

We can't Hold Nature Responsible for these Man-made Disasters under any Argument

This is not a problem that cannot be solved. It can't also be avoided by calling it a natural problem. It is only Nature's reaction against the harassment and destruction carried on by the capitalist development.

The people of Punjab suffer a lot whenever there is a flood or a drought in Punjab. It is a matter of regret that the present rulers are trying to evade their responsibilities by blaming it on the nature.

This time, even though the monsoon came a week earlier than usual, the rains were good. If the rulers had fulfilled their due responsibilities, the loss of such a colossal magnitude of life and property would not have happened.

In the month of July, there was 44% more rain than normal. About 1500 villages in 19 districts got affected by the recent flood. According to a report of the Government of Punjab there was a loss to the tune of Rs 1000 crore. But this seems to be gross under-estimation of the loss incurred. The newspapers reported that 54 people lost their lives, crops under an area of 6.25 lac acres got damaged and 27 thousand cattle perished. The river and canal embankments breached, at least, at 488 places. This resulted in silting of farm lands. There is a remote possibility of carrying out replantation on many of those lands. As usual, the ruling party and the opposition parties blamed each other to reap the electoral benefit in the coming election.

The people of Punjab, as true to their nature, are extending their support to the distressed people. Different Farmer organizations are also engaged in relief works and reaching out to the flood affected people.

Whenever there was heavy rain in the catchment areas of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, floods often occurred as it is seen in 1988, 1993 and in 2023.

This is mainly due to the destruction caused to the nature by the rulers. The trees are cut by the contractors arbitrarily which cannot be done without the connivance of the authorities. The theory propelled by some that the damage occurred due to human settlement on the banks of rivers does not hold much water. All over the world human settlement started on the banks of rivers. Rivers follow their own natural course, create their beds, find their own tributaries which collect water through channels and fall into the rivers. In the past few years, builders have made a lot of illegal encroachments and constructions on many of these channels. According to a report published in the English newspaper Tribune dated 11-

7-2023, out of 2.57 lakh acres, 1.47 lakh acres have been illegally encroached which obstruct the natural flow of water. Floods occur, very often, due to these obstructions.

Professor Ranjit Singh, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, has written in his article that after the flood in 1955, 400 drains were dug across Punjab. For two decades, cleaning and maintenance of these were done regularly. After 90s maintenance and cleaning works completely stopped and it is now limited to paper works only.

According to the article written by Dr.Gurinder Kaur, the reason for the destruction that the Ghaggar River has caused in Patiala city is due to the recent rapid development of urban estates and construction activities which is under the Punjab Urban Planning and Development Authority.

According to the 2020 report of the Mines and Geology Department of the Punjab Government, there is an abundance of sand siltation in the river beds.

Apart from this, the imperialist directed farming model implemented under the name of green revolution is also one of the main reasons. It ate away crop diversity replacing traditional crops. The hybrid paddy cultivation that soaked up water has brought Punjab to the brink of disaster. First, the farmers are forced to turn the field into a pond by extracting underground water; later this water mixes with rain water and becomes the cause of further destruction. Apart from this, the ponds in the villages where the rain water used to collect have been filled.

This is not a problem that cannot be solved. It can't also be avoided by calling it a natural problem. It is only Nature's reaction against the harassment and destruction carried on by the capitalist development. We can't hold nature responsible for these man-made disasters under any argument.

So, the ruling class should abandon this development model and follow a nature friendly pro-people agricultural policy. Today, the situation demands the affected people to come together in the field of struggle and force the government to find a solution.

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