

Socio-Economic and Political Analysis of India's Semi-Colonial & Semi-Feudal State Character

This document was written by a Comrade of CPI(ML) almost two years back. We treat it as a positive and good effort. This document summarized and composed various facts, figures, and analysis, as given in Comrade T.Nagi Reddy's famous book, "INDIA MORTGAGED" as well as from some survey reports. Part-I, Part-II and Part-III of this document were published in June, July and August issues respectively. This is the final and part IV of the document.

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Now we will enter in to analysing various aspects of India's Semi-Feudal characteristics.

Feudalism and Land Reforms :

India is a continent of clusters of villages. More than 80 per cent of the population lives in rural India. More than 70 per cent of them depend directly on agriculture. The poverty of the rural population is a great hindrance to Industrial Development. The development of the home market is a primary condition for industrial growth. It was primarily for this reason that every bourgeoisie democratic revolution was fundamentally an anti-feudal agrarian revolution. In the imperialist period, no liberation revolution can fulfill either anti-imperialist or anti-feudal democratic tasks, unless it is both anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution. We had previously noted that such a full-fledged national liberation war cannot be led by the bourgeoisie.

The Indian bourgeoisie has been closely linked with the feudal forces from its early period. A large number, like the Birlas, own extensive agricultural firms of their own. The Tatas were closely linked with feudal princes from the initial period of their industrial development. Even the national leadership of the national movement, such as Vallabhai Patel and Rajendra Prasad, hailed from the land holding class. The leadership in the provinces was much more closely related to the landlord class. Consequently the National Congress, even though it talked of land reforms, off and on, mainly to shatter the influence of the Left forces, was never serious at any time about mobilising the peasantry in any national struggle. From the beginning it looked with derision and decried the growing people's struggle in the princely States.

To expect this leadership to go even half way in the implementation of the anti-feudal reform is foolish. Even the Zamindari abolition proceedings were an eye-wash. As Gunnar Myrdal explains in 'Asian Drama', "These measures can hardly be said to have produced a radical change in property relations. For the former intermediaries, abolition meant merely a change in the sources of their income and - particularly for those with, a large income - some reduction in size". These reforms affected only the intermediaries; they did not touch any of these landlords in India who possessed unrestricted ownership rights. In the name of 'personal land', as much land as possible was allowed to be retained by the feudals. "The right to Sir and Khudkasht (i.e. home farmland) made zamindars resort to eviction of even occupancy tenants themselves on

a large scale and claim it as their personal cultivation. Hundreds and thousands of acres have been thus affected in recent months". (H. D. Malavya : "Land Reforms in India", Page - 452)

Sub-tenants of these lands, i.e., the actual share-croppers who were the cultivators of the lands, not only did not receive any benefit from this legislation, but in the majority of cases got thrown out of the land. A considerable number of actual tillers, belonging even to the category of the middle peasants, who were dependent on those lands, were socially and economically degraded when zamindars took over land for their personal cultivation. Evictions reduced the status of many of them into agricultural laborers.

Thus the abolition of zamindars in the main did not change the economic or social base fundamentally in India. Rather, as Gunnar Myrdal has said, "Put bluntly, the answer is that the abolition of the intermediaries in India and Pakistan was not intended to give land to those who actually till it". (Page - 1309)

Land Reform Enactment :

Land reforms in the bourgeoisie democratic revolution are to hasten the development of commodity production and capitalist relations in agriculture. Feudal land relations hinder the growth of the home market.

In India, the medieval character of landlordism, comprising various forms of tenant farming based on servitude and bondage, payment of wages in kind, permanent labour, food loans to labourers at exorbitant rates on enslaving terms, and quite a number of other innumerable medieval practices are prevalent all over. The mass of peasants, crushed by feudal exploitation are being ruined.

The essence of land reform in India also should amount to the break-up of the large land concentration in the hands of generally 10 per cent of the landlords and the creation of a free and hard-working peasantry capable of developing the productive forces and promoting the progress of agriculture completely free from medieval forms of exploitation by feudal landlords. Therefore, the big landed estates will form the basis of distributable land area along with the land of the temples, trusts, and the land maintained by the industries such as the sugar factories.

As Lenin has explained : "The future is distinguished from the present by the incomparably greater 'equalisation' in ownership, that the new distribution of the land conforms far more to the 'labour principle'. And that is not accidental. It cannot be otherwise in a peasant country, the bourgeois development of which emancipates it from serfdom". "The idea of equality is the most revolutionary idea of the struggle against the old system of absolutism in general and against, the old system of feudal landlordism in particular". Therefore, the pivot of the struggle is the complete break-up of feudal landlordism, which is the most conspicuous hindrance to the development of productive forces in India.

Do land reforms in India, as they are being implemented by the ruling class, conform to these characteristics? Of course not, even though the political leadership had vaguely talked about land reforms. In the post-war period of peasant upsurge, along with the extremely repressive methods adopted to drown the peasant struggles in blood, the bourgeoisie and its government talked of ceiling on land, and distribution of land to the 'tillers of the soil'. The policy of the 'carrot and the stick' was adopted to divert the fighting masses and to drown their struggles in blood. Land reform committees were appointed. Their reports were published and discussed. Resolutions were passed - all temporarily to stall the agitation of the rural masses. All these

measures were mainly adopted to save the rural landlords from the wrath of the peasantry by creating a situation for diverting them from agitation, and into believing the promises of the ruling party. And finally came the land ceiling Acts.

After giving innumerable exemptions for pasture land, garden lands, commercial cropping such as of sugarcane, and mechanised farming, and so on, the ceiling was fixed at extremely high levels in such a manner that there would be no need for the Government to implement the Act.

Even though there is no scope here for analysis of the whole gamut of land legislation, it would be necessary to understand a few important aspects. Let us take an example of the Andhra Land Reforms.

An author in a weekly from Delhi, discussing the ceiling Act of Andhra Pradesh, analyses the ceiling clause as follows :

“A family holding has been fixed at 6 to 12 acres of wet land depending on the fertility of land, and the ceiling is placed at 6 times the family holding. Since each individual in the family can be termed as a family under Succession Act, the ceiling for a five member family comes to 180 to 360 acres wet land. In terms of dry land it can be anywhere between 1080 to 2160 acres! All temple lands, lands under sugarcane, coffee, tea, rubber and plantations attached to factories were exempted from ceiling”. (‘Mainstream’ : February 28, 1970)

As Gunnar Myrdal Remarks :

“The impressive facade of parliamentary democracy cannot hide the fact that political participation in any meaningful sense is confined to small upper class groups” (Page - 776). This piece of land reform under the impressive facade of political democracy “will be nothing but an innocuous piece of legislation to be dangled before the masses”. (‘Economic and Political Weekly’ : March 19, 1960).

This one clause in the so-called Ceiling Act will be enough to show the deceitful nature of the legislation.

Added to this, the administration representing the upper classes “behave as if the Act was not meant to be enforced” (Ladijinsky) - and the panel on the land reforms of the Planning Commission says that, “Revenue officials were unconsciously hostile in attitude!”

Is at least the tenancy legislation better ? Even according to the Planning Commission Report :

“The legislation has allowed unrestricted termination of such of those tenants who seek to assert their rights defined in the legislation. Thus this piece of legislation has made tenants in general apathetic towards the rights conferred on them. On the other hand, landlords could evict tenants with ease for even minor delays in payments of rents..... evictions were on a large scale..... Absence of record rights and of machinery to scrutinize, made the task of the Courts.... difficult to establish tenant-landlord relationship even when some tenants braved to fight in the courts. Thus the provisions were rendered ineffective and the desired change was not achieved”.

The effectiveness of these two pieces of legislation is evident even to the government. Why should anyone be surprised at the immensity of the growth of agrarian unrest in the country? Rural tensions are growing, and armed clashes are a common feature all over the country. Cases of Harijans being murdered in villages over land disputes all over the country have become common news even in the daily Press, which rarely report such incidents. The

stranglehold of big land – holders on rural life increased with the advent of Panchayat Raj, since their economic hold on the villages has been reinforced with political power even at the village level.

Indian Big Bourgeoisie – Landlord Government Strengthens Landlord Base :

Every concrete step taken by the government has strengthened the landlord base in the countryside.

The first important step taken by the government to transform the rural panorama was the historic Community Development Project plan in the early 1950's – hailed by the late Jawaharlal Nehru as a revolutionary step. The Community Development Programme, hailed by Nehru as "the dynamo providing motive force for the successful implementation of the Five Year Plans" was initiated with great enthusiasm and fanfare, with the intensification of building roads, minor irrigation, elementary education and development of credit co-operatives. However "they seldom reach the broad strata of the population but instead benefit instead the land holding class and the moneylenders". ("Asian Drama", Page-871). An emphasis was given to the co-operative movement to help the agriculturist to develop his resources for full utilisation of land and to produce better results. But again, the result was to strengthen the landlords economy.

As John Lewis in his "Quiet Crisis in India" states :

"The result, typically and plainly, has been to lodge the village co-operative in the hands of the same privileged villages cliques that have been doing most traditional money lending and trading. By insisting on the pretence of indigenous origin, the forces of reform have surrendered the co-operative instrument to the management of the very groups most inclined to resist massive rural reconstruction. In the process, the primary co-operative society has tended to become simply another device for reinforcing the pattern of rural privilege – with the comfortable new feature of a direct line of credit on the Reserve Bank of India". (Page - 164)

Whereas the big cultivators are provided with this channel of securing credit at a concessional rate to increase his field of activities, to amass further wealth and profits, the poor and small cultivators are being left free to pass on into the octopus grip of traders, moneylenders and landlords. What is wonder, then, is that this much advertised co-operative movement further increased the growing discrepancies in income and made the rich richer and the poor poorer.

Daniel Thorner, who had "the unusual opportunity of visiting 117 co-operatives of various types scattered throughout all the states of India", in his field report "Agricultural Co-operatives in India", remarked that, "in general, I found that hearts of co-operatives were the big people of the villages and that they had their fingers in many other pies as well as co-operation". (Page - 3)

He gives the instances of co-operative, joint firms functioning "as one family shows, operated mostly on family land by one of the landlord families of the village". He produces the case of a multipurpose co-operative, in which "half of the outstanding short-term loans (Rs. 95,000) out of a grant total of Rs. 1,91,000 had been made to only 11 members" (Page- 4). He talks of Nellore district which provided "the most flagrant example of large landlords using their position in the co-operatives to further their own power and interests" (Page - 5). His field report makes it clear that, "Soukari (money lending), Sarkari (government) and Sahakari (Co-operation)" are co-operating with each other with perfect co-ordination. He reports that, "the cultivator, who also does some money lending, figures prominently in co-operatives in Baroda, Saurashtra,

Hyderabad and Rajasthan. The trader-cum-moneylender is found in societies in Saurashtra, Mysore, Nilagiris, Nellore and Kashmir. The formidable combination of cultivating moneylender-cum-trader dominates the scene in Mysore and coastal Andhra" (Page - 8).

Therefore, "in a country where social change is the determining factor for economic progress, mere institution of co-operative service shall hardly remedy the situation. It may even help perpetuating the status quo. In such circumstances, the cover of co-operative organisation may even accelerate the process of polarisation - the rich becoming richer and the poor relatively poorer" (Page - 34).

Co-operatives credit has become the handmaid for the diversification of the activities of village rich in the countryside. "A series of developmental programmes on the countryside provides the big cultivators with opportunities to take governmental contracts" and other diverse activities. "It has been feared that the cheap co-operative credit, the bulk of which percolates into the hands of this fortunate big cultivators, is being mis-utilised for either of these purposes - trading in food grains, taking governmental contracts and lending for trade and commerce purposes' ('Economic Times', April 21, 1966).

Thus the government, through co-operative credit, panchayats, samitis and parishads, so-called developmental programmes, and various other loans in crores of rupees for the mechanisation of agriculture (for tractors, bulldozers, oil and electrical pumpsets, etc.) is feeding the village landlords to increase their share of wealth and income, to increase the disparities in the countryside faster than ever.

With all the tall talk of land reforms and its innocuous land ceiling legislations and tenancy Acts, no democratic land reforms have been implemented by the Congress government in its long tenure in office. Practically no change in land relations has taken place, except that with vigorous implementation of Panchayat Raj, co-operative institutions, loans for tractors and other agricultural machines etc., the political and economical strength of the landlords has been further strengthened in the rural economy.

The unchanging relations that continue to exist can be clearly noticed from the following Census Statistics published in Economic Times, July 16, 1965 :

In 1924 - 58.3% people had possession of the land below 5 acres, 18.4% people had 5 to 10 acres of the land and 23.3% people had the land above 10 acres.

In 1939 - 63.7% people had possession of the land below 5 acres, 16.9% people had 5 to 10 acres of the land and 19.4% people had the land above 10 acres.

In 1961 - 55.8% people had possession of the land below 5 acres, 19% people had 5 to 10 acres of the land and 25.2% people had the land above 10 acres.

With very minor changes, the situation has not changed so far as the concentration of land in the rural areas is concerned. A large part of the arable land is concentrated in the hands of the small upper crust of the peasantry and the bulk of the peasant families are bankrupt.

In 1961, the first Agricultural Labor Enquiry Sample Survey of Land Holdings showed that, holdings of 5 acres and less made up 59.1% of the total holdings comprised 15.5% of the land, holdings of over 25 acres made up only 5.6% of the total holdings and comprised 34.4% of land.

These data on the distribution of land among the different groups of firms reflect the profound process of class differentiation, which has gone deep among the Indian peasantry.

Another analysis of the data, contained in the census of population and sample survey conducted in 1951-52 by the Ministry of Labour, showed that agricultural laborers and members of their families comprised 36 per cent in 1951.

The National Sample Survey, 16th round conducted between June 1960 and June 1961, reported that the topmost 10 per cent of the agricultural population held 56.2 per cent of the land, as was reproduced in Economic Times of February 17, 1966.

According to the survey, 30 per cent of the lower rung of the agricultural population hold 0.1% of the land.

The next 10% hold 0.6% of the land.

The next 10% hold 2.1% of the land.

Hence 50% hold 2.8% of the land.

The next 10% of the agricultural population hold 4.7% of the land.

The next 10% hold 6.9% of the land.

The next 10% hold 11.0%.

Hence 30% hold 22.6% of the land.

Therefore, 80% of the agricultural population hold about 25.4% of the land. The next 10% of the agricultural population hold 19% of the land. The topmost 10% hold 56.2% of the land.

It is this topmost 10 percent of the agricultural population who have the lion's share of all the benefits of the Congress Government's economic policies during the last three Five Year Plans. It was for that reason that the income in the rural sector is increasingly more disproportionately distributed. It was also for the same reason that, even the bourgeoisie professors recognise that "the eternal help artificially injected into the countryside - in the form of co-operative movement, marketing and agricultural finance - "could not change the face of the village, nor could it succeed in creating those..... forces which could create a democratic base in the countryside. On the other hand, these policies have made the rich richer and the poor poorer". (V.B.Singh, 'India Yesterday and Today')

Therefore, it is clear that, every step that has been taken in relation to land reform has only aggravated the situation.

On the basis of recent studies conducted in India and in other countries where the green revolution has become the vogue, U. Thant, United Nations Secretary General points out :

"The Green Revolution is likely to benefit primarily those farmers who are already engaged in commercial production, rather than small farmers, and among commercial farmers, big ones more than small producers there is a possibility that small farmers may gradually be squeezed out of the market by big producers and that tenants may be evicted". (Citing an Indian study of the Green Revolution, he says). "A relatively few persons, not more than 20 per cent of the farm house holders in Punjab benefited by the Green Revolution. The study also mentioned the burden of taxation there, not to speak of land values spiraling, rents going up and condition of tenants no better if not worse".

In his presidential address to the Congress session at Bombay, Jagjivan Ram, the then Union Minister for Food and agriculture, focused attention on the extremities of land concentration. "There has been a breakthrough in agriculture. Arrangements for public allocation of inputs and credit have consistently improved. But the beneficiaries are not those who are living on a pittance of a few rupees a month, but the privileged minority of substantial and middle cultivators. With 41 per cent of farm families owning only one acre of land and 22 per cent having

no land at all, with 3 to 4 per cent of big cultivators enjoying all power, wielding all influence, making all decisions in collaboration with the government machinery and appropriating to themselves all the skill and resources, the expertise the government agencies offer, the poor half of the villagers have little to think and body for”.

These sympathetic vibrations from the ruling party are expected to give Indira Gandhi and her coterie a progressive facade to lull the people into inaction and to the revisionists, a ground for full-fledged and open declaration of support to her and her party in power. Having been increasingly talking about the growth of poverty and the necessity for land reform is a plan to import thousands of tractors as a loan from I.D.A for distribution to the landlords in the double faced and deceitful programme of Indira and company.

It is clear that the bourgeoisie landlord government is incapable of and is not interested in ‘land to the tillers’. This type of development which Indira Congress is implementing in India was called by Lenin “Landlord bourgeoisie revolution”, which is “adopted solely to the interests of the landlords’, giving them “freedom to plunder the village communes, to forcibly expropriate the masses, to round off their plots, to evict poor peasants, to undermine the very foundations of the life of entire village etc” (Page - 278). This type of landlord bourgeoisie revolution, as against the total liquidation of landlordism, was inevitable even in the epoch of strongly developed capitalism. “In such an epoch, this bourgeoisie, in the mass, is inevitably counter-revolutionary.” (Page - 321).

In such circumstances, Marxism must resolutely combat the view that a radical agrarian reform is possible without a radical political revolution. Such a peasant agrarian revolution can become a reality only by advocating, preparing and organising of it on a nationwide scale, by explaining consistently to the peasantry that, unless the revolutionary classes conquer political power, land to the tiller is an impossibility.

If the revolutionaries believe in supporting the revolutionary actions of the peasantry and in the confiscation of landlords’ lands, then they must seriously think about organising the masses for those actions. As Lenin says, “the peasantry cannot carry out an agrarian revolution without abolishing the old regime, the standing army and the bureaucracy, because all these are the most reliable mainstays of landlordism, bound to it by thousands of ties” (Page - 349)“Needless to say, a radical political revolution is difficult, but so is an agrarian revolution; the latter is impossible apart from the former, and it is the duty of the socialists not to conceal this from the peasants, not to throw a veil over it, but to speak out, to teach the peasants that unless they go the whole way in politics, it is no use thinking seriously of confiscating the landlords’ land” (Page - 350).

Growing Concentration of Land :

The experience of history is that, whenever the people are in a fighting mood to achieve their democratic programme, capitalist parties have been willing to become ‘socialist’ as long as they could uphold the privileges of the exploited class.

It was at the time of the Telangana armed peasants’ revolt in Andhra, Tebhaga struggle in Bengal and Warli uprising in Maharashtra, that the question of Bhoodan and land reforms were brought to the forefront by the bourgeoisie. It was again in the immediate wake of Telangana armed uprising of the peasants, at the time of the mid-term elections in Andhra, that the bourgeoisie proclaimed their deceitful programme of ‘Avadi Socialism’.

It was again during the first communist ministry in Kerala, that co-operative farming became the 'slogan' of the ruling party to divert the attention of the fighting masses.

Now again, in the midst of the armed uprisings of the peasants, beginning with Naxalbari and Srikakulam, when the question of the land had been again brought to the forefront due to thousands of fighting peasants coming forward to forcefully occupy the lands in East-Godavari, Mushahari and Terai regions, that the ruling party came forward again with the slogan of 'land reform and land to the tillers'.

To proclaim land reforms and distribution of land to the tiller as the policy of the government on the one hand and to implement policies which encourage the greater concentration in the hands of the 10 per cent rich village landlords on the other, has been the nefarious and disgustingly deceptive method adopted by the government all these years.

As 'Economic Times' in its editorial 'Farming and Progress' (January 3, 1970) points out :

"The keynote of the present agricultural strategy is to concentrate on specific area with a package programme. The green revolution which we are now witnessing is the result of the success achieved by this new farm strategy and one direct consequence of this has been the transformation of the farm economy from subsistence to profitable business. Some studies already undertaken have shown conclusively that, in the initial stages at any rate, the benefits of the new technology have gone to those who can command resources for investment to exploit the new opportunities. By the same time, the small farmers and tenant cultivators, though they may be willing to adopt the modern technology, have not been able to benefit to any extent because of lack of sufficient capital to invest in the new package of inputs. Mr. Jakhade, (in his presidential address to the All India Agricultural Economics Conference) quoted a research study to show how, in Punjab, the bigger farmers have found in the purchase of land a very lucrative source of investment, no matter what the ceiling legislation may say. Thus land owned by the bigger farmers increased between 1955-56 and 1967-68 by about 9.5 percent..... Farms of the size of 20-25 acres expanded by only 4 per cent, whereas those of the size group 100-150 acres increased by about 40 per cent..... It is therefore easy to see how this tendency will aggravate social tensions, unless land reform measures are implemented with vigour and expedition".

The green revolution has given birth to a host of social problems. It has aggravated the economic plight of the scheduled castes that constitute the bulk of the rural poor. The gulf between the rich and the poor has widened. It has released some social forces which may lead to the destruction of landlordism itself, in one of the Chief Ministers' conferences, Mr. Y.B. Chavan, the then Union Home Minister said: "The warning of time is that unless the Green revolution is accompanied by a revolution based on social justice, I am afraid the Green revolution may not remain green". The green revolution, in the very method adopted at present, is bound to give birth to social tensions.

Wiesmann, writing in May 1970 issue of Ramparts, the American radical monthly, drew a startling picture of how the Green revolution "was wished on India to promote American business interests".

He poses the question, "How long the revolution will remain green", and answers the question himself.

"The real disaster", writes Wiesmann, "is more immediate commercial agriculture, and by definition is produced for profit, not people. At the same time, the new seeds required Irrigation

and pesticides, and heavy inputs of fertilisers, the costs of which soared..... Those who have not capital or cannot get credit from village moneylenders or meagre government programmes are pushed out of their lands into agricultural proletariat or worse, while the new kulaks, the peasant capitalists, reinvest their profits in modern labour saving machinery”.

The tenant, too, has become economically weaker. The green revolution has been responsible for adversely affecting his position in two ways.

First, the landlords are now demanding higher rents because of the increase in the productivity of the land. As the tenants’ bargaining power is weak, and is not in a position to compete with the big farmer in increasing the produce from his land as he cannot afford to induct improved farming practices, he is unable to resist the landlords’ demand for higher rents.

Secondly, absentee landlords, whose interest on land was either confined to whatever rents could be obtained by leasing of lands, were induced to personally resume the land from the tenants.

Mr. Francine Frankel, who made a study of the impact of the new strategy in agriculture in Ludhiana, observed: “there is little doubt that, the position of tenants has become more difficult as a result of the green revolution”.

With the advent of the green revolution, with the immense amount of finance being funneled by the government into the coffers of the landlords in the name of increasing production, concentration of land in the hands of landlords has been growing. Even though there has been a lot of talk about the distribution of government land to landless peasants, the truth of the matter is that, the land is more and more being occupied illegally, surreptitiously by politically powerful and economically dominant groups in the country. A few examples would serve the purpose.

‘Land grab by Ministers’ — ‘Blitz’ : December 12, 1970.

Rajasthan : Sukhadia owns Durga Nursery, 40 bighas, with a magnificent bungalow in the confines. He has acquired another chunk of 200 bighas along the Rajasthan Canal. He owns a farm of 85 bighas in Suklapur village, seven miles from Jaipur. The biggest Raghunathpur farm has been acquired in the name of his wife, Indubala Sukhadia, and her brother Dinabhai. He possesses a farm of 40 bighas at Badi, near Udaipur. He has gifted a farm of 55 bighas, four miles from Jaipur, to his son-in-law, Martha Lal Goel.

In Jaipur City, Ajmer Road has been turned into a Minister’s farm exhibition road.

- (a) Along this road, the first in the series is the 38-bigha farm of Hardeo Joshi, Minister for Industries.
- (b) Next comes the 60-bigha farm of Law Minister Barkatullah Khan.
- (c) The third is the farm of Social Welfare Minister Amrit Lal Yadav.
- (d) The fourth is the 50-bigha farm of State Minister, Mapphool Singh, who also owns a chunk of 150 bighas grabbed by him in the Rajasthan Canal project area, in his native Ganganagar district.
- (e) Housing Minister, Bhikha Bhai also owns a 50-bigha farm along this road.
- (f) Yet another Minister possessing a 20-bigha farm in the exhibition colony, by the side of Ajmer Road, is Brij Sunder Sharma, Health Minister.

‘Land Grab in Andhra by land hungry Ministers’, ‘Blitz’, September 10, 1970, gives an interesting list of land owned and occupied by some of the cabinet ministers of that period.

- (1) Deputy Chief Minister, Mr. J.V.Narasinga Rao, heads the list with a family holding of 1,140 acres, in his home district of Adilabad and other places.
- (2) Ramalinga Raju has a joint family holding of 1,120 acres of fertile East Godavari land and "is a custodian of thousand acres of temple lands as a tenant on long lease".
- (3) Purushotham Reddy, Minor Irrigation Minister, has a holding of 700 acres in Nalgonda district. He is making frantic efforts to legalise his holding of 500 acres of government waste-land in Addaguduru village on the plea of exchange with his own land.
- (4) Three thousand acres of fertile Lanka Land has been illegally occupied by Raja of Challapalli. The land ceiling Act has given immense concessions to landlords by exempting vast tracts of land under sugarcane cultivation, gardens, seed farms, grazing grounds and temple lands from the scope of the Bill.

A few more instances of land occupation or allocation to influential big landlords, retired civil servants, military officers and so-called 'political sufferers' in the rich area of Nainital and Lakhimpur districts of UP, will shock any one, who has little bit of decency in him.

- (1) In Nainital area, the Prayag Farm has over thousand good acres and another over 2,000 acres. The proprietor of Prayag Farm is reported to have links with a number of business concerns.
 - (2) A retired army general has been given 1,500 acres of land.
 - (3) A retired Lieutenant Governor has a farm extending over 1,000 acres.
 - (4) A high police officer has a farm of 500 acres and so has an IAS officer.
- ('INDIA MORTGAGED', Page - 406 to 424).

"Agricultural Labor :

Agricultural workers constitute the single biggest section of our country's population - 12 crores out of 44 crores according to the 1961 census - 25 percent of total population, one-third of the rural population. They are most exploited, socially oppressed section of our people in many respects, treated worse than the Negroes in America or blacks in South Africa.

The agricultural policy of the Government, the system of distributing credit as well as high yielding seeds, fertilisers, pesticides has only helped the intensification and the polarisation between haves and have-nots in the rural system. Whatever be the talk of the government in relation to land reform, the hundreds of crores of loans from I.D.A (The affiliate of World Bank) to various state governments for distribution of tractors, combines, oil engines, electric motors and other necessities of the rural rich, will in action only mean greater concentration of land and result in growth of agricultural labour in the rural areas.

These economic facilities do not reach the small farmers and "many of the farmers belonging to the Harijan community are not aware of the facilities by the extension agency. Loans given under the Intensive Manufacturing Scheme of the samithi rarely reach the small cultivators who suffer from social disabilities".

("Agricultural Development and Small Farmers: A Study of Andhra Pradesh", Gogula Parthasarthy: Andhra University, 1971, Page-68).

Where the new techniques have taken root, land prices have risen three, four or even five times and land owners, especially the big ones, are in no mood to share with others the benefit brought by better farming methods. Their attempt is to get rid of tenants altogether and resume land for so-called self-cultivation, making use of the virtually unlimited supply of hired labour. Tenants are in this way being reduced to the position of landless labourers.

The increase in numbers of the rural laborers, which is mainly agricultural labour, is a growing phenomenon in India today.

Growing Rural Labour :

According to the Second Labour Enquiry, of the estimated 66.6 million rural households in 1956-57, 24.5 percent or 16.3 million were agricultural labour households. In 1963-64, according to the National Sample Survey (19th round), there were about 67.7 million rural households in India, of which 17.2 million or about 26 percent were rural labour households.

We have seen earlier that, in the national sphere, there has been no fundamental change in the occupational pattern in the country between industry and agriculture. The same is true in rural economy.

Between 1901 and 1969, the proportion of agricultural workers to the total work force fluctuated around 70 percent of the total population, though the proportion of agricultural workers to the total work force remained stationary at about 70 percent, in absolute terms there was an increase from 97.2 million to 132 million.

The latest available figures show that, out of a total of rural population of 434 million, over 100 million owned no land at all and 185 million owned less than five acres per family. Most of those who owned less than five acres of small patches of land are also mainly agricultural labour.

Landless Labour :

Labour without land is a growing phenomenon today. The growing capitalist relations and commodity production ruins small production, reducing petty cultivators and tenants into landless agricultural labour creating a rural proletariat without the means of production. He is left with his own labour power and nothing else to sell in the market for his living.

As Lenin had said in his book "Development of Capitalism in Russia":

"Machines lead to the concentration of production and to the practice of capitalist co-operation in agriculture" and "where the employment of machines is particularly wide spread (Mavorossia) is also distinguished by the quite considerable size of its farms." The systematic employment of machinery in agriculture ousts the patriarchal 'middle' peasant as irrevocably as the steam power loom ousts the handicraft weaver.

Thus the growth of commodity production in agriculture, growing capitalist relations in the countryside, concentration of production, and the increasing employment of machinery, ousts small and middle peasants from the land increasing the numbers of landless labourers.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the policies being adapted by the ruling big bourgeoisie - landlord class in India is also increasing the army of the rural proletariat. This is clear from various studies on the impact of the 'new agricultural strategy' in India.

The following table gives the percentage of distribution of agricultural labor households, by category of households with land and without land in 1956-57 and 1963-64, showing the increasing trend towards the growth of the rural proletariat without land.

Percentage of Distribution of Agricultural Labour Households by Category of Households : 1956-57 and 1963-64.

	1956-57	1963-64
Andhra Pradesh	67.0	72.7
Assam	70.3	59.7
Bihar	38.8	52.7
Gujarat	72.9	86.3
Jammu & Kashmir	67.2	50.0
Kerala	43.9	30.1
Madhya Pradesh	61.0	50.0
Maharashtra	72.9	71.4
Mysore	65.5	69.0
Orissa	47.0	55.2
Punjab	89.0	85.5
Rajasthan	64.2	60.4
Tamil Nadu	65.5	71.0
Uttar Pradesh	45.7	48.5
West Bengal	66.6	62.2
All India	58.4	61.2

The all-India average of agricultural labour households without land, out of the total agricultural labour households has increased from 58.4 percent to 61.2 percent during 1956-57 and 1963-64. The states in which such an increase of households of landless agricultural labourers could be reckoned are Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. The states where the percentage of landless agricultural labour households to agricultural labour households is greater than the all India percentage of 61.2 - Andhra Pradesh (72.7), Gujarat (86.3), Maharashtra (71.4), Mysore (69.0), Punjab (85.5), Tamil Nadu (71.0) and West Bengal (62.2).

As for the percentage distribution of agricultural labour households by categories, about 33 percent of the households had some land in 1963-64 as against about 42 percent in 1956-57. According to Agricultural Labor Enquires the percentage of landless labour to total agricultural labour, which was 50 in 1950-51, increased to about 57 in 1956-57, and according to National Sample Survey, the percentage was about 61 in 1963-64.

“The percentage of landless agricultural labour has thus been increasing during all the years of developmental planning”.

‘Capitalism penetrates into agriculture particularly slowly and in extremely varied forms’ (Lenin), with the result that various forms of capitalist relations along with the feudal exploitation co-mingle to make an excessive burden on the rural poor.

The feudal relations in our countryside are prevalent almost every-where. They have preserved almost all their medieval supremacy of the landlords over the peasantry in the village. In the following pages, a few instances of feudal methods of exploitation will be given as examples of the prevailing and growing tensions in the villages. There is yet prevalent in the overwhelming parts of our country, a system as ‘debt bondage’ or ‘debt slavery’. A

correspondent writing in 'Economic Times' on June 1, 1970, on the state of the Harijans in Mysore, describes the system as follows:

'There is then the 'Jeetha' system - the pernicious practice of a system of bonded labour - something akin to slavery practised by the early American settlers. It is said to be practiced in parts of Hassan district and also in South Kunara, North Kunara, Chikmagalur and Shimoga districts. The Elaya Perumal Committee describes the system thus : "according to Jeetha system, the agricultural labourers are advanced petty sums of money in time of their need. They are bound in such a way that, they are not able to repay the debt out of their meagre wages, because under the terms of the bond, they got food, cloth and small salary only. The result is that they are not only unable to repay the loan but also have to add to it. Consequently their debt increases. Even their children are obliged to take upon themselves, the repayment and become involved in it.

Thus the lords of the land have even retained the jurisdiction over their 'labourers'. They have preserved almost all their medieval practices, including various forms of free labour. It is true feudalism, flourishing more in some localities than in others, but the fact is that nowhere has it been entirely destroyed.

For example, the system of attached labourers is prevalent all over the country. Writing about Burdwan district, Francine Frankel reports that, "permanent relations between land owners and labour still persist; they are particularly common in parts of the district, dominated by larger holdings. In fact, with the introduction of intensive cropping, the necessity of having assured labour at peak cultivation period, actually tended to strengthen the system of permanent land-owner stroke labourer relations". ('Mainstream ' : December 13, 1969)

This system is based on local traditions and customs. They are "employed according to a traditional arrangement by which agricultural labour families are permanently attached to the family of a land-owner, usually from one generation to the next..... Those interviewed reported cash payments ranging from 110/- to 150/- annually and varying amounts of paddy, averaging six to seven mounds a year. In addition, they ordinarily receive two or three meals a day and during the year, three or four dhoties, one woolen wrapper, oil, bidi, and paddy straw for hatching their houses". (Ibid, Page - 22)

Thus the attached labourers are characterised by the debt bondage, caste restraints, tie-in allotments of land, increasing prevalence of pre-capitalist features of employment of labour. Attached labourers are tied down by loans, repayment of which was practically impossible.

Moreover, in many cases, the employers give the attached labourers house-sites and land, sometimes on a share-cropping basis. In South India, large numbers of farm servants known as padiyala, pannaiyala, pulayas, parelu, jeeta etc., work year after year, if not generation after generation for the same land-owner families.

Such a medieval system of bond slaves, according to the Second Agricultural Labor Enquiry Report, is on the increase. The percentage of attached labourers among all agricultural laborers increased from 9.7 percent in 1950-51 to 26.63 percent in 1956-57. There is no doubt that, considerable section of the agricultural labourers in India is victims of pre-capitalist exploitation; semi-feudal feature of wage payment in kind is prevalent in vast areas of our countryside. It was revealed by the Second Agricultural Labor Enquiry Report that the employment situation as well as the terms and conditions of employment have markedly worsened over time.

Apart from low wages and inhuman living conditions, the agricultural labourers are victims of unemployment and under employment. Even according to the note submitted by the Central Statistical Organisation to the All-India Seminar on Agricultural Labor in 1965, they are employed only 200 days a year.

The agricultural labourers are not part and parcel of the village. They are forced to live outside the main village, in separate ghettos, under horrible conditions, without any common facilities, such as wells for drinking water, roads, street lanes etc. They are mostly illiterate.

Even the 'Economic Times', June 1, 1970 calls this system no better than 'age-old serfdom'. As Ranjit Das Gupta has written "The intertwining of the pre-capitalist methods of exploitation and the capitalist method has subjected the underprivileged groups of rural India to absolute and relative impoverishment".

In addition to this, they are socially oppressed in our caste-ridden society. The overwhelming majority of agricultural labourers belong to untouchable or backward castes. Social ostracism of those castes is worse than the whites attitude to Negroes in America. They are obstructed from using the wells, tanks, temples, and other public places.

The reason for this is that, during the British period, there was no fundamental change in the character of the Indian economy which remained essentially semi-feudal and semi-colonial in character.

Even after the transfer of power from the British to the Indian comprador class, no fundamental change in the economic, social and administrative spheres has been achieved. Even to this day, the character of the economy has remained essentially semi-feudal and semi-colonial. Forms in some respect have changed, but fundamentally caste has remained the same. The system of Panchayat Raj, the growth of green revolution, the growth of commodity production in the countryside, have only helped the ruling big landlord and big business class to increase their domination through the revivalist and obscurantist social ideology based on castes. ('INDIA MORTGAGED', Page - 406 to 452)

All the above descriptions, data and analysis as provided by Comrade T. Nagi Reddy in his book up to the period till 1970, undoubtedly proved that even after the transfer of power, India's agricultural system remained to be of the same semi-feudal characteristics, as was left by the British. But has there been any concrete development in this regard because of the various policies and measures adopted by the Indian government in the next 50 years? Has our semi-feudal agricultural system been transformed into a capitalistic agricultural system?

To clarify the issue, especially to establish that no basic changes has ever been taken place in the characteristics of our agricultural society, based on fragmented and scattered land concentration in the hands of big landlords class, in the post 1970 period, we will look into a few recent survey reports, collected from Google and various official statistics already published in this regard. Thereafter, an analytical review of the present Indian agricultural system will be produced, based on latest data, so as to conclude whether the semi-feudal character of our agricultural system still remains the same or it has changed into a capitalistic agricultural system.

Farm Census Report for 1915-18 Collected from Google:

According to the Farm-Census report, the proportion of arable land under small and marginal farmers for housing, cottage industries and agriculture is only 47.3%.

However, the total area under agriculture has decreased from 159.7 million hectares in 2010-11 to 156.14 million hectares in 2015-16.

Only 47.3% of arable land remains under the ownership of small and marginal farmers.

According to an update dated October 1, 2018 by one Mr. Sayantan Bera, between 2010-11 and 2015-16, the farms have become more fragmented; leased lands also were distributed unequally.

The Tenth Agricultural Census Report of 1915-18, published from New Delhi, states that, inspite of the proportion of small and marginal farmers with less than 2 hectares of land being 86.2% of the total number of farmers in India, they have the ownership of only on 47.3% of arable land.

By comparison, the proportion of poor and medium farmers owning 2 to 10 hectares of land is 13.2% of the total Indian peasantry, although they occupy 43.6% of the cultivable land, the survey report shows. Overall, the survey found that between 2010-11 and 2015-16, as Indian farms disintegrated, so did the distribution of leased land. At that stage, the proportion of small and marginal farmers increased from 74.9% to 82%, while the amount of movable real estate completed on lease increased from 138 million to 148 million.

Although, in 2015-16, the total area under cultivation decreased from 159.8 million in 2010-11 to 158.14 million, but the existence of a large number of small and marginal farmers estimated at 127 million according to the survey suggests that it is up to the government to take as a challenge, so that new technologies and agricultural support schemes are delivered to them through the government's conventional agricultural development plans. Moreover, since these 127 million farmers own a total of 74.4 hectares of land or only 0.6 hectares per person, it is only natural that they should not be able to produce such a surplus crop as they own so little land per person. Economically, they can continue to support their families. Explaining the growing crisis in Indian agriculture between 2010-11 and 2015-16, the survey showed that the number of small and marginal farmers had increased to 9 million at this stage.

Taking all types of farmers into account, the average per capita land area decreased from 1.15 hectares in 2010-11 to 1.08 hectares in 2015-16.

Ashok Gulati, Professor of Agricultural Chair, New Delhi-based Indian Council for Research in International Economic Relations, commented:

"This increase in the number of small and marginal farmers indicates that the rest of the economy is unable to raise surpluses..... India will have to continue with this small scale agriculture for the next two decades and the way out is to provide them with access to good technology and markets. That's the way China did it."

Mr. Gulati further said that small scale farming can be economically sustainable or viable if high quality crops are cultivated and huge amount of capital is invested through value chain.

According to the state-based statistics provided in the survey, Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of working farming families (23.8 million), followed by Bihar (18.4 million) and Maharashtra (14.7 million).

In terms of cultivated land area, Rajasthan tops the list with 20.9 million hectares of land, followed by Maharashtra (19.9 million hectares) and then Uttar Pradesh (18.45 million hectares). The survey also found that the proportion of women-run agriculture increased from 12.8% in 2010-11 to 13.9% in 2015-16, indicating an increase in women's participation in agricultural management.

Thus we can see that, in all the recent survey reports, it has been accepted through various statistics and data that, our agriculture still not only remains in the old scattered and unplanned conditions, it is not even able to produce and generate enough surplus, so as to establish itself to be a growing phenomenon.

It is a matter of great concern that, inspite of our agriculture being in such a backward state, some of our comrades still claim that, India's agricultural system has already acquired its capitalistic characteristics. In order to counter such claims, a detail analytical review of our agricultural system, based on current data, is being presented here as per the following details.

(G)

The Agricultural System in India is Semi-feudalistic or Capitalistic? A Review.

After the echo of the 'Green Revolution' initiated by the then Prime Minister of India, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri in 1965, rumors started circulating that a great change had taken place in the agricultural system of India. Shortly after, during the period of Prime Minister Shri PV Narsingh Rao in 1991, when Finance Minister Manmohan Singh formulated and declared the policy of 'Financial-Liberalization', rumors started circulating in the Indian political arena that the Indian agricultural system had acquired a capitalist character. Recently, this demand is being strongly made by some left-leaning individuals and organizations. So, has the semi-feudal agrarian system of the British era now been transformed into the capitalist agrarian system, with a fundamental change in the agricultural system of India?

Proponents of this case highlight the use of tractors instead of plows, electric pumps, and other agricultural equipment instead of the old method of irrigation, availability of government loans and above all the easy access of selling the surplus crops produced in the government-run markets. At the same time, they claim that the radical change in India's agricultural system has begun with the 'green revolution' centered on the government's various landmark (?) reforms.

But the transformation of the semi-feudal agrarian system, left by the British, into capitalism means a qualitative or fundamental change in the agrarian system itself. How is this qualitative change possible without any revolutionary upheaval? Or has India's big zamindars and big comprador bourgeoisie, under the leadership of the Indian National Congress has done this revolutionary work silently?

The matter is quite confusing and it has become imperative to reach a reasonable conclusion through a detailed analysis of it from a Marxist point of view. So let's move on to that path.

In order to resolve whether such a fundamental change has really taken place in the Indian agricultural system from a Marxist point of view, it is essential to find a good answer with a proper analysis of the following few questions.

- 1) What exactly is meant by a qualitative or fundamental change in the character of the agricultural system?
- 2) What was the character of Indian agriculture before 1947 and what are the benefits of all the concrete steps taken by the Government of India to improve agriculture in the following years?
- 3) What is the true nature of the green revolution in India?
- 4) If the Indian agricultural system has been capitalized, what kind of changes has taken place with respect to ownership of agricultural inputs and in the relations of production?

(5) What has been the role of imperialism and imperialist capital in this change in agriculture?

Let's try to find out the right answers to these five questions one by one, by analyzing various data and statistics available with us in this regard.

Analysis (1) –

What exactly is meant by a qualitative or fundamental change in the agricultural system?

The transformation of the agricultural system means the fundamental or qualitative change in the character of agriculture, from the old state of agriculture to a completely new state. This means whether there has to be change in ownership of the old productive forces (in this case aggregate agricultural land, farm plows or tractors and other agricultural implements, water-irrigation management, etc.) and also the old production relations (i.e. relationship between the owner of the land and equipment and the share-farmer or sharecropper or agri-worker) has undergone a fundamental change and a new agrarian system has been born.

In this case, what we have to do is to find out the real truth through a comprehensive analysis of the state of agriculture before 1947 and the changes that have taken place in the agricultural sector of the country in the subsequent period.

Analysis (2) –

What was the character of Indian agriculture before 1947, and what are the benefits of all the concrete steps taken by the government of India to improve agriculture in the following years?

A review of history reveals that the British left India in 1947 as a result of a hundred years of peasant revolt against British imperialism, the various struggles of Dalit organizations against Brahmanism, numerous peoples' movements, numerous revolutionary activities across Bengal-Bihar-Punjab-Maharashtra, and nationwide freedom struggle against the British Imperialists. The agrarian system in India was then semi-feudal. This semi-feudal system was established by the British through the introduction of permanent settlements and the zamindari system, which also led to intense exploitation and indescribable oppression of Indian peasants. Not only was this exploitation limited financially, but unspeakable oppression and other social exploitation of the Adivasi-Harijans in the name of caste continued through the zamindars, which were, in fact, an integral part of semi-feudal exploitation.

In this situation, the Indian National Congress, the party representing the big bourgeoisie and the zamindar classes, after coming to power, – the united voice of the various peasant assemblies of the country demanded, – 'land in the hands of the peasants', 'give all power to the people', etc. Without giving any importance to all these demands and without any attempt to radically change the agrarian system, the Government, on the contrary, kept on handing over more cultivable land to the big zamindars and rich peasants in the name of so-called land reform, and thus, the semi-feudal system left by the British has been maintained intact. Even at this time, the Tebhaga movement in Bengal and the peasant uprisings in Telangana in Hyderabad were relentlessly suppressed by this Congress government of the independent country. Such was the type of sympathy, the government had towards its people.

After 1947, the Congress government passed a number of laws for land reform, but none of them were actually implemented. For example, in 1950, the Zamindari Abolition Act and the Tenancy Act were passed in different states. In West Bengal, the Bargadar Act was passed in 1950. This law was amended several times and became part of the West Bengal Land Reform Act. In 1953, the Estate Acquisition Act was passed. Those who earlier paid rent to the zamindars but were recognized as 'rai-yats' were given land ownership under this Act. The West Bengal Land

Reform Act (1954) was passed in 1954. Under this law, all raiyats are allowed to keep up to 25 acres of agricultural land and up to 15 acres of non-agricultural land. In 1970, the law was amended to limit agricultural land to 12.5 acres in irrigated areas and 17.5 acres in non-irrigated areas, and the amendment stated that sharecroppers would receive 75 percent of the crop produced. The only amendment made since the Left Front government came to power was in 1980, to bring all agricultural and non-agricultural land between 17.5 and 12.5 acres.

The purpose of this law was to take land from large landowners and distribute it among landless farmers. But the law was not enforced for a long time, as the lobby of the big-landlords within the Congress stood in the way. Meanwhile, in the seventies, in the tide of other peasant movements in West Bengal, including the Naxalbari movement, and in 1977, in the tide of various peasant movements, some lands in West Bengal were lost and the names of some sharecroppers were recorded. However, the amount of land distributed in West Bengal was only 8% of the total agricultural land. It can be added that the names of about 15 lakh squatters are recorded. In this case, the share of the land they got was only 7 percent of the total land. In a word, land reform in West Bengal has established farmers' rights to about 15 percent of the land, which is much higher than other states in India. The land has been transferred in other states of India in name only. Across India, this land was only 2% of the total land.

Thus it is seen that the main component of productive energy in the agrarian system, in the case of arable land ownership, has undergone a slight, quantitative change, but no fundamental change. In addition, a small amount of new land has been allotted to sharecroppers. While all these measures are of public welfare and laudable, they are not at all a sign of the introduction of capitalist agrarian system, as it further fragmented the agrarian bourgeoisie rather than centralizing agrarian land and hindered the capitalist process of increasing the rural proletariat. The conventional semi-feudal system has been strengthened. It can be called some developmental work of the conventional system.

In northern and western India and in some areas in the Krishna-Godavari valley, zamindars and wealthy peasants began to cultivate in a capitalist manner. But due to the dependence on multinational companies for seeds, fertilizers, machinery and technology, a large part of the surplus went to the imperialists. Now the 'green revolution' that has beaten the drums in those areas has come to a standstill. The central government has since launched a plan for a "second green revolution" in the eastern part of the country, which aims to increase the cultivation of rice and other crops through hybrid seeds. Farmers have to buy hybrid seeds every year from multinational companies like Monsanto. If these seeds are widely introduced, agriculture will be completely controlled by imperialist capital through multi-national companies like Monsanto. In other words, arrangements are being made to introduce a capitalist agricultural system which mechanically depends on imperialism in agriculture. But in a semi-feudal semi-colonial country like India, where the zamindars-feudal lords are left out, even the big capitalists are not independent, but are totally dependent on imperialist investment capital, where the purchasing power of the common man is low, in the agricultural system. Trying to introduce capitalism is like holding a peacock's tail by a crow. In reality this plan is nothing more than an attempt to serve imperialism.

Analysis (3) —

What is the true nature of the green revolution in India?

In 1975, Prime Minister Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri started the Green Revolution by beating the drums in Punjab province. The initiative was later extended to Haryana and some parts of Uttar Pradesh. The aim was to bring about a revolutionary change in the production of wheat by cultivating high-breed grains imported from abroad. Initially, there was a huge outcry over the significant increase in wheat production as a result of improved quality seed cultivation, but overall, the initiative has failed miserably, in a word, it has 'flopped'. And as of then this plan was put on hold. The reasons for this failure are as follows:

- « The skyrocketing price of imported grain seeds.
- « If you do not cultivate this on a large area of land together, the cost of profit is not very high.
- « It has been heard that the use of chemical fertilizers, which is necessary for a higher yield of these grain seeds, actually damages the normal quality of the land.
- « Incidental costs are much higher than usual.
- « The profit of the exporter of high-breed grain seeds is more than the profit of the farmer, i.e. the profit is eaten by ants.
- « Overall there is a need for huge capital investment, which was not readily available.
- « Farmers are discouraged due to various problems in seed import and ancillary management.

Analysis (4) —

If the Indian agricultural system has been capitalized, what kind of changes has taken place concerning ownership of agricultural inputs and in the relations of production?

First, what is meant by the capitalization of the agrarian system, and in fact, what is the correct idea of the semi-feudal agrarian system and before that, it needs to be clarified through a little more detailed discussion.

We know that in 1757, the East India Company of England defeated the last Nawab of Bengal, Sirajdaullah at the Battle of Plassey, and seized power in Bengal-Bihar. Later in 1793, the British, by introducing 'Permanent Settlement' per the British land settlement system, accepted the zamindars as the permanent owners of the land throughout Bengal and Bihar and in some parts of Madras and the United Provinces. And through these zamindars, the Britishers kept on exploiting the peasants by forcefully collecting rents at an exceptionally higher rate. The earlier 'feudal agrarian system', in which the people had to pay the rents to the Nawab-kings directly and at a relatively low rate, i.e., in the absence of any evil power between the zamindars, was shattered. Later, the British established this system all over India. This is the new system of agrarian exploitation that was created by the British through numerous zamindars, by doubling, tripling, or even quadrupling the taxes levied on the peasants by overthrowing the system of levying a small tax directly from the peasants during the Mughal period. The semi-feudal agrarian system, is neither a feudal agrarian system of kings and nawabs nor a capitalist agrarian system. In this system, a large portion of the entire agricultural land was owned by the big and small zamindars and rich farmers, and the remaining small amount of land was given to the middle peasants and the poor peasants.

That is to say, the total agricultural land of India, that is, the eco-land were scattered among the different classes of society and existed in a much disorganized state. At the head of the numerous classes of society were the zamindars, talukdars, jotdars, malgujars, and rich-peasants, who had the most ownership of the land and whose social influence was unimaginable, as they were given maximum protection by the British government. They did not cultivate it themselves but instead shared it with sharecroppers or, in some cases, farm laborers.

The zamindars had to pay a huge amount of annual rent to the British Government, which was twice or three times or in some cases up to four times the rent which the zamindars extorted from the subjects of all levels under them. Then there were the rich peasants who did not cultivate themselves but supervised the cultivation. Beneath it was the middle peasants and the poor peasants, who cultivated their own land and somehow supported their families. The landless farm laborers were at the lowest level of society. They were mainly Dalits, tribals, or any other lower-caste community. These were the victims of the most exploitation, oppression, and humiliation. In the present era, a large part of them (about nine to ten crore in number) do not have adequate opportunities for agricultural wages in the villages, so in the corners of different states of India, in the big cities, they are somehow living through uncontrolled wage labor.

In this case, it is seen that the productive power of the society of that time was mainly in the hands of the zamindar-jotedar class and to some extent in the hands of the rich-peasants. The remaining majority class was exploited, oppressed, and neglected. And in that era, the main conflict in the agrarian system was between the wealthy zamindars, the middle class of the British as money-lenders and the sharecroppers, the farm laborers, and the poor people.

This was the productive force and production relations of the society of that time and this agricultural system was the semi-feudal agricultural system of India at that time.

It is important to note here that it is difficult to get any data on the agricultural lands of British India. All the data available on land are prepared by the Government of India: Tenancy and land concentration as well as census data in 1961, The Rural Labor Inquiry in 1964-65, All India Debt and Investment Survey in 1971, 'Census of 1978' etc. There are also some tables prepared by the Center for Monitoring the Indian Economy, (CMIE) in 1979, but it is very difficult to come up with a straight forward conclusion from these figures. Nevertheless, the most useful information that can be gleaned from these statistics is as follows:

Amount of land occupied by large zamindars and rich farming families: —

31% of the land is owned by maximum 4% (of which 23% of the land is owned by 2.2%). According to the 1971-72 statistics, only 5% have 47.21% of the land, and the highest 1% has 22.96% of the land. A rough estimate of this shows that a maximum of 5% of zamindars, jotedars and rich farmers own about 50% of the land.

Amount of land occupied by medium and poor farming families: —

Probably 20% to 30% of the cultivable land is in the hands of 75% of the families who cultivate it themselves. Eighty-five percent of these households include middle class to poor peasants and even landless, very poor employed in other occupations. Among the medium farmers, only those families with more than 2.5 acres of land are able to make a living on the land and those below it have to make arrangements for other livelihoods in the village or town.

Rural Proletariat: —

65% of rural households who own 9% or less of the country's land as a whole have been identified as rural proletarians. They have to find agricultural wages or other livelihoods to earn a living. According to NSS / AIDIS statistics, the proportion of these agricultural laborers has come down from 22% in 1953-54 to 9.6% in 1971-72, due to various government tenancy acts, land ceiling acts, etc. However, at the same time, the number of rural landless households has increased in the same proportion from 11% to 27.4%. Overall, according to data provided by AIDIS, the proportion of landless farm laborers in 1971-72 was 14.6%, landless handicraftsmen 2.4%, and other non-agricultural laborers 10.4%, or a total of 26.4%.

It is estimated that by the year 2000, the overall proportion of these rural proletarians will have increased, albeit very little, to less than 30%. And a large part of them later became migrant workers.

Let us now take a look at what is meant by the capitalization of agriculture and how much this capitalization has been implemented in India.

Capitalist – agriculture is undoubtedly a sophisticated agrarian system, in which with the use of modern agricultural machinery and high-quality seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides, as well as by application of advanced techniques on large and centralized farms, a huge quantity of high-quality agricultural products are produced. In this case, three things are most important, – first, the large and small, scattered agricultural lands are centralized and converted into large farms. Secondly, wide application of agricultural machinery, use of high-quality seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc., and application of advanced technology is ensured. Thirdly, apart from landowners and agricultural laborers, others such as sharecroppers, brokers, other middlemen, etc., as surplus collectors are extinct.

To judge whether the old semi-feudal agrarian system of India has been capitalized, it is essential that some of the prerequisites for the development of the capitalist system be met. Those prerequisites are as follows:

A) Centralization of Agricultural Land — Most of the agricultural land should be centralized, mainly owned by a limited number of wealthy people, who can invest the capital required to produce large-scale agricultural products. In this case, provision of bank capital or any other public-private capital may be required.

B) Improved Production Relations — In agriculture, instead of other middlemen like sharecroppers, various agents, etc., a fair number of direct employment of agricultural laborers should be observed. Because in this system, apart from landowners and agricultural laborers, other middle classes like sharecroppers and other surplus collectors, etc. disappear.

C) Use of Modern Agricultural Machinery and Technology — Farming will require extensive use of modern agricultural implements, such as tractors, dumpers, pump sets, and other agricultural implements, instead of manual work such as old plows, old irrigation systems, manual paddy cutting, threshing, and transportation of goods, etc.

Extensive use of modern agricultural technology and high –quality seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides is also a must.

D) Sales of Agricultural Products — At least 90 percent of the total agricultural produce should be sold directly in the agri-market, due to the non-existence of middlemen like sharecroppers, agents, etc. At the same time, in the case of crop sales, the extinction of middlemen like brokers has resulted in a huge reduction in costs and a reasonable increase in profit margins.

E) Contribution of Agriculture to GDP: The contribution of agricultural products to the country's GDP has increased significantly due to the huge increase in sales of agricultural products and therefore the increase in government tariffs on agriculture, which should be reflected in the country's annual agricultural income statistics.

F) Development of Advanced Class-Consciousness — The establishment of modern production processes and better relations of production in the capitalist agrarian system must have a fruitful effect on society. Therefore the culture of many old hate-based practices in our country should gradually disappear and be replaced by a culture of superior class consciousness, whose reflection should be visible in society.

We will now review the above six conditions (prerequisites A to F) one by one in terms of various statistics from NSS, AIDIS, and CMIE to see what percentage of these so-called capitalist-agricultural conditions in India can meet these prerequisites and how much of this so-called change in our country effective.

Review of Prerequisite A) — Agricultural Land Centralization :

From the data already obtained, we have seen that roughly 50% of the total agricultural land in India is concentrated in the ownership of 5% zamindars and rich farmers. The remaining 30% of the land is in the hands of medium and poor farmers.

Now it may seem that the ownership of 50% of the land is in the hands of 5% zamindars and rich peasants, for whom it is not at all difficult to provide sufficient capital for modern farming methods, it is easily possible for them to cultivate in this capitalist system. But the problem is that 50% of the land is scattered in different states, in different regions, with 5% different owners, which means the lands are not centralized. So how will the prerequisite for capitalist cultivation on huge concentrated lands are met? Nevertheless, in some cases, this is not to say that capitalist agriculture cannot take place on some lands of small to large size. But in that case, as a result, in the all-India context, there may be some increase in the quantity of agricultural production, but no great change in quantity and quality can be expected at all.

Therefore, with respect to Capitalist agriculture related to the centralization of agricultural land, it can be assumed that 30% to 35% of this prerequisite has been met, nothing more.

Review of Prerequisite (B) — Improved Production Relationships:

We have already seen from AIDIS statistics that the percentage of landless farm laborers in 1981-82 was 14.6%. If we take into account the population growth in the future, if the proportion of rural proletariat is very high in 2000, it can be seen that it has almost doubled to 30%, of which at least 10% are employed as migrant workers in other cities. But if capitalist agriculture has taken place all over India, then what can be done with the remaining 20% of agricultural labor? Where we know that at least 80% of the farmers in India are directly involved in agriculture, then who are the remaining 40% of farmers? They can be none other than sharecroppers and other middlemen. Thus, it is understood that the existence of sharecropping is fully maintained. And that is why in this case also the precondition of capitalist-agriculture related to agricultural labor is not fulfilled.

Review of Prerequisite C) — Use of Modern Agricultural Machinery and Technology :

According to Table 1 of the 1969 Agricultural Input given by CMIE, 5.1 kg of all types of fertilizers were used per hectare of arable land in 1965-66, 17.4 kg in 1975-76, and 29.4 kg in 1978-79. For every one lakh hectare of cultivated land, 34 tractors were used in 1965-66, 166 in 1975-76, and 234 in 1987-89. For irrigation, electric tube wells and pump sets were used per 100,000 hectares of land, 362 in 1965-66, 1617 in 1975-76, and 2,306 in 1978-79. Isn't the above statistic ridiculously inadequate in terms of the capitalist agrarian system all over India? A Google search revealed that the total amount of arable land in India is 159.7 million hectares or 15,97,00,000 hectares. Only 234 tractors were used to cultivate this 1597 lakh hectare land in 1978-79? At present, if this number is increased tenfold to 2340, then only 68,248 acres of land can be cultivated. If a tractor is used on even ten acres of land in one day, then the total cultivated land (as for me) would be 6,82,479 hectares, which is only 0.43% of the total agricultural land in India. If the above calculation to use of fertilizer and irrigation is taken into account, its proportion will become more negligible in terms of the whole country. So, in a country as large as India, these numbers

are insignificant and ridiculous in proportion to the overall agricultural needs. So even in this case, the preconditions of capitalist-agriculture are not being fulfilled in any way.

Review of Prerequisite D) – Sales of Agricultural Products :

First of all, I would like to point out that no statistics on the sale of agricultural products are available anywhere. Therefore, in this case, the decision has to be made based on personal information. Personal inquiries show that the average village farmer usually keeps collected one-fourth of the annual crop for his own consumption and sells three-fourths of the crop in the warehouse of the petty-collectors. Poor farmers may save three-quarters for themselves and sell a quarter to the petty-collectors, or the whole may not be enough for themselves. Wealthy peasants and landlords seem to follow the same path. And last but not least, the petty-collectors sell these collected crops at wholesale prices to the government in the agri-market or through agents. So where did the sale of agricultural products go – directly to the agricultural market or to the government? Instead, the middlemen have absorbed a significant surplus through that work and shared in the profits of the actual producers and the government. So even in this case, the preconditions of capitalist agriculture are not being fulfilled.

Review of Prerequisite – E) – Contribution of Agriculture to GDP :

The contribution of agricultural products to GDP depends entirely on statistics, but sadly no clear information has been provided by NSS, AIDIS, or CMIE. Here are some of the statistics I have collected from Google and I think that's enough to make a decision.

After independence, more than half of the total national income came from agriculture. In 2003-04, 21.7 percent of the total national income came from agriculture, while in 2007-08 it declined to 17.8 percent. In 2008-09, India's gross national product grew by close to 7 percent, but the contribution of agricultural production grew only by 1.6 percent. In this case, it is important to note that the production of food grains and pulses decreased by 0.8 percent and 8.5 percent respectively. Overall, the contribution of agriculture to the country's GDP is critical. In the ten years since the introduction of neo-liberalism, state investment in agricultural infrastructure has declined sharply. Agricultural surpluses, on the other hand, have been swallowed up by imperialist capital through multi-national companies. These overall statistics indicate a deep crisis in agriculture. Therefore, from the information gathered in this case, it is not established that agricultural products have any significant contribution to the GDP. In other words, even in this case, the condition of acquiring the capitalist character of agricultural production is not being met at all.

Review of Prerequisite – F) – Development of Advanced Class-Consciousness :

The vital condition for the abolition of the abominable feudal caste system in the capitalist agrarian system that we are now going to discuss is not only very important, it demands detailed and proper consideration because national culture is a mirror of social life, in which the exact image of any social life is reflected.

India's oldest four-caste systems, which defines the division of social labor, states that Brahmins will read and worship, Kshatriya will participate in warfare and administration, Vaishyas will take part in trade, and Shudras, will do manual labor. The Hindu scriptures speak of strict adherence to this division of labor. If a Brahmin holds a plough, he will be expelled. If Shudra tries to study, again he will be sentenced to death. Such a provision has been going on in our country for ages. As in British India, the system has not changed much but has remained in full swing in independent Indian society. We have seen how much importance was given to

the traditional division of labor even by the political leaders of modern India, the pattern of which has emerged through the debate between Gandhi and Ambedkar. In the book "What Has the Congress and Mr. Gandhi done for the Untouchables", Ambedkar has quoted Gandhi's writings. Gandhi wrote, "People of lower castes should be given all kinds of educational opportunities. But this does not mean that they will leave the traditional profession and take up another profession. If people leave the traditionally followed professions, there will be great chaos in the society." So it is understood that the subject of profession according to caste in India has been followed in all ages, modern India is no different. It is also worth mentioning that land ownership was not private from ancient times until the arrival of the British. The surplus was drawn by the state and the surplus was distributed among the different groups according to the high and low position in the caste system. Naturally, we can say that the caste system was a special kind of production-relationship because it was a human-to-human relationship in which people participated in the production and the distribution of social production was regulated by that relationship. In this way, various new nations have been created during the last two thousand years.

Even in today's age, we see how many kinds of injustices and even murders are taking place in society in the name of race and religion. Indigenous people and Dalits are still employed exclusively for hard manual labor on farms and all kinds of hard work inside the deep mine-womb. Casteism and untouchability have crippled our society in the villages and suburban areas. Can we still claim the introduction of the capitalist agrarian system? We can't do that in any way. Therefore, even in this respect, the prerequisite for the introduction of a capitalist agrarian system is not being observed in any way.

Therefore, when all the above data points to the fact that no prerequisites are being met for the capitalization of the agricultural system, especially when there is no change in the productive forces and the relations of production, it can be emphasized that despite little changes having been taken place in the farming methods, India's semi-feudal agricultural system remains in place.

Analysis (5) —

What has been the role of imperialism and imperialist-capital in this change in agriculture?

As we have already seen in our review, despite the steps taken by the Government of India to improve the agricultural system, no signs of change in the character of the agricultural system have been found except for some quantitative increase in agricultural production. So can it be called a failure of the government or is there some other reason behind it ?

No, not at all a failure. This is just an attempt to reform the agricultural system in the name of change. The ruling class of India never wanted to capitalize on the agrarian system, because the revolutionary goodwill required for this move was not there and cannot be even expected to be in the ruling class at all. Because this government was nothing but a representative of the combination of the big comprador bourgeoisie, big landlord class and bureaucratic capitalists, that was characteristically agents of imperialism. Improving some modest development in all spheres of the country by this government has always been permissible for imperialism but the approval of any revolutionary step ignoring the bloody eyes of imperialism — unimaginable and more than impossible. And so, in both agriculture and industry, as we have seen, the Government of India's development efforts have been pushed to a limited extent. We have seen that since independence, the Nehru government has been working for the betterment of the

country, from the Bhakra-Nangal water dam in Punjab to hundreds of reservoirs, dams, mile after mile of roads, public settlements, electricity, rail connectivity, etc. to various other facilities. Thousands of initiatives have been taken to take the country a little further on the path of progress through the construction of five huge steel plants, the formation of Navratna companies and various other industrial development activities. After a moderate improvement in the development of agriculture and industry, it has come to a halt before reaching the final goal. And why was this halt particularly effective in the early nineties? Here lies the question of the role of imperialism. The steps that the Indian government has taken since 1947 to build the country and have been able to move forward steadily have been made possible by the fact that the world was then divided into two poles, — US imperialism and Soviet social imperialism. And between these two imperialist camps there was intense rivalry, competition, and tension. And taking advantage of that conflict, India continues to advance the country's progress on behalf of the Soviet social imperialist camp. Following in the footsteps of the Soviets, on July 19, 1969, the then Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, took a significant step in the economic field by nationalizing 14 large banks and a few other sectors. In addition, great strides were made in everything from education and culture to the industrial sector, rail services, air services, electricity, telecommunications, and the expansion of television. Even through the modernization of the army, the country made great strides in the military field. At that time India was even dreaming of becoming a superpower. But then came a huge shift in international politics. As the 1980s approached, the Soviet Union became economically, politically, and militarily weak.

In that situation, they proposed some compromising military agreement with the United States in order to maintain the international political balance. Subsequently, on December 8, 1987, a number of agreements on nuclear weapons control were signed between the two countries. These agreements, in turn, bore witness to the weakness of the Soviet Union and a kind of surrender, which the whole world did not hesitate to understand. Realising the importance of this changed situation, India also shifted its camp towards the United States. Then, on December 26, 1991, the so-called socialist system of the Soviet Union collapsed and the re-establishment of capitalism in Russia was announced. And as a result, the world became unipolar. The US imperialism became the super power and established its influence and dominance around the world, by establishing global domination through the policy of globalization and huge investment of finance capital. Meanwhile, the Congress government of India also gradually took refuge under the umbrella of US imperialism and in 1991, Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's Congress Finance Minister Manmohan Singh formulated a policy of economic liberalization and made India a loyalist of the new world-imperialist camp. But what was this economic liberalization? Let's take a brief look at the issue.

In fact, the policy of financial liberalization was to give a liberal character to the Indian economy, to facilitate markets and services, and to expand the role of private and foreign investment. This change in the economic field was made as a condition of taking a loan of 500 million from the World Bank and IMF as a bailout package to get out of the then economic crisis. In fact, the changes in monetary policy include the reduction of import duties, the lifting of market controls, the reduction of taxes on international investment, and the opening up of greater foreign investment. And all this was done by the then government with the aim of paving the way for huge economic growth between 1991 and 2000. Domestically, the overall goal of this

liberalization was to reduce agricultural subsidies and to facilitate economic growth by easing the various rights-rich labor policies achieved as a result of India's long working class movement. From then until today, all governments, regardless of party affiliation, have upheld this policy and have risen to implement the above anti-people policies, which are in fact nothing more than allegiance to imperialism.

This is the compromising path of the governments of the backward countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America in the age of imperialism. And our country has followed the same path.

The role of imperialism in the agricultural development of such a backward country is the role of a development-controlling exploiter. Countries like India just have to serve them — but not to compete with them by changing the nature of the country's agriculture or industry. And with the tag of superpower, they will talk about improving our agriculture, on the one hand, will pressure us to import grains, seeds, fertilizers, etc. from multinational companies like Monsanto, on the other hand, and will encourage us to take loans from the World Bank.

In the 1970s, the World Bank significantly increased the amount of credit for agricultural development in India, but no statistics have been released on exactly how much it has increased and what the overall debt component is. However, according to an estimate by the Reserve Bank of India, the amount of all types of direct and indirect institutional loans in agriculture doubled from Rs. 2,621.8 crore to Rs 5,722.3 crore between 1973 and 1978.

So it is understandable how farmers have been trapped in debt in the name of agricultural development. But the increase in the income of the farmers is a far cry, it is gradually becoming insignificant in terms of livelihood. And as a result, farmers have to choose the path of suicide due to debt. On May 3, 2016, the Central Government of India informed the Hon'ble Supreme Court in a written statement that it has been aware of an average of more than 12,000 farmer suicides every year since 2013. However, according to an unconfirmed report, an estimated 150,000 (one lakh fifty thousand) farmers in India have committed suicide in recent years due to non-payment of bank loans. This is the consequence of trapping farmers in debt and this is our agricultural system. If anyone tries to argue that this is a developed capitalist agrarian system, then there is nothing more to say.

However, it is clear from the above review that the role and purpose of imperialism and imperialist capital in the agricultural system of India and other backward countries is the same, — to thwart any qualitative change in the agricultural system of these countries. Consumerism of various products and entanglement in the net of debt to turn into an imperialist-dependent and a cowardly country. And the role of the governments of these backward countries is — to obey all their commands as a perfectly obedient boy.

So at last, it can be said that if backward countries like ours cannot stand against imperialism through united struggle, why only in a semi-feudal agricultural system, it will not be possible to make any fundamental change in any kind of system.