and come to be known as the cancer belt. The train connecting Abohar to Jodhpur has come to be known as a cancer train as over 60% of the passengers are people seeking treatment in the cancer centre in Bikaner. This is how widespread the cancer endemic is in Punjab. Using the false promise of development and an end to poverty, the imperialist powers and their intermediaries, the ruling class of India has harvested cancer among the people of the soil. The ruling class has betrayed their own people, those they claim to represent, for the profits of their imperialist masters. They have poisoned the air, water and soil, feeding the millions of India this poison, so that their masters can reap more profits. This class should never be forgiven for their betrayal of the masses across India.

Irrigation became a major issue due to the excessive usage of water during the Green Revolution. India has the highest demands of water usage across the world and 91% of this water is used by agriculture. The crops introduced during the Green Revolution were water intensive crops. Almost 50% of the dietary water footprint in India is constituted by cereals which were introduced during the Green Revolution. Punjab is shown as a model for Green Revolution and here water has depleted to such an extent that water scarcity is inevitable in Punjab. According to a research done by NABARD in 2020 the agriculture budget is 9,828 crore including irrigation, from this if one subtracts

the expenditure for irrigation the budget is revealed to be 3,080 crore INR. Irrigation is thus a major issue for agriculture. Along with this the soil toxicity has affected the groundwater table. The groundwater has proven to be poisonous as the chemicals have seeped into the water.

The expansion of foreign capital into India through the Green Revolution led to a metabolic rift. This meant that the land got over exploited in an unsustainable manner so that capital could expand further. The unsustainable use of water has led to the groundwater tables drying up. For the expansion of foreign capital into India our ruling class have poisoned and depleted the air, water and land. The masses consume the poison that our people were forced to buy to aid the imperialist powers. The Green Revolution benefited the rich peasants and landlords of certain parts of northern India. The small farmers could not expand in agriculture. Along with this the natural varieties of India which do not require the high amount of pesticides and fertilisers that HYV require are endangered. Two decades after the Green Revolution there was a decline in the fertility of land and a decrease in the growth rate of agricultural production due to low irrigation and high amount of fertiliser use. Expenditure by the government was mostly on procurement of costly HYV from imperialists and less on the development of agriculture. Together this led to increased unemployment and income inequality.

## Conclusion

The Green Revolution did not lead to the development of the Indian masses. Its aim was to deviate the people from the revolutionary movement by creating a temporary solution to their hunger. Agriculture continued to be semi-feudal in nature. When production is semi-feudal, expansion of agriculture cannot occur. Surplus production will not occur when production is semi-feudal and thus the expansion of productive forces will not occur. The grain drought in India cannot be addressed. At the same time, when the mode of production is semi-feudal the masses who work in the field will not have the democratic freedom that a worker in a capitalist country will have. Thus, it is essential for India to change this semi-feudal means of production to advance as an economy and as a democracy. The Green Revolution did not do any of this, but enabled greater loot of India by imperialist powers. The ruling class in India betrayed the people, selling them dreams of development so that they could fill the coffers of their bosses, the imperialists in advanced capitalist countries. The ruling class enforced an unsustainable system of agriculture on the Indian masses which has led to the pollution of the air, water and soil of the masses. The ground water table has drastically



reduced. It has become a necessity that the farmers of India unite with the other forces fighting for their jal, jangal and zameen, to protect and preserve their natural wealth.

## Agriculture

provides the basic necessity of all the masses of the country, when agriculture is poisoned the masses of the country suffer together. Therefore, a broad unity against imperialism and feudalism is essential for all Indian people.

## Bibliography

1. Bhattacharya, Amit. *World Turned Upside Down: Imperialist versus Peoples Model of Development*. Paris, France: Foreign Languages Press, 2022.
2. Lenin, Vladimir Il'ich. *State and Revolution*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1973.
3. Kandasamy, Meena. "No One Killed the Dalits ." <http://sanhati.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/lecture-with-footnotes.pdf>
4. Cleaver, Harry M. "The Contradictions of the Green Revolution." *The American Economic Review* 62, no. 1/2 (March 1972).
5. Kumar, Ajay. "On Production Relations: Investigation in Haryana (Part 1)." *Towards A New Dawn*, April 2013.
6. John, Daisy A., and Giridhara R. Babu. "Lessons from the Aftermaths of Green Revolution on Food System and Health." *Frontiers*, January 13, 2021.
7. Singh, Vir. "Green Revolution and a Harvest of Cancer." *The Pioneer*, February 8, 2021.

# BOGUS LAND REFORMS AND FEUDALISM'S OFFENSIVE

by Val Varshri



Land has been the main source of wealth of all preceding ruling classes and continues to inform class formation today. It is the first point wherein nature intervenes with the production process, setting the ecological

barriers to the social interaction between people with their environment. Through territory, land is an important determinant in the formation of nations and forms the base of state sovereignty. People's common connection to land knits communities and plays an important role in identity formation. Even those who may feel disconnected from land ultimately depend on it for subsistence. In India, 54-60% of its population is engaged in the agrarian industry. The development of relations of production is through the history of class, in which land plays a determinant role as it gets consolidated in the hands of the ruling classes.

Therefore, the land question is not merely a question of ownership over land, of class—it is a question of formation of human society, of individuals and communities alike.

The transition from feudalism to capitalism requires the growth of commodity production, which was a process hindered by the colonisation of India by the British. The advent of direct imperial control brought to a stuttering halt the beginnings of capitalist production which could be seen emerging in certain regions, in industries like handlooms. While some industrial development was undertaken by the British, it was done with the purpose of exploitation and extraction of India's resources.

The British never tried to abolish feudalism and India's unique feature of caste, instead subordinating the relations of production to their extractive agenda. For example, factory workers have come often in the position of unskilled labour from peasant and artisan castes of Shudra status, while Dalits were recruited in large numbers in army and construction. Their historical and systemic exploitation and oppression through Brahmanical ideology meant that they had little choice in what kind of occupation they did, thereby providing a cheap reserve army of labour for the imperialist agenda of resource extraction. Moreover, the history of landlessness of this caste meant that these workers were willing to migrate, sometimes with their family, as they did not have any connection with land. When the British exited India, their power was merely transferred to the comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie (composed primarily of landed caste Hindus) who continued to serve merely as managers of foreign capital on behalf

of the imperialist countries.

Due to this impartial transition from feudalism to capitalism, India's mode of production is termed as semi-feudal, semi-colonial. Semi-colonial mode of production describes the situation in which India's industrial development is reliant on foreign capital, thereby subordinating its "sovereignty" to the interests of its imperial masters. Meanwhile, semi-feudal is used to describe the manner in which class relations are formed. In the relation between the superstructure and base under a semi-feudal society, the continuing dominating influence of the superstructure is such that class relations in India continue to be unfree, often under extra-economic coercive forces like caste and landlordism.

Today's time sees imperialism as the principal contradiction in the world, and with it, the question of land is intertwined in a place like India, wherein land continues to dominate people's consciousness and lives with land being so intertwined with class formation as it is. Therefore, the land question, with its contradiction between the landlord and the tiller, has become a fundamental contradiction in the development of Indian society.

### **History of State-led Land Reform**

At the time of transfer of power to the Indian comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie, the agrarian sector was characterised by parasitic, rent-

-seeking big landlords and their goons. The system of land ownership was scattered, with stark regional variance in terms of revenue and ownership system, with a small portion of the population holding vast amounts of land. Around 1947, 53% of the land was held by 7% of the landowners whereas 28% of small/middle peasants owned only about 6% of the land.

Due to this unequal distribution, India was characterised by the formation of a high density of tenant cultivators who were governed by insecure tenancy and exploitative production relations. In most states, zamindari was abolished by 1956 though the absence of land records made it difficult to implement said laws. Despite the land being redistributed, the area under kashtakars (sharecroppers) had come down from 42% in 1950-51 to around 20-25% in the beginning of the 60s. This did not mean that the sharecroppers had become owners, rather it meant that the landowners had evicted them.

Subsequent legislation providing for ceilings on agricultural land holdings were implemented in two broad phases- the phase between 1952-70s and from 1970s-present. The 26th National Sample Survey Round of 1972 shows that many landowners held fragmented parcels of land across revenue villages which provided an escape from Land Ceiling Act- thereby leading to reforms in the form of consolidation of holdings.

Resultantly, national guidelines were prepared during a Chief Ministers' Conference in July 1972. However, the complications in implementation process resulted in indirect control over landholdings, most infamously through the benami transactions, which is when land ownership recordings are falsified through the use of a fictitious name. While a total of 2.97 million hectares have been declared surplus under ceiling laws, a skewed distribution of land among different size classes of operational holdings persists. The number of holdings below 2 ha has gone up from 49.63 million in 1970-71 to 66.6 million in 1980-81. They constituted 74.5% of the total holdings in 1980-81 but operated only 42.76 million ha or 26.3% of total operated area. Against this, holdings above 10 ha have come down from 2.77 million in 1970-71 to 2.15 million in 1980-81. They constituted 2.4% of the total holdings in 1980-81 but operated as much as 37.13 million ha or 22.8% per cent of total operated area.

As land reforms via state laws continued to fail and tensions against the state continued to mount, the state was forced into conceding to a more "radical" reform. Tensions against the state can be seen in "Spring Thunder" of Naxalbari, an uprising in the small village of Naxalbari, Bengal which expressed the dissatisfaction of the Indian masses with the failed promise of growth, prosperity and development. It also sowed the seed for the blossoming of Communist

sentiments in South Asia as similar revolutionary struggles in almost all the states of India sprung up following Naxalbari. In response, the government launched various policies to strengthen imperialist control over the region and the Forty-Fourth Amendment Act, 1978 was a part of the state's response to their growing fear of the Red Revolution. It was passed with the justification that the removal of the right to property and the insertion of Article 300A will discourage the zamindari system and redistribute land amongst the landless. Therefore, Article 19(1)(f) of the Indian Constitution was amended to include that "no person shall be deprived of his property saved by the authority of the law" which changed the status of property to a constitutional right. This is subject to *Bajranga v. State of Madhya Pradesh* (2021) in which the Supreme Court ruled that deprivation of land can only be done in conformity with legal procedure.

In essence, this amendment allowed the strengthening of the concept of "eminent domain" which was used by the state to buy land from the peasants so that this land could be used to establish industries under the control of imperialists- thereby shattering any dreams of the development of agriculture. It may be observed that land disputes plague the legal system, choking people's right over their land as they get caught up in the bureaucracy of land reform measures- 25% of the disputes in Supreme Court as of 2020 are related to land disputes, while 66% of

all civil cases in India are related to land disputes.

## THE BHOODAN MOVEMENT

While there was an effort led by the "welfare state" to transform land relations, the masses were not enamoured by the state, asking if reform was with the purpose of the welfare of the people, or whether it was a design of imperialist capital to penetrate into Indian society? As people continued to be alienated from the land they tilled, the struggle of the peasants became one of saving their land from the brutal assault of foreign capital, a resistance against the landlords and against bureaucratic capitalism which helped line the pockets of the imperialist masters.

The origins of the Bhoodan Movement can be traced to 18th April 1951 in a village in Andhra Pradesh wherein Maoists were active at the time. During a conference Vinobha was attending, a landless dalit villager of Pochampalli demanded land, which he was granted by the benevolence of a landlord, therefore sparking the Bhoodan movement.

The movement was premised on the importance of "daan" in the subconscious, with the idea of daan as equal distribution derived from the scriptures. The tactic utilised in this endeavour was appealing to the "inherent good" in people's consciousness. This was achieved by stressing the need for land redistribution and by questioning

the ethical basis of private property while the work was undertaken in the form of a yajna, wherein Vinobha travelled across the country asking for land as a right of the landless.

### **Idea of Gramdam**

By the end of December in 1957, approximately 43 lakh acres of land had been received in Bhoodan out of which 6 lakh acres had been distributed to about 2 lakh families. However, the limitation of land redistribution as a policy was acknowledged by Vinobha himself who realised that such a policy would lead to fragmentation of land. As a result, the second phase of the movement focused on the villagisation of land i.e., control of the village community over the land—therefore, Bhoodan evolved into the Bhoodan-Gramdan Movement.

Claims reiterate that by 30th September 1962, a total of 530,344 donors had given 41, 62,623 acres of land; 11,20,485 acres of land had been distributed to 313,866 landless persons and the number of gramdani villages was 5079.25 whereas almost all states had passed a Bhoodan Act and established committees to overlook the same. However, as the Bhoodan Movement lost its steam due to its over reliance on the state as well as idealistic aspirations, the land which was promised as a gift was never redistributed and continued in the hands of the landlord. The hollowness of the movement was even echoed in the fact that nearly 50% of the “donors” never even

provided particulars such as plot numbers, demarcation details in their “land gifts”. Therefore, the Bhoodan Movement left its impact restricted as a “symbolic movement, a programme to make the people understand the sarvodaya idea.”

### **DID LAND REFORMS LEAD TO A CHANGE IN PRODUCTION RELATIONS?**

Despite the various measures which are undertaken for land redistribution, the situation at present remains abysmal. The persisting feudal relations in India mean that landlords continue to hold power in the functioning of the state due to which it is easy for them to find loopholes in the law in order to maintain their proprietorship over the land. Meanwhile landless, poor peasants who work as agricultural labourers could never take possession of land and were forced to either resell or relinquish their land to landlords. Moreover, evictions from land were common.

Due to feudal relations in agriculture, there is fragmentation of land as not only do people refuse to part with their land, but inheritance law means that land keeps on getting divided with each generation. Fragmentation of land occurs when holdings are divided into discrete parcels that are dispersed over wide areas, with different landholdings being composed of different biophysical characteristics such as soil quality and moisture condition. Some states like Haryana show a trend wherein

peasants hold onto their land, arguing that, "*We keep getting a lot of offers from builders who want to construct residential or commercial buildings here but we refuse them as we do not want to part with the land*".

Therefore, consolidation of land is curbed which hampers its productivity. The sheer number of holdings in India had increased from 71 million in 1971 to 89 million in 1981 through area expansion and sub-division.

This hinders its productivity due to which the cultivation is not profitable, with a small piece of land barely meeting the needs of the farmer. Resultantly, land is often supplemented by other sources of income. A recent survey on land holdings and rural households in 2019 has found that 54% of rural families are agricultural households of which 70% possess land less than 1 hectare, while only 0.4% own land above 10 hectares. The average land holding per person in a rural household is 0.2 hectares, while large landholdings comprise only 9% of the total productive area. 35.6% of those who possess agricultural land hold land which is only 0.4-1 ha while 34.2% hold land which is between 0.1-0.4 ha; this means that the majority of people (69.8%) hold land which is sized between 0.1-1 ha.

Caste is another manner to study the semi-feudal relations in India, with it determining even land ownership. In every village, a proportion of the panchayati land is reserved for Dalits under the law. However, manuvaadi

diktat rule that oppressed castes are not deserving of land. This ideology is reproduced in land ownership, with the panchayats made up of upper castes working in tandem with the state to prevent the claims to land by the Dalit landless peasantry. An apt illustration of this is the Khap Panchayats (informal institutions of each gotra in the Jat community of North India which determines the customs, practices and religious norms for its specific gotra) of Haryana.

The history of khaps reveals that since Mughal times, they have been used by Jat landlords in maintaining or strengthening the role of Jats as intermediaries in the feudal land revenue system, which persists through their domination as office holders in the panchayats and state in present day governments. In nexus with village administrators, khaps were used to maintain control over artisan class and castes, menial castes, tenants and even other Jat peasants through land ownership being concentrated in the hands of the upper class ("khudkast") amongst the Jats. In Haryana's villages, the Dalit landless peasantry claim that there is a "kabza" (forceful seizure) of the reserved land by the Jat community, or the land that is redistributed to them is inadequate due to being either waste/barren land, or far from their households, or too small a plot to be cultivable. In this manner, extra-economic coercive forces ensure that land is not distributed equitably amongst the masses. Moreover, khap panchayats enforce



rules of marriage so as to preserve property ownership within their own dominant community, often in the name of preservation of social pride and honour. Therefore, with the establishment of the "modern" state, institutions like the khap have become a parallel political authority which also became a means to consolidate the political status of its influential leaders.

It is not only in the ideological sphere of caste, but also religion which reveals the feudal character of the Indian economy. The history of state formation has shown the role that temples have played as owners of land, with them continuing to undertake administrative functions like revenue collection, thereby leading to the development of states, or "proto-states" as some of them were then known as. Temples have had a historical role in shaping India's agrarian economy through controlling huge endowments of land, gold and money. This state continues today- in Tamil Nadu alone, HR&CE details how 36,000 temples are under the control of the department and they own 4,78,272 acres of land. These endowments were used for the development of irrigation, and modern day examples like Vizhinjam, where church took over land from which sea had receded and forced the fishermen to buy the land which is not legally owned by the church, would reveal how religious institutions control land ownership and dictate the paths of development on the basis of feudal relations- the fact that 85% of rural landowners are

Hindus while Muslims account for just over 11% also reveals the hand of Brahmanical Hindutva fascism, a reactionary force of capitalism which maintains hegemony over class society on religious lines.

As a result of semi-colonialism, industries have infiltrated farmlands through foreign capital. However, the emergence of industries saw only stuttered growth, thereby providing a limited avenue for job opportunities despite the subsequent increase in available workers. Thereby, the proliferation in the ranks of the landless and small peasantry led to the increased ranks of farm-labourers (khet majdoors) and the emergence of a new class, the semi-proletariat. This allows for a reserve army of labour, and with the workers far exceeding their need, the exploitation of the proletariat, peasant and semi-proletariat alike is greatly multiplied. This reserve labour is also the person who works for minimum wage in the industries, as the land that they own is not even able to meet the subsistence needs of their family.

This contradiction between tilling and ownership is further exacerbated by the caste system, which continues to dictate the ownership patterns of land holdings, thereby denying them the status of cultivators in spite of working as the primary producers. Since ancient times, oppressed castes have worked on land in the capacity of "siri" (those who work in accordance with the will of their masters), and even today, most of

those who perform menial labour in agriculture are from oppressed castes. This is despite the fact that oppressed castes are mostly from landless peasant backgrounds, thereby contributing to alienation from the land they till, but have no control over. Information released by PIB in 2019 reveals that 75.9% of agricultural households are SC, ST and OBC castes whereas only about 17.1% of oppressed castes have their own land. Further, a 2019 survey shows that Scheduled castes (SCs) own 10.2% of rural land, scheduled tribes (STs) own 14.1%, other backward classes (OBCs) own 47%, and "the others" own 28.5%. SCs account for approximately 16% of agricultural households, STs make up 14%, and OBCs comprise nearly 46% of agricultural households.

Further, the rise of the semi-proletariat and khetmajdoor is seen in the fact that approximately 77% of agricultural households are self-employed, with 69% engaged in crop production. The remaining households are divided into 7.7% engaged in regular salaried work and 14% involved in casual labour. Among non-agricultural households, 48.6% are engaged in casual labour, while almost 18% are employed in regular salaried work. 8.2% of rural households are landless, defined as owning less than 0.002 hectares of land. This is because land has become a saleable commodity and farmers have lost hold over land as it is increasingly concentrated in the hands of absentee landlords, usually on caste lines. A tendency of land

ownership by temples can also be seen in rural areas, with the temples of caste Hindus appropriating panchayati land meant for the Dalit masses.

## CONCLUSION

For productive forces to develop and for agriculture to succeed, efficient land reforms and redistribution is the need of the hour. Those who till land continue to be deprived of it, fuelled by the prevailing semi-colonial and semi-feudal conditions of India. Agricultural labourers are that class of people who are exploited on the basis of labour, living on a mouth to mouth existence in the hopes of seeing a rising sun the next day. Simultaneously, the caste character of these agricultural labourers means that not only do they get exploited via their labour, they bear the brunt of being oppressed by the Brahmanical Hindutva ideology of the caste system as well which does not allow for oppressed castes to own land. Nonetheless, these agricultural labourers are stuck in this vicious cycle of exploitation as their main source of sustenance remains land, with this dependency further aggravated by the absence of industrial development. With no option, these labourers rely on land to survive.

Suppressed by the terror of the state via its agents in the landlords and the ruling class ideology of Brahmanical Hindutva fascism, survival is a relative term, with control over rural society being maintained through

khap and biradari panchayats at the behest of foreign capital, as village administration works in tandem with the state and central governments of a comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie nature in order to preserve their own class-caste interests. Land is exploited, and through it, the tillers who toil relentlessly. In 2020 alone, the total number of suicides in agriculture was over 10,600, with 48.1% of these suicides being committed by agricultural labourers, according to official NCRB data. Land is constitutive not only of an economic relation, but also a social relation. In a semi-feudal country like India, this is most visible. Feudal power in India manifests itself through ideologies of caste and religion in India, and in the cyclical relationship between ideology and economy, the role of ideology is a dominant force. This can be seen in the manner that caste and religion change the very basis of the economy, of land ownership. This trend of dominance of the ideological sphere over the economy in semi-feudal societies is rooted in extra economic coercion, thereby debilitating any form of “free choice” and eroding people’s democratic conscience. In this manner, the ideology is able to suppress and exploit, changing the very nature of the economic base. Land is a part of the consciousness of the people, it is not an alienable commodity for people to use, but people’s manner of living. Therefore, the first step towards bridging this gap between people and land is land redistribution which is a necessity to enable people

to have ownership over their labour, to connect people with each other.

## Bibliography

1. Ghandy, Anuradha. “Caste Question in India.” In *Scripting the Change*. Daanish Books, 2012.
2. Deshpande, R.S. Current Policy Issues in India  
<https://www.fao.org/3/y5026e/y5026e0b.html>
3. Bandyopadhyay, D. “Land Reforms in India. An Analysis.” *Economic & Political Weekly* 21, no. 25–26 (June 1986).
4. TNN. “70% of Agricultural Households Possess Land Less than 1 Hectare, Finds Survey.” *Times of India*, September 2021.
5. Shrivastav, Urvi. “Land Fragmentation: The Core Issue In Agriculture.” *Business World*, December 2020.
6. Kumar, Ajay. “Khap Panchayats: A Socio-Historical Overview.” *Academia.edu*, 2012.
7. Darshan, Anasakti. “Bhoodan Movement.” *MKGandhi.org*, 2012.
8. Niroula, Gajendra S, and Gopal B Thapa. “Impacts and Causes of Land Fragmentation, and Lessons Learned from Land Consolidation in South Asia.” *Land Use Policy* 22, no. 4 (October 2005).
9. Express News Service. “HR & CE Begins Uploading Temple Land Details.” *The New Indian Express*, June 2021.
10. Tewari, Ruhi. “85% of Rural Landowners Are Hindus; Muslims Account for Just over 11%: Report.” *Indian Express*, September 2015.

# DEVELOPMENT OF PRODUCTIVE FORCES IN INDIA

by Nishant Anand

In her speech on the 2023 National Budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sithraman declared that the budget is of "Amrit kaal" (the auspicious and golden time when great prosperity arrives) and that despite the dark state of the world economy, the Indian economy is heading towards a bright future with an astonishing 7% growth rate.

Although the budget of 2023 has adopted catchy phrases such as "Inclusive India" and "Shining India", the veracity of these statements remains to be examined.

The essence of the budget and the government's policy in general is its continuing commitment towards the growth of comprador bourgeois forces while ignoring and worsening the acute destitution of the toiling masses of India. The Indian big bourgeoisie are said to be comprador since they depend on foreign capital for functioning. Through them, the value created by the Indian masses is

stolen by the imperialists. In the current budget, restrictions to F.D.I have decreased, thus enabling the compradors to get greater capital and deliver more profits to their masters abroad. More land has been handed over to the compradors in the form of greenfield projects. Greater focus has been given to the public-private

partnership model of infrastructure development.

Here, the state uses the tax which has been taken from the petty bourgeoisie and the working

class to take away land from the people in India and deliver it to the compradors. The compradors then use this land to create more profit for the imperialists abroad.

Farmers of this "new India" are dealing with collapsing commodity prices on one hand and increasing input cost on the other, and as a result are being forced to migrate

*India progressed rapidly as Amrit Kaal began : PM in Mann Ki Baat*

WE NEVER  
KNEW! THAT'S  
BREAKING NEWS!



to the cities for their sustenance. This distressed state of agriculture is one of the major causes of farmer suicides in India. According to a NSSO report from 2018-19, the weight of farm loans is 60% of the average annual income of farmers- which translates to 74000 out of 1.24 lakh per annum. Including agriculture and other sectors like manufacturing, infrastructure, MSMEs, the overall development of productive forces has been hindered due to excessive pressure over them. The proletariat is struggling as the unofficial work hour of 12 hours a day is going to be given legal sanctity by the government. It is indeed an Amrit Kaal for the comprador bourgeoisie and their masters abroad as the chains of imperialism can have a stronger hold over the Indian people. The development of society is reflected through the advancement of productive forces (ie. the means of labour and the human labour power) and the consequent development of new relations of production. The change from feudalism to capitalism in Europe is an apt example of such a development. Advancement of productive forces led to a change from the old feudal relations of production to new capitalist relations of production. This resulted in increased democracy in society. This qualitative change in the relations of production is the output of continuous quantitative directional change in productive forces. Two categories of personalities can be seen within society, the ones who believe that everything is governed by external forces and that change is

a result of external contradiction, and the other believes that both internal and external factors lead to change. The basic difference is in how one perceives the world. The former kind of people are puppets to the conditionality and relations in society. They believe that repression is historical and that power relations are inherent to society. They believe nothing can be changed. The latter category is governed by the objective reality and the historical changing nature of the subject. Here, there is a recognition that advances in technology and development of human consciousness is a by-product of contradiction. There is a recognition that the contradiction between advancing productive forces and the mode of production is inherent to human society and its development. This would mean that there is a constant contradiction between opposing forces in society.

### **Productive Forces**

Forces which are essential for the production process are called productive forces. In simple terms, human labour and technology are the two important productive forces. Viewing the world from a Marxist perspective, an axiomatic assumption of constant change applies. Hence, the nature of productive forces has also been observed as changing with time and space. From the ancient times to the modern world, the advancement of productive forces has moved in a certain direction where humans have changed themselves from the 'control of nature' to the

'control over nature'. Our ancestors in the caves feared nature. They were limited to their caves, anxious about forest fires, changing climate and the darkness. Humanity learned how to control fire, turn darkness into light. We have even gained the knowledge to control climate and create rain in deserts. This is how we developed, from being controlled by nature, to controlling nature. With the development of human consciousness, we have solved several riddles interfering in the path of human development. Humans are constantly learning new tactics to overpower natural forces through struggle.

This demonstrates that the advancement of human consciousness is directly related to struggle, and contradictions are causal to this struggle. The correct way to handle contradictions is the historical dialectical method, which is the philosophical approach that claims that ideas arise from an objective reality which can be perceived by the five senses and exists independent of mind or spirit. Idealism, the philosophical school that suggests that matter is dependent on mind or spirit or that the mind or spirit can exist outside the realm of objective reality, cannot deal with such contradictions. In England, before the bourgeoisie revolution, many written complaints were filed by the capitalist class to the feudal lords for tax concessions and facilitation of the advancement of the trade, but every time the feudal ruling class denied the genuine demand of

the rising capitalist class in order to maintain their class rule. With time, and with the advancement of the productive forces, the rising capitalist class realised that negotiatory means of achieving their goal were not sufficient and they turned towards militant organization. The militant overthrow of the British feudal lords was not a sudden and abrupt change, but a result of the constant and rigorous development of productive forces in the intense class struggle. During struggle, the emerging capitalist class developed collective consciousness on the class line and class interest. They developed their own technology and production mechanisms parallel to the feudal landlords. The development of indigenous technology made their movement self-reliant and helped develop their internal contradiction sharper than ever before.

Struggle and the inefficiency to combat the nature of the enemy provides a new space for the advancement of technology in order to overcome the ongoing hurdles. In ancient India, development of iron ore and steel technology played an important role in the advancement of society from one stage to another. Using wind and water to reduce the manual labour required to produce commodities from raw materials was the biggest factor in developing Europe into a collection of powerful kingdoms capable of feats that were previously impossible. Similarly in ancient India, the use of iron had a great role in the surplus production

of agriculture and the second urbanization in the Indian subcontinent. It helped to advance the production relations from the shudra holding system to feudalism. Through this change, a large part of the masses that were previously not part of the production process came under it.

### **Productive Forces and Their Relation With Mass Movement on Class Line**

We are living in an age of 'protestism' where protesting for sectional interests has become a predominating phenomenon for the petty-bourgeoisie section. Whether it is Jantar-Mantar or a different arena of protests, we can observe a common trend that a few activists come and engage in sloganeering and self-gratifying "photo ops". The same trend is repeated by this section every few days on a different issue. In studying the class-caste struggle in India, it is essential to investigate the nature of specific movements and the intention of the leadership. After the advent of the neo-liberal economic model and the emergence of a related social consciousness, a tendency to go for sectional interest within the legal framework has been seen to be increasing. There have been a number of protests emerging on an identitarian and intersectional line, but they don't take a sharp class line aimed towards building a larger unity of the oppressed. Due to a weak internal structural struggle and the hesitancy or refusal to articulate demands on class lines, many

movements have failed to meet their demands and have been co-opted by the ruling class.

In India, the situation regarding the development of the productive forces becomes very complicated. Our revolutionary forces are majorly focusing on the superstructure and not really working on the base of the system. The role of a leader is very essential in this. India's semi-feudal semi-colonial nature is reflected in the trend that the masses analyse the individual leaders and not the leadership as a collective. The rhetoric that although members of party 'X' are problematic and corrupt but a few of the leaders are good is very common.

To understand the real nature of a leader, the fundamental idea of the party needs to be the center of analysis. Let's take an example. It may be possible that one of the members is not taking bribes from the masses but what are the other activities of the party? Are they not promoting privatization in India? Have they taken action about the decreasing wages of workers and the deterioration of the agricultural sector? The answer, most often, is that neither the party nor the leaders are engaged positively with such issues directly plaguing the people. Hence, they are ultimately not working for the masses. If they are not working for the oppressed and exploited then they are working for the oppressor. Without sharp class struggle, clarity about the objective reality of the situation is not possible.

## Factors That Are Affecting Productive Forces

Brahmanism is the core of idealism in India. It does not believe in scientific analysis. According to this ideology, nothing remains to be discovered for humans. The ultimate aim of the human is *moksha* (to know the relation between the soul and Brahma). Brahmanism considers the study of material reality as a fallacy. Anything, other than the study of soul and Brahma leads to an individual getting tied to the material world. Such an individual is denied *moksha*. Thus, the preconception of attaining ultimate knowledge pulls us away from investigating society.

The Advaita Vedanta philosophy of Brahmanism is in direct contravention to the theory of contradiction, which justifies the dynamism of the society. The Absolute Monism of Brahmanism denies the existence of different things and phenomena, classifying them as diversities of the Brahma, thus denying the existence of different aspects. There are no different aspects and therefore, there can't be any contradiction between these aspects. One does not split into two according to Brahmanism, everything is part of the one. This passive nature of Brahmanism actually restricts Indian masses from developing new strategies and tactics to overcome contradictions.

Another blow to the productive forces is the penetration of imperial capital and the country's dependence

on it. Questions regarding the reason for India's direct jump from agriculture to the service sector without corresponding development in the manufacturing and production mechanism are never raised. Recent data shows that the primary sector contributes 21.82% to Indian GDP, secondary sector contributes almost 24% and tertiary sector contributes almost 51%. Our manufacturing never developed to the strength required for a development in the relations of production. The reasons for the same are twofold: firstly, the Indian agricultural sector has never produced the amount of surplus required to develop its own manufacturing base and secondly, the nature of the Indian big capitalists is comprador in nature. Comprador capitalists depend on imperial capital for technology and capital investment. The purpose of this inflow of imperial capital into India was to create a big market and use Indian land and resources to produce raw material and some spare parts of industrial produce. The imperialists developed a big exporting base for technology redundant to them in India. Because of India's backward mode of production and consciousness, a strong aspiration for technology redundant to its producing country remains. To understand the nature of production and its mechanism in India through TNCs (Transnational Companies), we can take the example of casualization of work in the process of Apple iPod production. In the iPod production industry, almost 66% of their workers are coming from outside of the USA



and 34% of their workers are coming from the US. The managers and engineers of the company are largely employed in the US. They earn almost 85,000 dollars per annum and this section covers almost 66% of the wages given by Apple in the Ipod production process. Meanwhile, casual and unorganized labour is engaged in third world countries like India and China. This section of workers earns only 5-6% of the standard income given to the casual workers of the US. The difference in the nature of work, and the exploitative surplus gained from the workers in imperialist countries compared to workers employed in countries like India is obvious. Technical and "advanced" managerial work is being governed by the forces of advanced imperialist countries and the "petty", manual work requiring more physical labour and less technical know-how is being outsourced through the backward productive forces of the "third world".

ILO published its 2016 report on the labour participation of the third world. It states that the share of agricultural workers in the total employment has been falling down but the number of workers in the agrarian sector is going up especially in south Asian countries. This is a clear indication of the stagnation of industrial employment in these countries. The expansion of employment in the real estate industry is also indicative of expanding foreign capital penetration in India, in which many semi-skilled

or unskilled forces are getting involved.

The above mentioned examples show a concerning growth in the technological dependency of the Indian economy on foreign countries. Mere subsistence is the key nature of the agricultural and industrial sector of India, while simultaneously excess surplus accumulation by the foreign imperialist and Indian capitalists has become the biggest bottleneck in the development of productive forces of India. India's national bourgeoisie is under heavy competition with the big capitalist and foreign companies. This force is under the heavy ideological influence of the comprador bourgeoisie. Because of this, their independent development is almost impossible until they free themselves from the clutches of this repressive nexus.

Advancing fascism in India is an eminent challenge for the broad toiling masses. The Indian state, acting in collaboration with the imperialist forces, is trying to push the people of the country under the trap of disenfranchisement from their own resources. Continually decreasing profit from land and agriculture practices is pushing farmers from the farmland to the industrial sector, where they are exploited as part of the informal workforce. Hilly areas of the country are facing massive forced migration towards the plain area, where the people are faced with no option but to work as cheap labour for survival. Land encroachment is rampant in the

whole country. Through such encroachment the Indian state is making land banks in different areas to give land on lease to big corporations. In the post-Covid times, states are competing with each other to develop land banks that attract foreign investment into their state. Yogi Aadiyanath, the staunch face of Hindutva nationalism in UP, is giving open instructions to the administrative officers to develop land banks which will disenfranchise the tillers from land and destroy their means of production. Pranab Rajan Chaudhary, the chief convenor of Centre for Land Governance, a NGO working on the land related issues, explained that to grab lands, the government is bypassing the rules and regulations and avoiding legitimate procedure. Government grabbed lands include a huge number of agrarian lands. Interestingly, most land banks have already attained all the requisite clearances for functioning. Thus, in the name of development and new projects, the government is selling people's valuable land with minor or no compensation. Because of less developed productive forces and huge competition with big corporations, this compensation money is not converted in the capital production process. Ultimately, after utilizing this small amount of money, the farmers are forced to work as petty-workers or unskilled workers in the foreign companies or into providing services on their own land which has been developed by the capitalist. Increasing trends to invest in real estate is the emerging phenomenon in

India with very less orientation towards production and manufacturing. This tendency actually derails the possibility of development of an independent national bourgeoisie. The national bourgeoisie is an independent capitalist who is not dependent on foreign capital and technical know-how for survival. Value produced by the national bourgeoisie in India stays in India and isn't looted by the imperialists. The increasing trend towards real estate would mean that surplus value will not be generated through production. Capital is created using surplus value. In the absence of capital, India will continue to be dependent on foreign capital.

### **Way Forward**

Overall, the situation of productive forces in India is in a very pathetic state where Brahmanism and imperialism are looting and derailing the majority of the Indian toiling masses. On one hand the passive nature of Brahmanism is creating a barrier to the development of the masses: and on the other hand, imperialism is promoting a mass consumerist culture within the masses. These two are the biggest hurdles to developing class struggle in the society. For the collective struggle towards liberation, we have to wage section-based struggle but this must be on the basis of a sharp ideological class line to achieve the revolutionary goal. We have to challenge the class-collaborationist approach of the contemporary left parties and attempt to develop a faith

in class-based struggle. This does not mean that section-based movements are not necessary.

Such movements are essential in order to understand the primary contradiction of a particular space, and work on it. But the Marxist forces must go further and develop the movement for the ultimate goal of revolution. Gloomy fascinating 'left' has created a very false image of Marxism, where they present Marxist aesthetics but work in essence, as revisionists who have no vision or aim of social transformation. Such "Marxists" derail the youth by preaching the impossibility of revolution. Their struggle is based on immediate economic needs and not based on larger political transformation to remove exploitation. Such forces never do a class struggle, they tail the masses who react based on their immediate needs and change the aesthetics accordingly. For example, if a caste atrocity is in the headlines they will put up posters of Ambedkar, but they won't do any struggle to annihilate caste as such. Similarly, when the queer question is in the news, they put up pride flags, but don't work towards queer liberation. These forces are also the representatives of the mechanical Marxism that prioritises external forces and do not show any concern to sharpen internal contradiction. This tendency also leads to passivity in the two-line struggle within the organisation which is essential for its development.

The youth must analyse the essence of the ideology of such forces, and discard their illusory aesthetics. To understand the real nature of struggle, the subjective forces have to look beyond their class interest or sectional interest and try to strengthen the struggle of the proletariat class. To combat the fascist onslaught, the nature of fascist attack must be analysed and understood. Repression and struggle have a dialectical relation. Slowing the speed of class struggle gives an upper hand to the class enemy. Absence of class struggle would mean a lack of resistance from the masses, this leads to increased repression from an emboldened ruling class. This is evident from history, be it the case of Najib or the regular vandalization of mosques in India. A victim-based politics, sympathy may be gained from 'Instagram masses' but the struggle is at the same time continuously losing ground.

Idealists talk about external forces and weaken the courage of the masses. We are used to listening about the strength of the enemy but very rarely do we actually focus on the internal consolidation.

In his famous writing of On Contradiction, Mao Tse-tung said that "the approach of one-sidedness is an idealist approach to see the problems. ....continued on Page 66

# UNCHANGING CHANGE: LOANS AND CREDIT IN AGRICULTURE

by Ramnit Kaur  
and Val Varshri

In Madhya Pradesh's Harda District, Rajesh Karode died during treatment after consuming celphos. His son alleges this was due to a INR 40 lakh debt which was owed to a set of harassing moneylenders who had imposed an interest as high as 10% on the loan.

This story is not of Karode alone—according to latest NCRB data, a total of 10,881 persons involved in farming sector (consisting of 5,318 farmers/cultivators and 5,563 agricultural labourers) have committed suicides during 2021, accounting for 6.6% of total suicides victims (1,64,033) in the country.

Multiple studies and surveys suggest

that a huge proportion of the farmer suicides in the country can be attributed to debt. For instance, 88% of the nearly 10,000 farmer suicides recorded across six districts of Punjab were due to the cycle of debt the victims were trapped in. Such a cycle is created systematically, due to the specific nature of Indian agricultural production where local usurers, landlords and banks form a nexus with Non-Banking Finance Corporations and small finance businesses. The negligible profits in the agrarian sector forces many farmers to rely on loans. The rising costs of farm inputs in the agrarian sector, especially after globalization and liberalization in the 90s, forced the farmers to further rely on loans due to lack of state support.



Loans from arhatiyas (middle men for landlords) and new forms of banking institutions become more and more of a necessity for the impoverished peasants to engage in agriculture. Informal forms of money-lending dominated the sphere. The nature of these informal systems led to local debt traps, as elaborated in one of our previous articles. The majority of the Indian agricultural sector is made of small and marginal farmers, with small land-holdings. One production cycle produces barely enough to cover their own consumption needs, which actually reflects subsistence farming. As the round of production does not produce enough surplus to cover the costs of the next round, the farmers have to rely on loans, not profit, for their next round of production. Wrongfully, we understand that surplus capital is the driving force in agriculture by looking at the lavish houses of landlords and their fancy vehicles, but the most important question is whether this is reinvested in agriculture for the advancement of production, which is omitted.

### **INFORMAL METHODS OF MONEY LENDING**

With the advent of liberalisation-privatisation-globalisation reforms introduced in 1991, due to the decreased contribution of farming in the national income, the government dis-invested from agriculture. As a result of the privatization of banks and removal of preferential rates of interest, reliance on moneylenders for credit is once again on the rise.

Usurious capital thus persists as a distinguishing feature of Indian agriculture.

Landlords, merchants and big farmers are providers of usurious loans in the village economies. They themselves can afford bank loans that come at institutionalised rates of credit. However, contrary to the capitalist mode of production, instead of investing this capital in technology that would increase surplus, a peculiar trend has been found in the use of bank loans by big farmers and landlords in India. They prefer to lend this money to small or landless peasants already reliant on them in the feudal organisation of villages. This credit is given out on usurious rates.

As these loans are sought for consumption needs, and/or to finance their initial mode of production; and most small farmers and landless peasants cannot afford the securities and documentation required to obtain institutionalised forms of credit- they are left with no choice but to rely on these big farmers and landlords. The parameters for obtaining loans from the landlord-moneylenders are relaxed- the moneylender relies on goons/ coercive feudal systems such as the naukar system in Haryana etc. to obtain back the loaned money.

### **Coercive Systems of Loan Repayment**

Moneylenders rely on a number of feudal ways to extract repayment of the loans advanced. In fact, full

repayment is not even expected out of such loans. For example, the landlord may use the debt to coerce the debtor into cheap labour that can be categorised as a form of semi-bonded labour.

This is a continuation of the feudal system where the worker is considered to be "attached to the land" of the landlord. Such a system is also based in caste exploitation- where the lower caste labourer is forced into labour through debt traps for the politically and economically powerful upper-caste landlord. This is evident in the *naukar* system in Haryana, where in exchange for loans, the oppressed caste labourer is forced to labour in the landlord's land for minimal or no wage. Often, the labourer's entire family is forced into performing labour for the landlord's family; this also reflects in rampant sexual abuse of landless women labourers by the landlords. The landownership dynamics is entirely in the favour of landlords and upper castes. For animal husbandry the Dalits and Valmiki community are heavily dependent upon landlords land for grazing. In the name of grazing and fodder, a number of extra economic coercions were forced on them, compelled to do tasks for which they make no money. Thus, semi-feudal bondage prevalent in rural India survives on the system of usurious capital.

Coercive and usurious methods of loan repayment reflect in informal loans taken from merchants as well. Credit is extended on the condition

that a particular crop that the merchant trades has to be cultivated and debt has to be repaid by selling the crop to that trader on prefixed terms favourable to the merchant. Sometimes, usurers or landlords, impose such conditions that at the time of payment is decided in such a way that these farmers are forced to sell, sometimes under prior commitment, a large part of their produce primarily to collect the cash needed for repayment. To pay the previous debts they have to take new debt from another money lender, because if they don't pay the compound interest will apply on the previous loan (found during a recent study of Sonipat, Haryana by the Nazariya Team). Sometimes, they have to repurchase the same with a higher price. Further, landlords rely on goons, thugs and their political power in the villages to avoid cases of runaway debtors.

### **INSTITUTIONALIZED FORMS OF MONEY-LENDING**

Despite the presence of institutional sources of loans, agricultural loans are given mostly by money lenders. Nonetheless, since the 1990s, most peasants have become members of cooperative committees from which they take small amounts of loans. Moreover, there has been an increased presence of banks in rural areas, as well as schemes centred around farmers. While small and middle peasants continue to depend on moneylenders, the landed peasants with big holdings are able to avail loans from institutional sources like

cooperative credit and bank loans more easily.

### **Credit System through Cooperative Societies**

Institutions providing loans are largely divided into short, medium and long term credit, which is a system governed by numerous laws like the Co-operative Credit Societies Act. These cooperatives often undertake the role of sale of agricultural inputs and distribution of rations through Public Distribution Systems. Though all peasants and even artisans and small traders may become a member of the society, it is interesting to note that shares are issued by these cooperatives which further determines the members' borrowing capacity. Loans are granted against security, landed assets, mortgages, cattle, agriculture, jewellery (with gold having a certain preference). Whereas short-term credit is supplied on the personal security, medium term loans are given by creating charge on immovable assets or mortgages.

Demand for long term credit arises out of the realisation that capital investment would lead to increasing production potential through acquiring assets like machineries, livestock and undertaking permanent land improvements and infrastructural development (construction of wells, buildings, erection of pump – sets). This was undertaken through Land Development Banks for which landowners are eligible through

mortgaging land.

### **Credit System through Bank Loans**

The aim of banks is to provide farmers with a low level of interest in order to reduce usury and excessive interest rate. However, the question of who is able to avail loans will reveal that small and middle peasants are hardly beneficiaries of these schemes. Peasants under tenancy face trouble as due to the informal nature of agreements, they are unable to procure relevant documents. Meanwhile, agricultural labourers are not even entitled to these benefits. Resultantly, there is a reluctance by both small peasants to ask for loans and by institutions to give loans. Therefore, there is a dependence on money lenders in the rural areas.

This is often in the form of arhatiyas, middlemen who establish themselves in towns and cities to mediate between farmers and grain procuring agencies via mandis though their main activity is to provide loans. Since some of them are also big landlords, it is easy for them to make bank limits and procure bank loans, which is used to lend money at high interests to small and middle peasants. In this manner, money lending is monopolised by ruling landlords- either directly or through arhatiyas.

### **Micro-finance and Imperialism**

Exorbitant forms of loan taking system from banks and money lenders made a large section of the

rural people loan less. To bridge this gap the government is promoting small finances which are backed by big banks. Government is pulling its hand from the loan side, and giving open space to foreign investment companies to exploit the cheap labour resources from the village side. We can easily see the appropriation of village agriculture and labour forces by big capitalists. Subsidiary companies of big companies are outsourcing through these petty works of village women outside factory set-up.

After rampant penetration of finance capital in metropolitan areas, it started penetrating towards village areas. The advent of this mammoth process started with the Green Revolution. Through this agrarian reform, foreign companies introduced new seeds, fertilisers and pesticides in specific areas of the country. Through this wide network of markets, the Gramin bank and NBFCs were promoted by the government to reduce the subsidy on agriculture. It was very clear from the very inception when India formally joined WTO, that after sometime they have to give up their subsidy policy. Through lifting these subsidies from diesel, electricity, seeds, fertilisers, the majority of the marginalised farmers left their lands.

The death trap of loan never leaves them alone. Small and landless peasantry have to take a loan to compensate for their previous loan and after this all hard process, they have to take loans from local

Sahukars. Recently, our survey team visited villages in Sonapat, Haryana and investigated the conditions of the financial system of peasantry. We hardly found a single house where people never took out loans, except some big landlords. Majority of the cases, these landlords are functioning as usurer or Sahukar in the villages, who charge according to the situation, most of the time, at a very high rate. Landlords and other powerful land owning sections get loans from banks very easily. They give bank loans to the landless and small peasantry at a very high rate. Here, we can see the direct nexus of big landlords and big financial institutions in the village areas.

Due to the crisis of capitalism as evident in the rising debt in the agrarian economy, individuals are increasingly experiencing a decline in their purchasing power due to which they find themselves unable to afford essential everyday needs, with inflation slowing down consumption rates; private consumption grew at 2.8% in the first quarter of FY23, while it grew 0.5% on a seasonally adjusted sequential basis after contracting 2% in the previous three months. To address this disparity between people's ability to consume and the rate of production, farmers turn to non-banking financial institutions that offer small loans, commonly known as micro-loans. It is through these organisations that imperialist forces penetrate a semi-feudal system like India, with a IBEF 2023 report on agriculture reporting a sharp increase of investments with a



cumulative FDI inflow of \$11.51 billion between April 2000-September 2022. These micro-finance providers position themselves as an alternative to traditional landlords and usury. However, imperialism does not change the system but is instead integrated into it. Therefore, the disparity between them lies primarily in their outward appearance rather than their fundamental nature, in form rather than essence.

The underlying dynamics of the system remain intact, perpetuating the same coercive, exploitative and unfree relations as that in a feudal society. This is because farmers depend on consistent liquidity for their daily expenses. Consequently, they seek financial support from micro-finance providers, believing it to be a viable solution. However, this reliance on micro-loans often leads to a mounting burden of debt as people's purchasing power is still low due to which their products are not bought. In Haryana, farmers were seen throwing products on the roads, with the explanation being that when you have overproduction or little to no production, price fluctuates as consumers are unable to afford even the MSP. Moreover, micro-finance means that there is a legal contract between the creditor and the farmer, which results in a formal system which is increasingly rigid, leaving borrowers with limited room for negotiation or flexibility due to set terms of contract. Further, since the loan contracts are legally binding, the state in its role as an enforcer,

employs the police and courts to ensure compliance and pursue non-payment cases. This coercive approach further exacerbates the borrowers' predicament.

Moreover, the time-frame for loan repayment, coupled with exorbitantly high interest rates, adds to the challenges faced by borrowers. The repayment window is often extremely narrow, leaving borrowers with little opportunity to meet their obligations. In addition, the interest rates imposed on these micro-loans can be shockingly high, often ranging from 30% to 40%. These oppressive interest rates deepen the cycle of debt, making it incredibly difficult for borrowers to escape their financial burdens.

Take the story of Mangal Chand Meghwal, a Dalit farmer with disabilities, who committed suicide due to mounting debt as an illustration of the feudal relations prevalent despite foreign capital. Despite paying back Rs 1 lakh of his Rs 2.98 lakh loan, he was told to deposit Rs 4.59 lakh more, while being coerced and harassed by officials as the farmer received a notice that his land would be auctioned. The state is a goon for credit sharks, with villagers narrating how a protest was met with a dismal response: "I don't understand why the administration is cooking up stories about his suicide. Even when we staged a protest following Mangal's death, the SDM threatened us in front of everyone saying that it a murder and not a suicide."

## **The Semi-Feudal Character of Institutionalised Loans**

The question of class determines who is able to avail loans in a semi-feudal, semi-colonial society, in which institutions of credit depend on formal documentation and security. This is uncommon for feudal relations in agriculture which function on informal agreements between the landlord and the peasants, not to mention subsistence farming in which savings and security is an impossible task for most peasants. Resultantly, it is only the rich landed peasantry which has accessibility to be able to avail loan, due to which small and middle peasantry is reliant on them for credit.

In a capitalist society, surplus generation is paramount and therefore forms the motivation behind availing credit. In contrast to the same, bank loans in India are often availed for non-agricultural purposes which do not develop productive activities. Borrowed money is often availed for the purpose of marriage and religious ceremonies, building houses etc; a trend more common amongst middle and big peasants. In tandem, peasants may need loans on an emergent basis (education of children, hospital bills, migration etc) and delay in getting institutional credit forces the peasants towards landlords.

The existence of feudal relations within villages facilitates the emergence of the dominant landlord classes, who frequently possess their

own armed forces to exert control over the village. These dynamics have a direct impact on established credit systems such as banks and cooperative loans, which adhere to a policy of distinguishing between "new and old" loans. As new loans cannot be issued without clearing old loans, landlords and middlemen collude with bank personnel so that the records of the farmer are manipulated to falsely indicate that the entire loan has been repaid, thereby allowing for an extension of the loan limit- repayment is then owed to both the banks and the middlemen.

## **Conclusion**

The increasing indebtedness in agriculture is attributed as the primary cause of agrarian distress as well as mounting farmer suicides. Debt is created due to diminishing returns from agriculture. As the costs of inputs continue to rise and farming becomes more expensive due to the effects of the imperialist policies of Green Revolution and neo-liberalisation, farmers are still stuck in producing for their bare subsistence and are therefore unable to meet the costs of agriculture, thereby relying on loans.

While credit was institutionalised in the form of banks and cooperatives, its essence remains feudal in nature due to the reliance on landlords. In this manner, debt is created due to the semi-feudal mode of production wherein the landlord is more interested in maintaining their class

interest over maximising agricultural production. Resultantly, it is the land and the tiller who suffer for it as not only is surplus generation curbed (due to which there is a growing reliance on loans and indebtedness) but the productivity of land impaired. This is because under the semi-feudal, semi colonial system, the peasantry who form the backbone of agricultural production, is denied the opportunity to exercise ownership over the means of production. This arrangement perpetuates a situation where peasants are dependent on landlords for access to land, stifling their ability to innovate and improve productivity. Consequently, agricultural development remains stagnant, hindering overall economic progress. Therefore, as long as land remains in the hands of the landlords, as long as the mode of production empowers landlords over people, stagnancy in agriculture will continue.

Therefore, revolution is inevitable in the current circumstances, in fact, it is the only solution. For this, it is necessary to wrest control over land and resources from the ruling landlords and empower the tillers. By granting the tiller control over land, agriculture can flourish and subsequently break the cycle of debt which acts as the noose marking the demise of Indian agriculture.

## Bibliography

1. ENS. "Heavy Debt Burden Drives Farmer to Die by Suicide in MP." *The New Indian Express*, June 9, 2023.

2. National Crime Records Bureau. Rep. *Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India*. New Delhi, 2021.

3. Gupta, Vivek. "88% of Over 9,000 Punjab Farmers Who Died by Suicide in 18 Years Were Debt-Ridden: Study." *The Wire*, June 2022.

4. Ghandy, Kobad. "Theoretical Basis to Understand Class Relations in Transition in Agriculture." *Towards A New Dawn*, 2012.

5. Kar, Guruprasad. "Prevalence of Semi-Feudal Relations and Intensification of Parasitic Extraction of Agricultural Surplus under Neo-Liberal Policies." *Towards A New Dawn*, 2018.

6. Kumar, Ajay. "On Production Relations: Investigation Haryana (Part 2)" *Towards A New Dawn*, 2013

7. Rajeev, Meenakshi, and Pranav Nagendran. "Are Gold Loans Glittering for Agriculture? ." *Economic & Political Weekly* 53, no. 26-27 (June 2018).

8. E-Agri, Agricultural Finance and Co-Operation Lecture No. 11  
<http://eagri.org/eagri50/AECO241/pdf/lec11.pdf>

# SAMIR AMIN'S CARDINAL SINS AGAINST THE TOILING MASSES

by Nishant Anand



As young Marxists of the 21st century, we undertake the historical task of countering imperialism, revisionism and fascism. The long history of human civilization, particularly from capitalist development to imperialist development, has seen a change in the nature of capitalism from progressive capitalism to moribund monopolistic imperialism. However, straight generalization of history is not the appropriate way for a Marxist to understand history and the current movement as doing so would mean lacking the objective reality of a particular time and

space in our analysis.

In the current time when revolutionary movements are facing setbacks materially and ideologically, we have to be very conscious regarding postmodernism, fascist traps, revisionism, modern revisionism and other non-revolutionary reactionary trends. That's why we have to differentiate between appearance and essence, reality and aesthetic. In the age of Instagram and like-based viewership, the legitimacy of work is justified on the basis of likes and shares.

The mode of communication and interactions are being severely controlled by imperialist forces and continuously targeting the revolutionary contents in circulation. The idea of Samir Amin and the justification of third worldism is a very prominent debate in the public arena through which people of the third world are justifying the third world revolution. Through this "ideological struggle" between north and south, Samir Amin proposed a very broad picture of debate on Marxism and dogma of Marxism.

### **1. In The Name of Third Worldism**

"All people in the first world are considered as the exploiters and revolutionary potential is said to only exist in the third world" is the most vulgar position of the third worldist, where they eliminate the exploiter-exploited relation in the first world. This line will lead to subjectivism and further imperialism through revisionism, where major focus has shifted from transformation to reform.

Arguing against imperialism, Samir Amin has focused on American imperialism and its repercussions on the development of third world countries. Detailing his arguments against American imperialism, he exposed the role of IMF and WTO-World Bank like institutions which have been helping to expand the imperialist capital of America and its allies. Underdeveloped nations and their current pathetic manufacturing and agricultural production are in this

predicament because of American imperialism. It is very true that in between American imperialism and the emerging Russian and Chinese imperialisms, American imperialism is the dominating one. But the third worldist position of Samir Amin pushes the argument in the direction that the only contradiction in the world is the one between American imperialism and oppressed nations of the third world. This position negates the internal contradictions within the third world countries. That is, the contradiction between proletariat-imperialism and imperialism-oppressed nations.

On the one hand, America is giving open support to eradicate resistance by tribals from the different regions of India and on the other hand China is also countering India's revolutionary movement. The Dengist approach of revolution was developed to restore capitalism in China. The parties like CPM, CPI, etc who are talking about the Dengist path and continuously focusing on productive forces. "At one time productive forces will get revolutionary" and "time is not for revolution" these are all Dengist diplomacy to hide their real anti-revolutionary agenda.

### **2. Class Analysis of Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) Leadership And Its Nature Towards Imperialism**

The NAM was established for the vision of non-alignment with two poles and to find a separate way of development. This vision was

supported by Samir Amin as an alternative to world order and as a strong force against imperialism. But we need to evaluate the relation of NAM countries with America and Russia and the overall impact of imperialism on these nations. The most fundamental aspect of investigation for a Marxist is to understand the mode of production of a particular space or country or nation. Unfortunately, Samir Amin has failed to do so. He has drawn a simple line between north and south, without examining the class nature of the ruling class and its functionality with imperialism. Oversimplification can lead towards subjectivism. When Samir is talking about the peasantry, there is also an over-generalization since he categorized the entirety of global south peasantry as one homogenous class. Class analysis of China was available in front of him but he just avoided the basic fundamental aspect of contradiction. Similarly, if we want to understand the nature of the ruling class of India we have to investigate the relations of production of this country.

The NAM countries were largely dependent on American and USSR imperialism for technology and capital. This dependency was created through the comprador capitalist of the south and feudal ruling class alliance. Because of the strong national liberation movement in southern countries, it became tough to intervene directly in the third world. The major purpose of the imperial forces to ally with the ruling classes was to restrict the

independent development in agriculture and industries and penetrate imperial capital for the maximization of surplus extraction. Amin also negated the merger and annexation of oppressed nationality companies and negated the question under the realm of world capital. This process of Annexation and Merger also impacted the capitalists of northern countries, where big imperialist forces successively swallowed small or medium companies.

In an interview, Samir said that "Our Movement of Non-Aligned Countries proclaimed our right to choose our route to development, implemented laws and forced the powers of the time to adjust to the demands of our development." We have to investigate this statement carefully and how far it got implemented on ground. Under the regime of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, the government had established a project, Helwan Steel Works. This project was presented as the backbone of the industrialization of Egypt. The major aid of this company was coming from the USSR, which was turning into an imperialist country and expanding their finance capital through aid. After the 1970s, when the global scenario was changing and the power balance shifted towards the US, the Egyptian government had signed foreign aid treaty with USAID in the 1970s. In the same trajectory, we can easily trace the dependency of the Indian state over foreign funding from imperial blocks.

### 3. Lack of Class Analysis in Agrarian Production in Developing Countries

After the advent of post-modernism understanding and its spreading in the intellectuals, we experienced a sea of change and shift from the class line. The Great Chinese Revolution had fuelled the class struggle in the global south and north. But after the capitalist restoration and transformation of China as an imperialist country the politics of class struggle got reduced. That was the exact time when reactionary post-modern identitarian politics took its pace. The era of generalization and compartmentalization covered the university spaces and unfortunately the universities became 'centers of knowledge production'. The form of knowledge production which was forced by the imperial forces is against the Marxist knowledge production. Knowledge production is based upon objective reality and perception, where objective reality is the center of knowledge production. Mao in his famous philosophical article, *On Practice*, recognized that knowledge is produced through struggle. Every phase of development must conflict with the existing opposing forces of the existing mode of production. But in the era of 'post-colonialism', 'Postmodernism', 'post-structuralism', the production of knowledge started occurring through discourse, not through struggle.

Samir Amin proposed his criticism against Lenin on the agrarian

production development, in which he opposed the idea that modernization of technology through capitalism had solved the problem of food crisis. Parallely, he appreciated Maoists for understanding the agrarian question. This position of Samir is coming from his 'generalized-marxist' perspective which has loosened its capacity to receive the things in totality and particularities and its dialectical relations with each other. In *'Investigation of Societal Transformation from Feudalism to Capitalism'*, Rodney Hilton explained the role of market formation, mercantile capital, modernization of technology, development of commodity exchange, advancement of agrarian technology and the role of protestant, etc., as factors which contributed to early capitalist countries developing their industrial base which engaged the peasantry which left the farms and joined the factory. Number of people engaged in agrarian work decreased drastically. To maintain the production and meet the country's needs, advancement of technology was the essential aspect. Advent of capital in third world countries through imperialism has changed some class dynamics in the agrarian relations too. But Samir has neglected the most basic aspect of the contradiction, that is, the internal contradiction is the dominating factor. On agrarian production and the food crisis in the global south, he neglected to mention the contradictions between landlords and landless peasantry or the relations between big landlords and big capitalists. The change in the

land holdings of middle and small peasantry, these factors were always missing in his analysis. Internal contradiction is the major contradiction of any aspect, this is the basis of the Maoist investigation method. But because of his conflation of internal and external contradictions and his generalizations, he was not able to propose any solutions.

#### **4. Problems in Core Periphery Theory**

When we see the structure of biosphere parks, it is divided between three major parts: core, buffer and periphery. The core area is a no-go zone where no human (natives) are allowed. Periphery is the region where people can do agricultural activities and animal-rearing work. Likewise, according to Samir Amin, all contradictions lie in between south and north countries and nations, or more precisely, we can say the capital penetration from Global north to south. Prominent Marxist scholar Andre-Gunder Frank had proposed the "dependency theory." The theory talks about the underdevelopment of the global south and its reasons. "The people of less-developed countries are not to blame for the failure of their societies to develop. Instead, Gunder Frank suggested that Western nations deliberately failed to develop these countries." A casual reader may agree with this, once again this theory gives primacy to imperialism over the other contradictions within underdeveloped countries.

In his analysis, Andre-Gunder Frank

negated the role of big landlords and comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie in the third world countries. The role of big landlord and comprador bourgeoisie class have been explained by Yash Tondon in his famous work *Debate on Class, State and Imperialism* and Suniti Kumar Ghosh in *Indian Big Bourgeoisie*. Here, both showed that national capitalism of underdeveloped countries never fostered and production was monopolized by a imperialist-subservient comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie. The position of Andre-Gunder Frank and Samir Amin is non-dialectical too, where they completely negated that imperialism is propped on the base of feudalism in countries like India and they thus only fixated on one fundamental contradiction and ignored the principal contradiction in semi-feudal semi-colonial countries.

Samir has reduced the question of revolution in their world countries as an identity struggle where anything can be negated by the third world intellectuals in the name of anti-colonial thinking and any absurd practice can be accepted by these intellectuals which are coming from third world. This whole perception creation from above has subverted the Maoist position in which "internal contradiction is the major one." The worst part is that nowadays in the name of anti-colonialism and post-colonialism, intellectuals are guiding the path of revolution, not the proletariat revolutionary party or activists.



## **5. Mr. Amin, Don't Confuse Merchant Capital with Finance Capital**

It is interesting to investigate the understanding of Samir Amin regarding capitalist development in England where he justified the idea that the inception of the industrial revolution was based upon imperialism. For this he pointed at some important historical events like, plunder of American indigenous people, loot of their resources, slave trade etc. On the basis of these arguments, he delegitimizes Lenin's argument that imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism. According to him, imperialism was always inherent in capitalism.

Simply, merchant capital is the capital production in the process of commodity exchange. This means if X is a country where the value of luxury goods is very high and Y is a place where food grains value is very high. Value of any commodity is realized through the socially necessary labour time invested to produce it. This means an advanced technical product takes more time to produce in comparison to less technical food items. But the finance capital is not produced through the exchange of goods but through the merger of banking and industrial capital. It was developed in the era of imperialism during the 1870s when advanced capitalist countries started annexing and monopolizing small firms and banks. At the time of finance capital's development, production capacity of imperialist

countries was very high due to concentration of surplus and the advancement of technology.

In India, from 1750 to 1820s, was the time of merchant capital. During this time, the British East India Company never intervened directly in the production or any infrastructural process. As a merchant company, their major work was to buy goods whose demand was high in the European market and sell in their native market. But in the era of finance capital they invested massive capital inside India in railways, banking, industries, plantation etc. through this production process the goods turned into commodities and were exported from colony to their home countries.

These basic flaws of Amin's analysis distanced him from Lenin's position on imperialism. He deviated from the correct Leninist position which guides "concrete analysis of concrete situations" and took the revisionist line of "absolute generalization of concrete situations."

## **6. Position on China**

What should be the aim of a communist party? Revolution, change in the relations of production under the leadership of the proletariat. How can a Marxist conflate Maoist China and post-Mao China? Samir Amin, in his lengthy writings on the food crisis and about the underdevelopment of the south, justified Mao's initiative in the agricultural field. This means the

Communist Party of China took many big decisions and fulfilled the demand of the country and generated surplus, which was commendable. But there is no justification of post-Mao China, when capitalism was restored in the country. The contemporary opportunist Dengist clique had just destroyed the strong agricultural commune system of China which was developed during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Deng Xiaoping opened the doors of China for foreign investment and joined hands with the imperialist gang in 1980. Autonomy of the village economy was destroyed through the heavy privatization of land and the contract system. Government had fixed the limit of procurement of grain and pulses. Beyond that peasants were made free to sell their produce in the market. This whole process of privatization, the gap between rich peasants and poor



peasantry increased and crores of peasantry was unemployed. All these facts will not work in favour of your sins Samir.

These superfluous conclusions which have been drawn by Samir Amin are detrimental for the revolutionary movement of oppressed masses and

nationalities as they justify capitalist and imperialist form of development, as long as it is presented in the garb of a "third world alternative."

**Continued from Page 51....**

Where we focus on individual not collective, we consider the enemy but not the strength of our own, we talk about ruling class consciousness but not the consciousness developing through class

struggle, we only talk about productive forces and not about production relation". This means our one-sided approach turns the wheel of historical dialectical materialism to the metaphysical approach or idealist approach.

# UTSA PATNAIK: THE FEAR OF MAKING THE CALL FOR REVOLUTION



**by Shriram Rishi**

When faced with a situation of crisis, wherein there is mass upsurge and an organized peoples' struggle emerges to deal with the roots of this crisis, it is difficult for intellectuals to deny the objective truth of the situation that led to such developments..For legitimacy, some intellectuals may instead find

compromised conclusions which rely on the discoveries made within the course of peoples' movements, while at the same time changing those discoveries and political assertions into academic analysis that run counter to the demands of the movement. Such is the tragic case of Prof. Utsa Patnaik.

An economist heralded across the world for her work on the agrarian question in India, she is also lauded for her works on the transition from feudalism to capitalism, along with her joint work with Prabhat Patnaik on imperialism

The late 1960s to the 1970s was a period of global upheaval, with the all-mighty United States army facing defeat at the hands of the people of Vietnam, while at the same time in China, a student movement intended to transform the nature of education in the country transformed into a revolutionary upheaval in what is called the Cultural Revolution. The impetus given by the struggles of people in China and Vietnam was stoking a fire that had already been lit with the failed democratization of society that the transfer of power in 1947 had promised. The promised growth and development had never come. India remained at the brink of famine, facing severe droughts continuously from 1961-65 and with agriculture amounting to a peak of 42.5% of India's GDP in the 1960s, a crisis within agriculture would rock the functioning of the Indian state. Even so, shortages of cereals and grains needed for the domestic market were commonplace. Simultaneously, the Cultural Revolution questioned every aspect of society ruthlessly and rekindled a fire of interrogation and social transformation across the world. This also saw the explosion of peoples' movement in India, which started with the Naxalbari uprising and spread all over India in places like

Srikakulam, Lakhimpur Kheri, etc. It was in this period of crisis that this peoples' movement emerged.

Along with these developments, came ideological contentions struggling to discover the causes behind this crisis. It was clear that this was not just a matter driven by drought, but in the entire way people in India engaged in agriculture as a production activity. Within academia, Utsa Patnaik represented a unique trend in the "Mode of Production debate" of the 1970s, wherein she argued that Indian agriculture did not exhibit capitalist production but instead, was characterized by 'unfree' relations, akin to bonded labour. Beyond the academia's ivory towers, vigorous debate on the mode of production also took place between the leadership of the on-going peoples' movements, with activists like Charu Majumdar asserting that this agrarian condition was not capitalist in nature but semi-feudal. Changing this condition was the principal nature of the peoples' struggles mentioned above. Utsa Patnaik's position is one worth evaluating since her analysis is highly close to the analysis of semi-feudalism, even though she attempts to float between what she deems two absolutes of semi-feudalism and capitalism. But the deviations she takes are questionable alterations which have larger political implications to the question of "what is to be done" when it comes to changing society.

## Erroneous Conclusions in Patnaik's Analysis on the Agrarian Question

In her work, *The Agrarian Question and Development of Capitalism in India*, Utsa Patnaik historicizes the development of capitalism across the world. She evaluates this in terms of how the bourgeois democratic revolutions in Europe such as the French Revolution and the English Civil War transformed the pre-existing agrarian condition. This condition was premised on feudal relations of production towards capitalism through forceful re-orientation of land ownership from the hands of the feudal lords and landlord class who owned disproportionately vast amounts of land. Patnaik then lays out the two paths through which these land relations have historically been changed. First, is the revolutionary path of forceful seizure of land from landlords and redistribution of this among poor and landless peasants who own very small land-holdings or none at all. Patnaik gives the example of China, which in the stage of New Democracy (1949-1952), undertook this programme. The second route is the path taken in the erstwhile Prussia (now Germany) also colloquially called the Junker path. Wherever there is a resistance to this violent shake-up of the agrarian condition, this second path is undertaken which basically functions as a snail's-pace motion from feudalism to capitalism, through reform (for example, through laws) measures which are not intended to change the pre-existing

relations of production.

The decaying pre-capitalist, feudal system therefore sustains itself and minor changes occur which do not change the general nature of things. In Russia, a country which was already practicing imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, this path was pushed through various reform measures like the so-called serf-bondage abolition of 1861 which did not see the complete eradication of the vast feudal relations of production. As it can be inferred, this path is a "top-down" measure versus the "bottom-up" approach of the first path. This was similarly attempted in India through various reform measures like the attempted land reforms, the Land Ceilings act, the abolition of Zamindari by law etc.

This is where the first erroneous approach by Utsa Patnaik is highlighted. Joseph Stalin writes, "in order to live, people must have food, clothing, footwear, shelter, fuel, etc.; in order to have these material values, people must produce them; and in order to produce them, people must have the *instruments of production* with which food, clothing, footwear, shelter, fuel, etc., are produced, they must be able to produce these instruments and to use them. The instruments of production wherewith material values are produced, the *people* who operate the instruments of production and carry on the production of material values thanks to a certain *production experience* and *labor skill* – all these elements jointly constitute the *productive*

*forces* of society. But the productive forces are only one aspect of production, only one aspect of the mode of production, an aspect that expresses the relation of men to the objects and forces of nature which they make use of for the production of material values. Another aspect of production, another aspect of the mode of production, is the relation of men to each other in the process of production, men's *relations of production*. Men carry on a struggle against nature and utilize nature for the production of material values not in isolation from each other, not as separate individuals, but in common, in groups, in societies. Production, therefore, is at all times and under all conditions social production."

The motion of change in society is defined by the quantitative changes occurring within productive forces through the struggle of people against restrictions in this attempt at harnessing nature, with the scales tipping finally into the qualitative change in the relations of production (the changes in class relations) of society to push the order into a new mode of production. An avalanche does not occur without the continuous accumulation of snow and other material on mountains reaching a tipping point where it finally tumbles down in a massive form from mountain slopes, a quantitative change leading to qualitative change. This is the law of motions of change in society. This also applies to the transition from feudalism to capitalism. Utsa Patnaik states this as her position on what the mode of

production in India is: "the capitalist path in India's agriculture is one dominated by a socially narrowly based 'landlord capitalism' with semi-feudal feature, of caste subordination of workers, which is capable of raising the level of productive forces only under certain exceptional conditions, and which acts as a long run fetter on agricultural growth, and hence on the overall growth of the economy." In simpler terms, Patnaik sees that capitalism has a tendency of perpetuating uneven development. So, according to her, in various parts of India, the shift from feudalism to capitalism has not taken in a qualitative manner and thus such areas are semi-feudal in nature, which is how Vladimir Lenin characterized Eastern Europe too. Simultaneously, Patnaik upholds the view that all of this is part and parcel of the 'uneven development tendency' of capitalism, arguing that the prevalent nature of capitalism in India is "landlord capitalism" of which semi-feudal areas are a part. Essentially, to Patnaik, if the journey from feudalism to capitalism is a long route, she says some areas are close to feudalism, but the overall march is towards capitalism. When she uses the term landlord capitalism, she is referring to the idea that the landlord class within the agrarian feudal structure is getting transformed into profit-seeking bourgeoisie within what she deems capitalist India. According to Patnaik, the mode of production in Indian society is in contravention to the law that Stalin defined above and has somehow

occurred not through the struggle of exploited classes for emancipation but through legal reform measures! Patnaik therefore violates the basic principles of historical materialism.

To elaborate further, one must engage with Patnaik's *On Capitalism and Agrestic Unfreedom* (1995), wherein she correctly understands that in India, capitalism as imposed by the British colonial force never demolished feudalism in India but instead strengthened the feudal structure and upon this pre-existing base of feudalism, built imperialist-capitalist relations in India. Simultaneously, they demolished all independent initiatives from among the bourgeoisie in India. Mao Tse-tung would call this state of affairs bureaucratic capitalism in China. This situation is vastly different from what occurred in Europe and the European struggle against feudalism via particularly the French Revolution. Russian geographer Peter Kropotkin, in his retelling of the French Revolution recounts how the method of top-down change and bottom-up agrarian change occurred during the French Revolution. He writes, "before the resolutions of August 5 and 'II had been published, before the line of demarcation between what should be redeemed and what should disappear since that day had been marked out-long before those acts and renunciations had been formulated into paragraphs of law, messengers had already brought the good news to the peasant. Henceforth, whether he was shot down or not, he would no longer pay

anything. The peasant insurrection took, therefore, a new force. It spread through the provinces, such as Brittany, which until then had remained quiet. And if the landowners demanded payment of any kind of dues, the peasants went to their chateaux and burnt all the records and land-registers. They did not care to submit to the decrees of August and distinguish between redeemable rights and abolished rights, says Du Châtellier. Everywhere, all over France, the pigeon-houses and game were destroyed. In the villages, the peasants ate their fill therefore, and they also took possession of those lands which, though formerly belonging to the village communities, had been seized by the lords." Therefore, the legal changes and formalization of the social order via the state only occurred *after* the people had already enacted such change on the ground through armed revolution.

Law was tailing and even holding back change while the oppressed and exploited peasantry themselves carved out the contours of change through direct action, enacting the later popular slogan of "land to the tiller." Later on, these changes were formalized in the French National Assembly. It is thus evident that firstly, the bourgeois democratic revolution is an armed agrarian revolution, secondly, capitalist relations of production were pushed through mass action and a violent restructuring of society, a qualitative change, instead of being imposed by

by some external force and thirdly, the political birth of capitalism occurred through a violent anti-feudal struggle unlike the alliance of feudalism and imperialism seen in the way Utsa Patnaik described the Indian situation to be.

It should then be clear that Patnaik's idea that the top-down method alone can somehow transform Indian society from the situation created during the colonization of India is mythical, since no parallel to what occurred during the French Revolution is seen in India. Utsa Patnaik is capable enough to recognize that the feudal 'fetters' act as a hindrance to agrarian change and only in 'extraordinary' conditions can agrarian change be pushed in a qualitative manner, even though she concludes that the general direction of change is towards capitalist relations in agriculture. What extraordinary conditions, except anti-feudal anti-imperialist peoples' struggle, is Patnaik referring to? It is apparent that quantitative changes have most definitely occurred in India but the nature of Indian society is yet to change qualitatively. The idea that the diminished presence of the big landlords in a village sitting on a khaat, smoking hookah in a circle translates to the disappearance of feudalism in India is incorrect. For example, Patnaik's claim that 'landlord capitalism' is emerging in India is easily exposed with the lack of agricultural capitalists as a class in India.

Scholar Pratik Rumba explains the

limits of the top-down method in India and this question as he writes, "the redistributive land reform arises from the presence of burden of rent on tenant-peasants that act as a barrier for capital investment. If one claims that agriculture is dominated by capitalist production relations then there is no need for redistributive land reform. This is solely because the major part of surplus is accrued in the form of 'profit' by capitalist farmers. One would be interested in identifying this capitalist class." Guruprasad Kar, responding to a study of Indian agriculture that propounded an analysis even further away from Patnaik's analysis, writes, "*Agricultural capitalism without capitalist farmer is as much nonsense as capitalism without the capitalist. And there is no basic difference between the capitalist in general and the capitalist farmer in particular.* First, the big land owning class (possessing over 10 hectares of land) invest only about 10.5% of the surplus they appropriate, in productive assets (This is all India average. The rate (22.3%) is somewhat higher in Punjab). Hence bulk of the surplus from this section does not return to productive investment. Secondly, the data [from National Sample Survey (NSS)] clearly shows that most of the middle, small and marginal farmers cannot even earn their living from farming. So the question of acquiring surplus by them does not arise. It is true that landless, middle, small and marginal farmers are creating surplus by their labour either through intense farming or labouring in others' fields,



but the bulk of the surplus is being appropriated by various classes who can hardly be recognized as capitalist class in Indian agriculture. The major part of surplus is appropriated by a complex combination of various unproductive exploiters. They are mainly usurers, traders and suppliers of agricultural equipments closely tied with the operation of imperialist capital.”

Patnaik has a sharp understanding to acknowledge that the mere existence of wage labour in agriculture is not proof enough for emergence of capitalist relations, but it is the ability to increasingly accumulate capital which is conclusive. This would require the so-called agricultural capitalist to re-invest the surplus value they accumulate. Kar clinches this with the fact that those owning more than 10 hectares of land invest only 10.5% of their total surplus. This is contrary to the general trend of capitalist production. Pratik Rumba concludes, “no significant change has occurred in the agrarian structure; instead it witnessed increasing trends towards rentierism, usury and Merchant capital since 1980’s. The NSS data suggest the declining share of large landholders over the decades. This led many to conclude the declining power of landlords in rural India. It is true that the landlord as an ‘individual’ holding a large size of land has declined over the decades (shown by NSSO) but the landlord as a surplus appropriating ‘class’ has been on the rise.” The big landlords are now found in industrial areas as labour contractors, in government

offices as bureaucrats, in the Parliament as politicians. But their relations to the land and production process remain the same.

Furthermore, circling back to the role of imperialism in distorting the development in India, a position Utsa Patnaik agrees to, one finds a key factor in the hindrance to this development of productive forces the way Patnaik is hoping for. The aforementioned Guruprasad Kar writes, “Deindustrialization, the creation of a new class of landlords mainly from higher castes who were completely alienated from agriculture, the payment of huge rent in cash combined with partial commercialization, and the forcible introduction of some cash crops have created havoc for the Indian peasantry. Each of these gave rise to, apart from landlords, some new parasitic classes like usurers, crop traders, and a large section of intermediaries that could fatten themselves by serving the colonial extraction. Due to their control over multiple markets of land, labor, credit, and output, they could increase this extraction beyond the limits possible in any single market. All of these processes led to a new type of feudalism that may be termed semi-feudalism. In this colonial system, trading capital, money lending business with an exorbitant rate of interest, and capital to purchase land with the aim of collecting high rent, could all *flourish by serving the imperialist plunder of the colonial rulers*. Naturally, all these different classes that were born

played a reactionary role in the context of developing the productive forces. In the absence of any alternative, the peasants were rendered helpless before these parasitic classes who took away not only the surplus but a part of the necessities for sustaining the family. The appropriation of the whole surplus from agriculture by these classes and the destruction of the indigenous handicraft industries actually pushed back the development of the productive forces in Indian society." The fundamental factor here is that the survival of these new feudal classes and their form of exploitation was premised in serving imperialism and foreign finance capital, in fact, they flourished due to imperialism which preserved and harboured feudalism for its purposes. This is contrary to the historic experience of development of capitalism as previously pointed out.

In a society where backward productive forces are not just created but preserved by the might of imperialism, the imagination that the 'fetters' that Patnaik talks of will automatically be eradicated without liberation from imperialism is an impossibility. This question was dealt with nearly a century ago in the Communist International (Comintern) via a debate between Leon Trotsky and J.V. Stalin. "The Comintern holds that *survivals of feudalism* are the predominating factor in the oppression in China at the present moment, a factor stimulating the agrarian revolution....

And precisely because feudal survivals, with their entire militarist bureaucratic superstructure, *are the principal form of oppression in China*, China is now passing through an agrarian revolution of gigantic power and scope..... imperialism, with all its financial and military might, is the force in China that supports, inspires, fosters and preserves the feudal survivals, together with their entire bureaucratic-militarist superstructure. Because it is impossible to abolish the feudal survivals in China without at the same time waging a revolutionary struggle against imperialism in China. Because anyone who wants to abolish the feudal survivals in China must necessarily raise his hand against imperialism and the imperialist groups in China. Because the feudal survivals in China cannot be smashed and abolished without waging a determined struggle against imperialism."

In India, perhaps the most apt example of this relationship is the set-up of the National Agricultural Bank of Rural Development (NABARD). This co-operative banking structure is an initiative financially and politically backed by the imperialist World Bank and the Asian Development Bank to set up local rural co-op banks in villages. Local landlords and exploiters are then elected into the boards of these banks wherein the semi-feudal surplus from agriculture, the foreign finance capital of imperialists and the surplus of the ruling comprador

bureaucratic bourgeoisie coalesce together, all wrapped in the aesthetics of modern banking structures. The landlords maintain their age-old task of credit-giving, all in the garb of modern banking! Imperialism therefore harnesses the feudal forces and provides new platforms for the preservation of feudalism for its own growth. The semi-feudal condition is strengthened and reinforced by the semi-colonial condition. In his book, the *Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Vladimir Lenin pointed out that during the transition from feudalism to capitalism, there was a growth of the industrial working class at the expense of the vast masses of people engaged in agriculture. Agriculture as a sector was already not creating enough surplus for small-landholding farmers and landless peasants to survive and the burgeoning urban industrial sectors, in need of a vast working class, absorbed these people as part of their workforce. But in the semi-feudal semi-colonial situation, people are leaving agriculture not due to employment opportunities and industrialization but due to lack of profit in agriculture. Unemployment is rampant and the expansion of the working class in numerical terms that is seen in capitalist societies is unobservable in India. Even engaging in animal husbandry becomes a near-impossible task for many sections of the peasantry with no common grasslands for cattle-grazing being left. Imperialism's enforced hurdle on the growth of productive forces therefore ensures that the transition from feudalism to capitalism cannot

occur 'naturally.'

### **The Politics Behind Patnaik's Confusion**

This brings the discussion to the Theory of Productive Forces. While we have factually discussed Utsa Patnaik's positions on the mode of production, it is important to note the politics that drives Patnaik's insistence on this eclectic position. The so-called theory of productive forces argues that the productive forces, as explained above, need to develop and advance to a certain level before socialism can be ushered in a society. Two inferences can be made from this. First, that productive forces are the determining factor of change in a society and so if they are developed to a high level, the transition from capitalism to socialism can occur peacefully. Second, that socialism can only be ushered in highly developed capitalist societies and no work towards socialism can occur until productive forces are developed in underdeveloped countries. The first position was propounded by the likes of Eduard Bernstein, who concludes that "as for the capitalist system, it should not be destroyed but should be helped to further develop." This position of peaceful transition, that of qualitative change occurring without revolutionary upsurge, is what drives the politics of formations like Communist Party of India (CPI) and Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPM), who aim to work within the state structure of India to develop the productive forces and work towards

socialism by winning elections.

The second position is Eurocentric and lies close to Leon Trotsky's formulation of the idea that only the western working class' leadership can lead to socialism in the underdeveloped countries. Trotsky writes, "*without the direct State support of the European proletariat the working class of Russia cannot remain in power and convert its temporary domination into a lasting socialistic dictatorship.*" Of this there cannot for one moment be any doubt. But on the other hand there cannot be any doubt that a socialist revolution in the West will enable us directly to convert the temporary domination of the working class into a socialist dictatorship." Trotsky further upholds the idea of "combined and uneven development" that is, capitalism has a nature of developing in an uneven manner where large parts of the world may be underdeveloped while the imperialist countries may be highly developed but they will all still be capitalist due to the fact that they are linked to each other due to globalization and imperialism. Therefore, Patnaik's conclusion of capitalist relations dominating in India even when she seems to recognize the grip of semi-feudalism on India finds its justification in Trotsky! Patnaik's crypto-Trotskyist position also aligns well with the first conclusion of peaceful transition. Since Patnaik holds the view that the top-down method has led to qualitative change, it justifies the politics of CPM and their brutal anti-people measures all in the name of

developing productive forces. Allowing the Tata Nano plant in Singur, selling of peasant land to the Indonesian Salim Group to make a Special Economic Zone, the crushing of Adivasi and Dalit struggle for land to protect a subsidiary of the Ram Prasad Goenka Group in Chengara and the displacing of fishing community to allow the construction of Gautam Adani's deep-sea port in Vizhinjam are all justified acts in the so-called task of developing productive forces of India and furthering capitalist development.

### **On Methods of Change**

Without referring to any of these theorists, Patnaik provides the justification to these anti-people theories and actions with this analysis that seems to recognize the realities of Indian society but seems to backtrack at the last moment. Patnaik seems to understand the task required for ushering in actual qualitative change in Indian society. Comparing the top-down method with the bottom-up method, she also agrees with Guruprasad Kar's assertion that surplus is not invested into productive activities by landlords and that this is the "fundamental reason for a slower long-term growth rate of production within an unreformed agrarian structure, compared to the alternative path of a socially wide-based tendency of capitalist production developing from within a peasantry after a radical land redistribution." In her work, *The Agrarian Question and Development of Capitalism in India*, Patnaik refers

to this 'radical' land distribution multiple times, which she explains is the method of "land to the tiller" enacted in China after it completed its New Democratic revolution in 1949. The Chinese democratic leader Dr. Sun Yat-sen had propounded this programme initially. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, another vigorous democrat, had recognized the problem of small land-holdings and non-capitalist farming in India in his writing *The Small Holdings in India and Their Remedies*. Democratization of society therefore, in the same vein as the democratization of European society, must first occur with the eradication of feudalism through a complete re-ordering of land relations and a complete implementation of the policy of land distribution to landless peasants. Patnaik recognizes this and heralds the Chinese revolution for achieving this task but shirks from propounding this path in India for no clear reasons.

Even in Russia, Lenin talked about how the Stolypin reforms introduced from 1906 had achieved no qualitative change for the lives of the masses in Russia. This reform measure, similar to the top-down measure Utsa Patnaik hopes for, would attempt to transform the feudal remnants in the agrarian condition by introducing large-scale individual farms, co-operative farming, new tools and methods of farming and modern lines of credit for the farmers. Even so, it was found that six-years after the reforms, most brutal forms of feudal oppression and exploitation remained rampant. It was

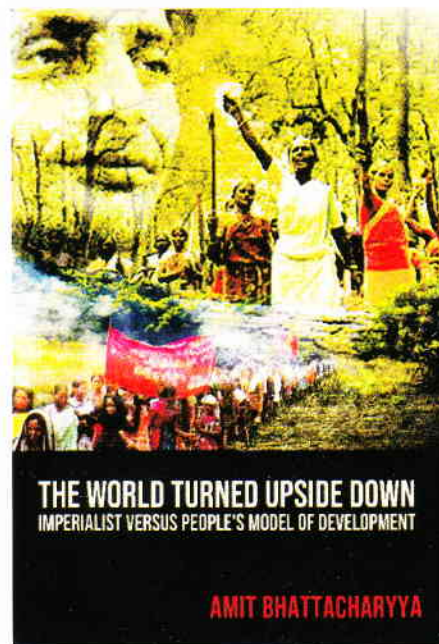
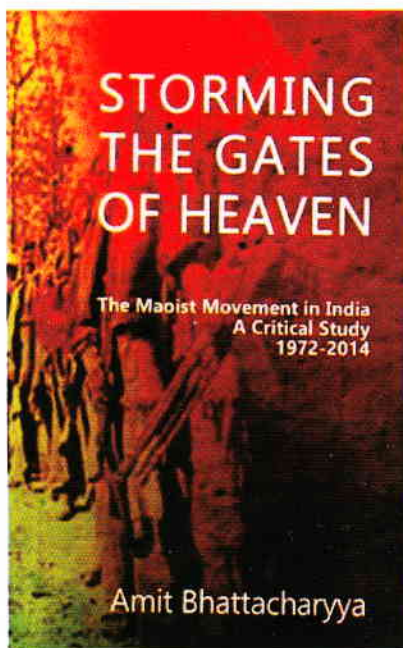
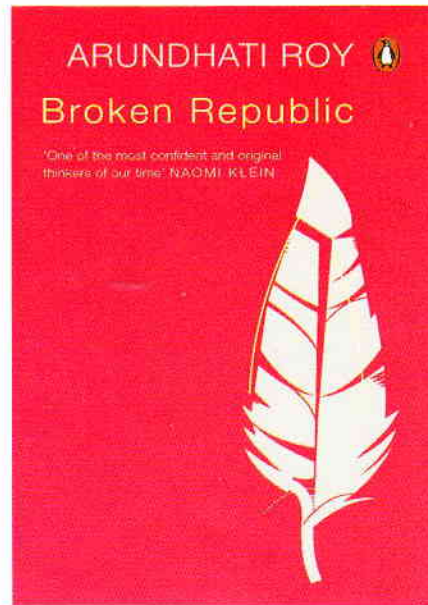
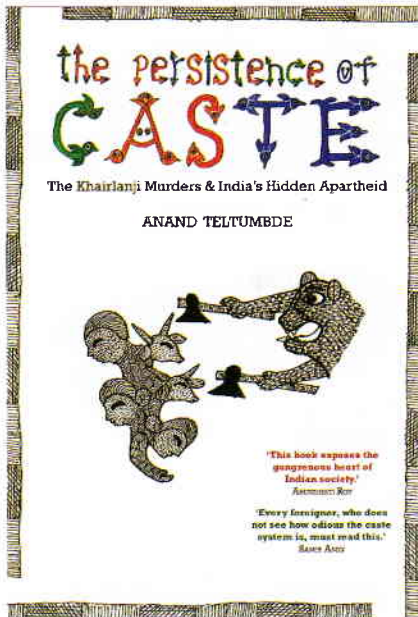
found that under the garb of the new methods, old forms of feudalism found a 'new lease of life' thanks to the reform. Lenin writes, "the Stolypin reform cannot do away with the bondage and labour service of the mass of the peasants or with famines among them. Decades upon decades of similar periodical famines will be needed before the bulk of the present-day households dies out painfully and the Stolypin reform 'succeeds', i.e., before the established bourgeois system of the general European type is introduced in our countryside. At present, however, after a six-year trial of the Stolypin 'reform' and six years of 'brilliant' progress in the number of those who have 'acquired' their land, etc., there cannot be the slightest doubt that the reform has not removed the crisis and cannot remove it. Both at the present time and for the immediate future, it is beyond all question that Russia confronts us with the old crisis of an economy which is feudal as regards a number of survivals, the old crisis of pauperised small farming held in bondage by the latifundia of the Markov or Purishkevich type." It should then be vigorously clear that only revolution of the anti-feudal anti-imperialist type that demolishes this old system is the way forward. When Utsa Patnaik refers to her 'radical' breaks, it is evident that she is close to recognizing this issue. It is also clear that she Utsa Patnaik understands that the Chinese path is the most apt way of demolishing decadent systems that hold Indian society back.

In the end, one is led to assume that Utsa Patnaik's backtracking and failure to apply her own conclusions and positions properly to India is due to political inclinations towards forces like the CPM, superseding her own conclusions as a rigorous academic. Patnaik as an academic finds conclusions close to the realities of Indian society but falls short of propounding for revolution. In 2023, Utsa Patnaik is going to be 78-years-old, yet there is no age limit to working towards revolutionary change in society. We end with the hope that Utsa Patnaik puts science before personal inclinations and overcomes her personal barriers to join the revolutionary movement in India.

## Bibliography

1. Patnaik, Utsa. "On Capitalism and Agrestic Unfreedom." *International Review of Social History* 40, no. 1 (April 1995).
2. Patnaik, Utsa, "The Agrarian Question and Development of Capitalism in India." *Economic and Political Weekly* 21, no. 18 (May 1986).
3. Stalin, J.V. "Dialectical and Historical Materialism." Marxists.org.
4. Kropotkin, Peter. *The Great French Revolution 1789-1793*. New York: Vanguard Printings, 1909.
5. Kar, Guruprasad. "Where Are the Indian Agricultural Capitalists?: Critical Comment on 'Relation of Production and Modes of Surplus Extraction in India.'" *Towards A New Dawn*, 2014.
6. Rumba, Pratik. "Agrarian Relations and the Maoist Movement in India." *Land Grabbing, Conflict and Agrarian-Environmental Transformations: Perspectives from East and Southeast Asia Conference*, no. 62 (May 2015). [https://www.iss.nl/sites/corporate/files/CMCP\\_62-Rumba.pdf](https://www.iss.nl/sites/corporate/files/CMCP_62-Rumba.pdf)
7. Kar, Guruprasad. "The Enduring Prevalence of Semi-feudal Agrarian Relations in India." *Journal of Labour and Society* 21, no. 2 (March 2018) 10.1111/wusa.12335.
8. Stalin, J.V. "Revolution in China and Tasks of the Comintern: Speech Delivered at the Tenth Sitting, Eighth Plenum of the E.C.C.I." Marxists.org, 1927.
9. Lenin, Vladimir. *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964.
10. Hung, Kao. "From Bernstein to Liu Shao-Chi." *Peking Review*, no. 38 (September 1969).
11. Hsueh-ping, Hung. "The Essence of 'Theory of Productive Forces' is to Oppose Proletarian Revolution." *Peking Review*, no. 38 (September 1969).
12. Trotsky, Leon. "Results and Prospects." In *Our Revolution: Essays on Working Class*. New York: Henry Holt and Co, 1918.
13. Ambedkar, B.R. "Small Holdings in India and Their Remedies." In *Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches*, Vol. 1. New Delhi: Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2014.
14. Lenin, Vladimir. "The Last Valve." In *Lenin Collected Works* 18, 18:248-53. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975.

AS PART OF THIS ISSUE, WE ALSO PROPOSE A FEW BOOKS FOR THE READER'S INTERESTS WHICH MAY FURTHER ASSIST IN STRENGTHENING THE NEED FOR BUILDING A DEMOCRATIC STRUGGLE IN INDIA.





## BIRSA MUNDA

He showed the way forward for all Indian revolutionaries through his war against imperialists in India. He correctly understood the nexus between the British imperialists, the feudal jagirdars and landlords and the sahumars who collectively attempted to grab Adivasi land and displace the peasantry. Munda's war was fundamentally a struggle for the preservation of the lands of the Adivasis against the trinity which continues to oppress Indian society in new forms. He serves as inspiration for the present as he showed that even the weakened forces of the oppressed can fight and defeat the mightiest of oppressors.



## LAND TO THE TILLER!

### CHARU MAJUMDAR



A communist leader who participated in the Tebhaga peasant movement before writing the Eight Historic Documents that changed the history of communism in India, he was a leading force in the militant struggle of Naxalbari which aimed to liberate all the oppressed and exploited sections of India. He struggled to ensure the fulfilment of the slogan of "land to the tillers." He firmly established the correct path for change and dared to not just dream but fight for a new world where the toiling masses would be free of all exploitation.

### CONTACT US

Email: [nazariyamagazine@protonmail.com](mailto:nazariyamagazine@protonmail.com)

Instagram: [@nazariyamagazine](https://www.instagram.com/nazariyamagazine)