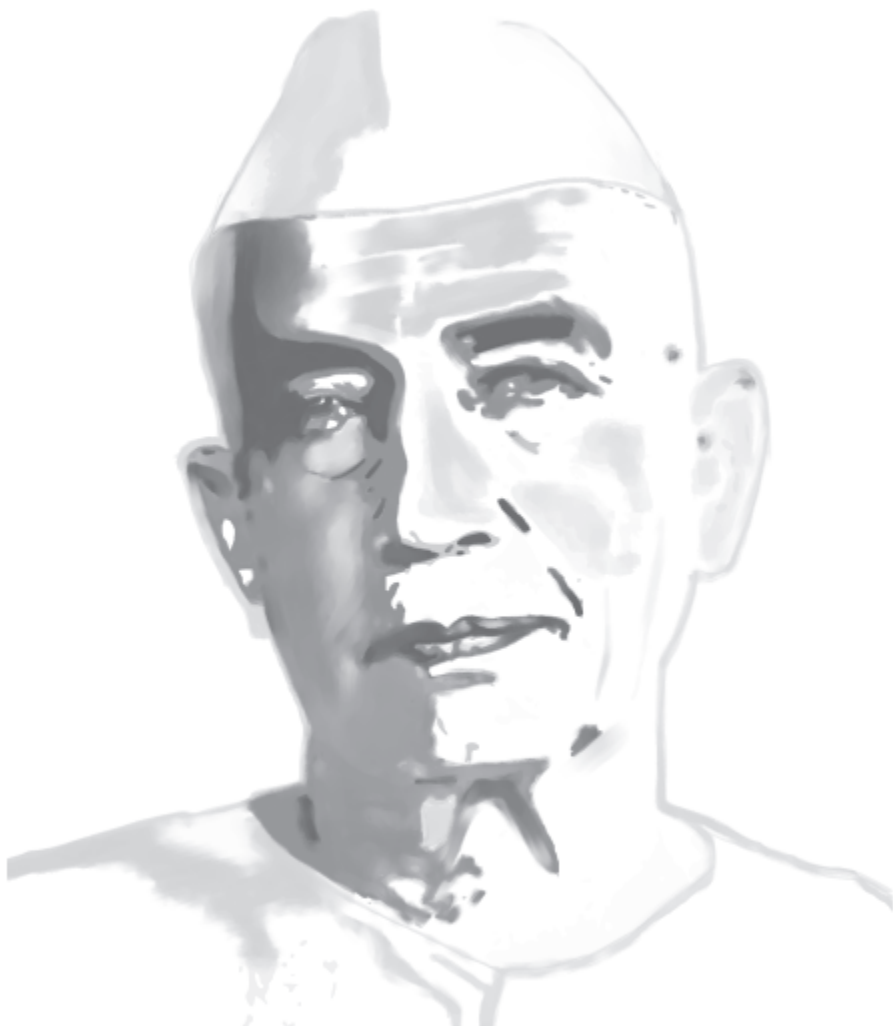


# Summary of Selected Works

---

Charan Singh



Abolition of Zamindari, 1947.

Joint Farming X-Rayed, 1959.

India's Poverty and its Solution, 1964.

India's Economic Policy, 1978.

Economic Nightmare of India, 1981.

Land Reforms in U.P. and the Kulaks, 1986.

# Summary and Bibliography *of* Selected Works

Abolition of Zamindari. 1947  
Joint Farming X-Rayed. 1959  
India's Poverty & Its Solution. 1964  
India's Economic Policy. 1978  
India's Economic Nightmare. 1981  
Land Reforms in U.P. & The Kulaks. 1986

*By*  
Charan Singh

Copyright © Charan Singh Archives



Published July 2020 by  
**Charan Singh Archives**

[www.charansingh.org](http://www.charansingh.org)  
[info@charansingh.org](mailto:info@charansingh.org)

Price ₹595

ISBN: 978-93-87280-76-2

All rights reserved.

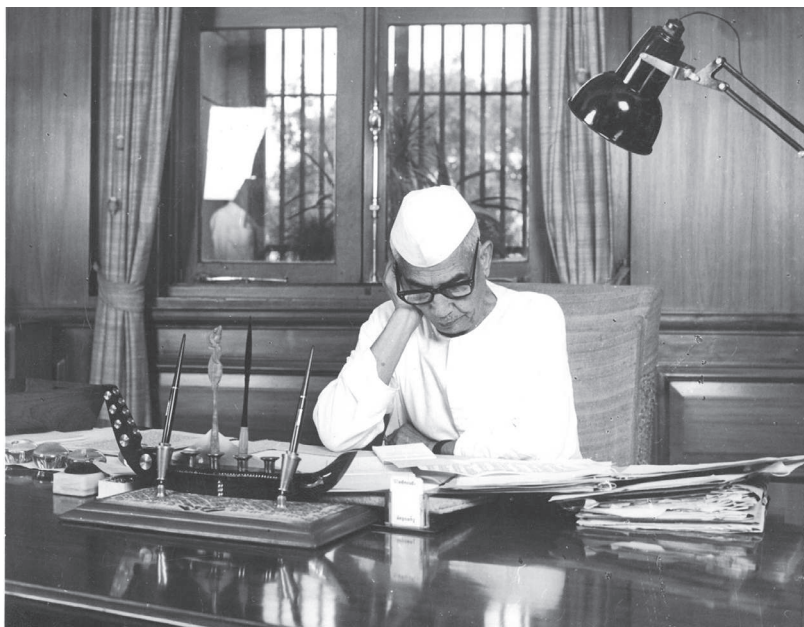
This publication may not be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted  
without the prior permission of the publisher.

For permission, please write to [info@charansingh.org](mailto:info@charansingh.org)

Typeset by Ram Das Lal  
Cover design by Anando Banerjee  
Printed by Saurabh Printers Pvt. Ltd, Greater NOIDA, India.



Mir Singh and Netar Kaur, parents of Charan Singh.  
Village Bhadaula, District Meerut. Uttar Pradesh. 1950.



Charan Singh  
Prime Minister of India. Delhi, 1979.

# Contents

<i>Charan Singh: An Introduction</i>	vii
<i>Foreword</i>	ix

## Section I: Summary

Abolition of Zamindari	3
Joint Farming X-Rayed	25
India's Poverty and its Solution	45
India's Economic Policy	70
Economic Nightmare of India	92
Land Reforms in U.P. and the Kulaks	123

## Section II: Bibliography

<i>Introduction</i>	149
Abolition of Zamindari	153
Joint Farming X-Rayed	157
India's Poverty and Its Solution	164
India's Economic Policy	175
Economic Nightmare of India	177
Land Reforms in U.P. and the Kulaks	186



## Charan Singh: An Introduction

Charan Singh was moulded by three key influences: his upbringing in a poor self-cultivating peasant family and the realities of village life; the teachings of Dayanand Saraswati; and those of Mohandas Gandhi. Young Charan Singh's thoughts, ideals and friendships took firm shape during the mass movement for freedom from colonial British rule, informed by Gandhi's dream of *Swaraj* as a peaceful, social and political revolution in an independent India. Singh believed deeply in a democratic society of small producers and small consumers brought together in a system neither capitalist or communist but instead one that addressed as a whole the uniquely Indian problems of poverty, unemployment, inequality, caste and corruption. Each of these issues remains intractable today, and his solutions as fresh and relevant to their amelioration and ultimate eradication.

Charan Singh was born on 23 December 1902 in Meerut District of the United Provinces (now, Uttar Pradesh) in an illiterate tenant farmer's modest village hut. His mental fortitude and capability were recognised early in life and he went on to acquire a B.Sc., M.A. in History and LL.B from Agra College. He joined the Indian National Congress at 27 in the struggle to free India from British rule and was imprisoned in 1930, 1940, and 1942 for his participation in the national movement. Singh remained a member of the Legislative Assembly of Uttar Pradesh from 1936 to 1974 and was a minister in all Congress governments from 1946 to 1967. This provided him a reputation as a clean and clear-headed administrator and upholder of the law of the land. His private and public life was one, his incorruptibility and high character recognised by all. Singh was the state's first non-Congress Chief Minister in 1967 and again in 1970, before his 1977-79 tenure in the Union Government as Cabinet Minister for Home and later Finance. This journey culminated in 1979 when he became the Prime Minister of India. He remained a figure of major political significance in Indian politics over much of the Seventies and early Eighties and passed away on 29 May 1987.

Charan Singh's ideas are relevant to India today, particularly as we struggle with an agrarian crisis where 67% of our impoverished population lives in the villages and 47% is engaged in non-remunerative



agricultural livelihoods. Only the most diehard proponents of industrialism and modernity envision a majority of our rural brethren moving to the slums of our terribly overburdened cities. Singh wrote scores of books and political pamphlets as well as hundreds of articles on the need for centrality of villages and agriculture in India's political economy and planning. His ideas are worth revisiting for those of us seeking less industrial, more hand-made and self-sufficient rural and local economies in India.

Singh's first brush with writing was with the 611-page report of the Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Committee in Uttar Pradesh in 1948 of which he was a key member. He wrote, amongst others, *Abolition of Zamindari: Two Alternatives* (1947), *Joint Farming X-Rayed: The Problem and Its Solution* (1959), *India's Poverty and Its Solution* (1964), *India's Economic Policy: The Gandhian Blueprint* (1978), *Economic Nightmare of India: Its Cause and Cure* (1981) and *Land Reforms in U.P. and the Kulaks* (1986).

"Charan Singh's political life and economic ideas provide an entry-point into a much broader set of issues both for India and for the political and economic development of the remaining agrarian societies of the world. His political career raises the issue of whether or not a genuine agrarian movement can be built into a viable and persistent political force in the 20th century in a developing country. His economic ideas and his political programme raise the question of whether or not it is conceivable that a viable alternative strategy for the economic development of contemporary agrarian societies can be pursued in the face of the enormous pressures for industrialisation. Finally, his specific proposals for the preservation and stabilisation of a system of peasant proprietorship raise once again one of the major social issues of modern times, namely, whether an agrarian economic order based upon small farms can be sustained against the competing pressures either for large-scale commercialisation of agriculture or for some form of collectivisation."

Brass, Paul. *Chaudhuri Charan Singh: An Indian Political Life*.  
Economic & Political Weekly, Mumbai. 25 Sept 1993.

# Foreword

Charan Singh, The Rural Intellectual

“So long as this country remains committed to the present pattern of economic development in which it sets up capital-intensive modern industries at enormous cost, only to cater to the needs of the urban elite or to export their products at throw-away prices, not only will unemployment go on increasing and capital go on concentrating in the hands of a few, but it will also run the risk of going deeper and deeper into bondage to the affluent nations. The only and the right way of avoiding this bondage – in other words, of fostering financial and technological self-reliance – is to make a clear break with the prevailing pattern of industrialisation and take to the Gandhian path, adapted, of course, to the changed or changing conditions. This path dictates, for example, that the production of consumer goods by machines is banned, thereby virtually forcing the cottage industries to fill in the gap; chemical fertilisers are replaced with organic manures as rapidly as possible; urban planning is taken in hand with a view to minimising the need for power-driven transport; and building laws are framed which compel the rich and the poor alike to go in for low-rise, high density housing, using cheap, locally available building materials, like bamboo, clay, bricks and tiles etc.

If India has to live and make the grade, the vast unemployment and under-employment, which afflict its economy, must be wiped out at the earliest date. It must, therefore, be unequivocally laid down that the aim of our economic policy has been changed from increasing the gross national product to increasing productive employment. In fact, the creation of more jobs would inevitably cause a rise in GNP but when, if at all, faced with the choice between a higher rate of growth of GNP with fewer jobs, on the one hand, and a lower rate of growth with more jobs, on the other, we will unhesitatingly opt for the latter course.”<sup>1</sup>

*Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.* The irony in the relevance of Charan Singh’s thoughts today informs us how little India’s situation has changed in fundamental ways over the last century. As Covid strikes at the heart of human activity, the ugly innards of the urban, post-industrial exploitative structure lie fully exposed. Our rural brothers and sisters flee the slums of the cities back to their villages from where, ironically,

---

<sup>1</sup> Singh, Charan. *Economic Nightmare of India* (1981), Charan Singh Archives, Delhi. 2020. p. 538-539

they had migrated to earn a living. The virus most afflicts the crowded, unbreathable and uninhabitable cities of our land. In Singh's ideal world there would have been no need for peasants or the landless to flee the village and our megacities would not have become the capital sinks of an ecologically unsustainable life. There is much a post-millennial India can learn from Charan Singh's thoughts.

Charan Singh studied in a village school in his early years and then in nearby Meerut city till his intellect propelled him to Agra University at the age of 19 where he went on to complete a Master's in History (British, European and Indian) and obtain a degree in Law. A vernacular man with a knack for languages, Singh came to know the Hindu scriptures as well as the poetry of Kabir that he recited at will. He wrote each of these 6 books in English<sup>2</sup> to connect with the urban Indian elites.

The renowned American political scientist Paul Brass<sup>3</sup> in an insightful 1993 article on Charan Singh, which subsequently became the introduction to his 2012 three-volume work on Singh,<sup>4</sup> identifies what he saw in Singh's life that makes it especially important for him and by extension for Indian society, to study:

"Four aspects of his political career and his influence on contemporary north Indian politics seem to me to be especially important. First is the fact that his political career involved him at all levels of the Indian political system. Second, he became identified as the principal spokesman of the middle peasantry of India. Third, he was identified also with the

---

<sup>2</sup> Byres, Terence. *Charan Singh (1902-87): An Assessment*, Journal of Peasant Studies, 1988. 15:2, 139-189. "More significantly, during a six-month visit to India I made in 1978-79, when I travelled extensively throughout the country, an earlier book, *India's Economic Policy: The Gandhian Blueprint* [Singh, 1978] had recently appeared. Had it been published some three or so years earlier – before the Emergency – it would scarcely have been noticed (indeed, his *Economic Nightmare of India*, published in 1981, received little attention outside of Lok Dal circles). But, in 1978-79, there was Charan Singh on the national stage, challenging for the highest office in the land. He could hardly be ignored. I was reading it and mentioned it to several people. A common response was to suggest that he could not possibly have written it himself. Among the doubting were some prominent urban intellectuals."

<sup>3</sup> Paul Richard Brass (b. November 8, 1936. <http://www.paulbrass.com/>) is Professor Emeritus of political science and international relations at the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington, Seattle, USA where he taught since 1965. After a B.A. in Government in 1958 from Harvard College, he completed an M.A. (1959) and Ph. D. in Political Science from the University of Chicago (1964). Paul has written scores of articles and 18 books on India and Indian politics since 1961. He and his wife Susan live the contemplative life in the woods near Acme, Washington, USA.

<sup>4</sup> Brass, Paul R. *An Indian Political Life: Charan Singh and Congress Politics*, Volume I, II and III. Sage India, New Delhi. 2012-2015.

aspirations of the so-called backward castes of intermediate social status between the elite castes and the lower castes. Fourth, he wrote a number of books, as well as political pamphlets, that presented an extremely sophisticated and coherent alternative development strategy for India entirely different from that of former Prime Ministers Nehru and Indira Gandhi.”

“The final aspect of Charan Singh’s life that deserves emphasis is his role as an author of several highly original books on land reform, agriculture and economic development in India that take a broad comparative perspective and are of theoretical interests as well to scholars of economic development.”<sup>5</sup>

This book unearths Singh’s intellectual heritage and lays out this ‘extremely sophisticated and coherent alternative development strategy for India’ that found favour with Brass. We include here summaries and the bibliography of each of the 6 key books written by Singh over the 40 years between 1947 and 1986.

Charan Singh’s written works are an early and comprehensive critique of the Indian development discourse by a successful politician. He stood out from his peers due to his knowledge of the realities of rural society, being well-versed in Indian grassroots government as a Minister for 25 years in India’s most populous and politically important State. Singh’s framework remains applicable to the contemporary problems of an agrarian India, 33 long years after his passing. He presented these ideas with an academic rigour and continuity over five decades that very few politicians in India can lay claim to. His numerous books,<sup>6</sup> booklets, articles, interviews and extensive communication of over 250,000 pages<sup>7</sup> lay down Singh’s alternative views on India’s development. It is not an exaggeration to identify Singh as one of the few outspoken, de-colonised intellectuals in Indian politics.

Charan Singh’s intellectual practice, politics and worldview were deeply rooted in peasant life of North West India to which he remained connected throughout his 65 years of public life. He was acknowledged by Terence Byres, a prominent British scholar of the Marxist persuasion,

<sup>5</sup> Brass, Paul R. *An Indian Political Life*, Economic and Political Weekly, September 25, 1993.

<sup>6</sup> Charan Singh’s 6 key books studied here *Abolition of Zamindari* (1947), *Joint Farming X-Rayed* (1959), *India’s Poverty and its Solution* (1964), *India’s Economic Policy* (1978), *Economic Nightmare of India* (1981), *Land Reforms in UP and the Kulaks* (1986).

<sup>7</sup> *Charan Singh Papers*, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML), Delhi. Instalment I and II (1994), Instalment III (2016).

to be the ‘organic intellectual of the rich and middle peasantry’ with ‘significance for the whole peasantry – the whole peasantry of both north-west India and of India at large’.<sup>8</sup> Not surprisingly, urban intellectuals in Delhi in the late 1970s treated Singh and his ideas with a combination of disbelief and disdain tinged with fear as his prescriptions would have made them and their class irrelevant in Singh’s India had he retained political power.

British-Indian scholar Sunil Khilnani writes in 2016:<sup>9</sup>

“While Russia produced more than a dozen agrarian intellectuals, and China produced a few, Singh may have been independent India’s one and only.”

Brass recounts the intertwining of Singh’s academic works and his electoral politics:<sup>10</sup>

“Although Charan Singh’s economic ideas are complex and scholarly, he did not present them for the edification of economists. Rather, they have been part and parcel of his political program. In fact, he several times condensed them and presented them as the central sections of the manifestoes of the political parties he led. As such, these manifestoes are by far the most sophisticated ever issued in India.”<sup>11</sup>

Brass, in his concluding remarks of the 1993 article, asks three larger questions that elevates the validity of Charan Singh’s intellectual

<sup>8</sup> Byres, Terence. *Charan Singh (1902-87): An Assessment*, Journal of Peasant Studies, 1988. 15:2, 139-189. “My judgement is that on the most rigorous definition Charan Singh was clearly an intellectual; and not only that, a most unusual one. .... Such a person, one might further insist, must possess a distinctively coherent, consistent and authoritative view of his ‘universe’; a capacity for independent analytical discourse; and particular skill in communicating that view in print (we are not here dealing with societies with an essentially oral tradition). Charan Singh, I would insist, met these criteria.” “Charan Singh, of Jat peasant stock, became a lawyer, but did not ‘cease to be organically linked to his class of origin’. On the contrary, he was, for most of his adult life, quintessentially an ‘organic’ intellectual, ‘directing the ideas and aspirations of the class to which he organically belonged’; and, without doubt, gave that class a ‘homogeneity and awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields’”

<sup>9</sup> Khilnani, Sunil. *Incarnations: India in 50 Lives, Charan Singh – A Common Cause*. Random Penguin House, 2016. p. 564.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. “The social scientist and politician Yogendra Yadav recalls going as a teenager to hear Singh speak to his small Haryana town: “There was no attempt to please the masses. He asked people to either sit down or leave, then went on to give a one-hour-long, school-teacher-like lecture on the political economy of Indian agriculture. This is the last thing you expect from a major politician who’s out there to woo the public, but it quite characterised who he was – plain, straight, no-nonsense and to the point.”

<sup>11</sup> Brass, Paul R. *An Indian Political Life: Charan Singh and Congress Politics*, Volume I. Sage India, New Delhi. 2012. p. 15.

framework to encompass all developing nations with an agrarian heritage.

“In summary, Charan Singh’s political life and economic ideas provide an entry-point into a much broader set of issues both for India and for the political and economic development of the remaining agrarian societies of the world. His political career raises the issue of whether or not a genuine agrarian movement can be built into a viable and persistent political force in the 20th century in a developing country. His economic ideas and his political programme raise the question of whether or not it is conceivable that a viable alternative strategy for the economic development of contemporary agrarian societies can be pursued in the face of the enormous pressures for industrialisation. Finally, his specific proposals for the preservation and stabilisation of a system of peasant proprietorship raise once again one of the major social issues of modern times, namely, whether an agrarian economic order based upon small farms can be sustained against the competing pressures either for large-scale commercialisation of agriculture or for some form of collectivisation.”<sup>12</sup>

## Writing Style

Singh’s books are not fragmented, casual reflections on random issues. He builds an integrated worldview that has no place for landlords (in the 1940s), for collective farming (1950s), or for chemical farming, mechanisation, big factories and big dams (1960s). His ideas critique models that were successful in vastly different conditions overseas and were proposed to be imposed on India. Singh identifies conditions and structures unique to India – a primarily agrarian civilisation at the new dawn of Independence, a colonially exploited and economically, socially and spiritually exhausted nation in the most recent three centuries – that he felt could not be addressed by one or the other imported model.

His problem statements and solutions have an academic rigour based on extensive research on societies across the world, backed by reams of painstakingly collected and clearly presented data. This special style of writing includes, apart from a thorough grasp of the subjects he writes on, a rich body of extensive, well-annotated statistical data to corroborate his assertions. This analytical method of building an argument is a consistent feature of all his books. There is an exceptional

---

<sup>12</sup> Brass, Paul R. *An Indian Political Life*, Economic and Political Weekly, September 25, 1993.

consistency and coherence spanning five decades in both his analyses and prescriptions.

### **Primacy of the Rural, Agricultural and Small<sup>13</sup>**

The subject matter of Charan Singh's writings is the central phenomena of modern human history – the supposed automatic and 'logical' transformation of agrarian societies to modern, industrial political economies. This remains a critical matter to India in 2020 when 50% of India's population remains engaged in unviable agricultural livelihoods thus making the agrarian and rural crisis a perennial feature of contemporary Indian village life, and this transition to a promised urbanity and prosperity is suspended for a vast majority of India's population.

Singh's framework for the India's development was based upon the State providing agriculture the pride of place at the core of the economy. In conjunction, he wanted the re-development of rural *livelihoods* in small, village-based ('cottage') manufacturing instead of *jobs* in privately or publicly owned large, mechanised and capital-intensive industry in or near large metropolitan centres. Singh was that rare politician who severely criticised the urban mindset of modernisation decades before it became fashionable to do so in academic circles<sup>14</sup>, including his opposition of the development of mass population megacities in place of the smaller, organic communities of the villages.

Implicit in Charan Singh's economic arguments was a strong defence of the rural way of life, which presented even more of a threat to the

---

<sup>13</sup> This section and the next are based on ideas and words, paraphrased or verbatim, borrowed from Praveen Dhanda in '*Ideas of Charan Singh: An Alternative Perspective of Development*', Economic and Political Weekly, 54 (14), April 6, 2019 p. 35-42 Dhanda studied Mohandas Gandhi, Ram Manohar Lohia and Charan Singh during his Ph.D. at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) '*Mapping Orthodox and Alternative Approaches to Development: Interpreting Indian Thought*' Unpublished Thesis for Doctor of Philosophy, JNU, 2015. (305 pages).

<sup>14</sup> Byres, Terence. *Charan Singh (1902-87): An Assessment*, Journal of Peasant Studies, 1988. 15:2, 139-189. "Charan Singh himself favoured and claimed kindred interest in Lipton's ideas and prescriptions. In his last substantial work, he cites both Lipton's book and an earlier article [Lipton, 1968; Lipton, 1977] at length in support of his own position [Singh, 1981: 164, 182, 186, 192, 224-5, 233, 512-13]. There is a certain irony in this, inasmuch as Charan Singh had been expounding his arguments *in extenso*, with skill and with passion, for some 40 years before this. Indeed, I have already had occasion to note Charan Singh's long-standing espousal of a variant of the 'urban bias' notion. Lipton nowhere quotes Charan Singh. He might well have done so, in detail and with favour."

colonised, urban Indian mind. Singh swam effortlessly in the river of Indian thought informed primarily by Mohandas Gandhi. They shared a belief that the village, with caste<sup>15</sup> and inequity stripped away, must be the centrepiece of a regenerated Indian economic, moral and social life. He defended the system of small peasant proprietorship as the most suitable form of social organisation to achieve both the economic goals of development and the political goals of democracy.

“A system of agriculture based on small enterprise, where the worker himself is the owner of the land under his plough, will foster democracy. For, it creates a population of independent outlook and action in the social and political fields. It is true that the peasants have to earn their living the hard way: only a few are able to accumulate a surplus. They may be conservative, but will not be reactionary; they may be in favour of a private economy, but are not exploiters, either. The peasant is an incorrigible individualist; for, his avocation, season in and season out, can be carried on with a pair of bullocks in the solitude of Nature without the necessity of having to give orders to, or, take orders from anybody. That is why the peasant class everywhere is the only class which is really democratic without mental reservations. The system of family-size farms ensures stability because the operator or the peasant has a stake in his farm and would lose by instability.”<sup>16</sup>

At this time, landlords and collective farms are a distant historical footnote though the question of land reforms has not yet been addressed adequately. In the early decades of the Indian nation Singh stood opposed, politically and academically, to both landlordism and Soviet inspired joint farming. He stood for an agrarian order based on small family farms of an independent peasantry predominantly run thorough family labour. Singh’s ideals faced a threat in the form of joint farming, widely endorsed by the intelligentsia and the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Singh confronted this politically and academically. Even a cursory study of the functioning of joint farming shows that its performance, wherever in the world it was attempted, has played out exactly in the way Singh anticipated.

Singh had problems with the dominant assumption in economic

---

<sup>15</sup> “Caste based on birth has had its day; it must be abolished” Singh, Charan. *Why 60% Services Should be Reserved for Sons of Cultivators*, 21 March 1947. CS Papers, Instalment I, Section A: Land Reforms (1939–1975), Subject Files, No A2.

<sup>16</sup> Singh, Charan. *Joint Farming X-Rayed*, Charan Singh Archives, Delhi. 2020. p. 121.



development theory (capitalist and communist alike) that societies progress ever in one direction – from the traditional to modern, from agricultural to industrial, from rural to urban. He argued that “reconciling the development of countryside with the growth of industries” is, in fact, a “vital problem.” In this, both capitalist and communist paths, according to him, “have failed” and “there is no example which India can exactly follow in solving the problem.”<sup>17</sup>

Charan Singh was emphatic that India needed to blaze and walk its own path, moving away from intellectual indebtedness to Western models that push us to ask the wrong questions in the first place. Singh remained critical of borrowed knowledge frameworks and considered this bankruptcy of the Indian intelligentsia, along with urban bias, as the key reasons for what he later in life called the ‘economic nightmare’ of the country. He was a decolonised thinker, one of the few in Independent India, unalienated from his roots.

“Marxism, like capitalism, has everywhere asked: How could one obtain from the existing surface a maximum return with a minimum of labour? The question for us is different. It is: How could we on the existing surface secure a living to a maximum number of people through the use of their labour in the villages? Land being the limiting factor in our conditions, our aim must be, obviously, not the highest possible production per man or agricultural worker, but highest possible production per acre. That is what will give us the largest total for India as a whole and thus eradicate poverty or want of wealth.”<sup>18</sup>

Singh formulated four distinct and inter-related objectives for India’s political economy: (i) Increase in total wealth or production; (ii) Elimination of unemployment and underemployment; (iii) Equitable distribution of wealth; and (iv) Making democracy a success.<sup>19</sup> To address these objectives, Singh remained a protagonist of the primacy of agriculture in India’s development. Singh’s arguments are based on desirability of the small over the big, and an economic system dominated by small, independent peasant-farms and cottage and small-scale enterprises. He presents a framework where “it is the human personality

<sup>17</sup> Singh, Charan. *India’s Poverty and Its Solution*, Charan Singh Archives, Delhi. 2020. p. 211. Also quoted by Dhanda, see footnote 13.

<sup>18</sup> Singh, Charan. *Joint Farming X-Rayed*, Charan Singh Archives, Delhi. 2020. p. 26. Also quoted by Dhanda, see footnote 13.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 25. Quoted by Dhanda, see footnote 13.

which has been assigned the first or central place – not money or machine”<sup>20</sup> According to him

“inasmuch as industrialisation will progress to the extent men are released from agriculture, and men will be released to the extent agricultural production goes up, and agricultural production will go up to the extent agricultural practices improve and more capital invested, industrialisation or economic development of the country turns on improvement in agricultural practices we are able to effect and amount of capital we are able to invest in land.”<sup>21</sup>

He called for a healthy balance between labour-intensive small-scale production and the capital-intensive mass production and of course between agriculture and industry. He reflects that “ultimately we should have urban villages which will take the place of rural hamlets and overcrowded cities of today ... without any slums.”<sup>22</sup> This will lead to

“an economy where (private) capitalism is eliminated almost altogether and (state capitalism or) socialism is retained to the minimum—an economy which is based predominantly on self-employed persons, artisans and workers, with the owner and the worker, the employer and the employee, the entrepreneur and the financier all rolled into one.”<sup>23</sup>

### Urban Bias, Rural Effect<sup>24</sup>

“There has always been lack of equilibrium, rather a sort of antagonism between cities and the countryside. This is particularly so in our land where the gulf of inequality between the capitalist class and the working-class pales into insignificance before that which exists between the peasant farmer in our village and the middle-class town dweller. India is really two worlds-rural and urban. The relationship between the countryside and the cities is, therefore, a vital problem to us.”<sup>25</sup>

Singh clearly and constantly called out the urban bias inherent in

<sup>20</sup> Singh, Charan. *Economic Nightmare of India* 1981. Charan Singh Archives, Delhi. 2020. p. viii–ix. Also quoted by Dhanda, see footnote 13.

<sup>21</sup> Singh, Charan. *India's Poverty and Its Solution*, 1964. Charan Singh Archives, Delhi. 2020. p. 406. Also quoted by Dhanda, see footnote 13.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. Pg. 308. Quoted by Dhanda, see footnote 13.

<sup>23</sup> Singh, Charan. *India's Poverty and Its Solution*, 1964. Charan Singh Archives, Delhi. 2020. p. 264.

<sup>24</sup> The four dimensions of urban bias in this section are borrowed, paraphrased or verbatim, from Praveen Dhanda in 'Ideas of Charan Singh: An Alternative Perspective of Development', Economic and Political Weekly, 54 (14), April 6, 2019 p. 35-42.

<sup>25</sup> Singh, Charan. *India's Poverty and Its Solution*, 1964. Charan Singh Archives, Delhi. 2020. p. 211.

India's development due to asymmetrical power relations between town and country. The first dimension of urban bias, according to Singh, concerns the allocation of scarce resources by city-based administrators and policy makers. This includes allocations for agriculture vis-à-vis industry, allocations for the rural versus the urban, and the existing and growing disparities between the stock of urban and rural wealth. In addition, Singh points to the neglect of the countryside in the services of health, hygiene and sanitation, housing, drinking water, transport, power, and above all, education. None of these imbalances have been rectified, indeed the divergence between city and village grows exponentially.

The second bias against the countryside visible to Singh is in the low prices paid for agricultural produce. Singh indicates various mechanisms through which terms of trade are tilted against agriculture and asserts that all three things, namely, small-scale farming (an inescapable condition in India), high productivity and low prices of agricultural produce cannot coexist. Hence the only way out, given the conditions of India, is remunerative prices to farmers.

The third dimension of urban bias is embedded in a prejudiced and discriminatory social perspective of city dwellers, a personal experience Singh often wrote about. Such prejudices are a distinction, Singh insists, between the ruler and the ruled. The 'ruled' has internalised such a perception about themselves and sees it as only natural. Singh argues that such a temper is not a result of some designed evilness or is not always consciously chosen on the part of city people, but a result of a 'natural' disposition. This disposition results, according to Singh, in biased behaviour. As early as 1947, he had made a passionate appeal as General Secretary of the United Provinces Pradesh Congress Committee that 60% of all government employment be reserved for sons of cultivators to take away the power of patronage enjoyed by non-agriculturists.<sup>26</sup>

"Only those who are brought up in the swaddling clothes of the cultivator will share his life or spend the night with him. Only those who are connected with him by ties of economic interest, by cultural bonds and psychological affinities will strike the right chord or turn on the switch that will illumine his life and dispel the darkness that surrounds him today. Only those can appeal to the cultivator's or villager's heart or touch his imagination whose reaction to things similar to that of his, none

---

<sup>26</sup> Singh, Charan. *Why 60% Services Should be Reserved for Sons of Cultivators*, 21 March 1947.

else. We have, therefore, to go a step further, and not stop at exhortations; the source of recruitment has to be changed.”<sup>27</sup>

The fourth aspect of urban bias is the issue of representation or the abysmally low presence of the countryside in the structures of power, one that Charan Singh attempted to correct in some measure through his politics but nowhere near adequately to make a permanent difference. He argues that “There is no direct rural presence in towns where political and economic decisions are made. Small farmers, in particular, have practically no direct impact” in power circles and “permanent migrants from villages to towns identify themselves with the urban elite they have joined”<sup>28</sup> Insisting on the importance of experiential reality, Singh asserts that the social background of the educated matters greatly as their sympathies are inextricably linked with others of similar origin. He goes on to say there are “Ministers of Agriculture who did not know the difference between *rabi* and *kharif*, highly-placed officers serving in the department of agriculture who could not distinguish between a sugarcane and a plant of *jowar*.”<sup>29</sup>

Singh believes “an urban class of businessmen and industrialists, workers, professional intelligentsia and bureaucracy controls the State” and “it is powerful; it dominates.”<sup>30</sup>

“The handful of the upper, educated and articulate sections of the people who form the bulk of the political and administrative leadership of the country, live so far removed from the overwhelmingly large numbers of the common people that they are completely unaware of the prevailing squalor, inhuman living conditions and intolerable misery of the latter. By living for generations in these two completely different worlds, each oblivious of what goes on inside the other, the two sets of people have developed as two different species of animals. Thus, with regard to social environment, tradition, culture and the way of life, there is an ab initio communication chasm between the two—between what are called the elite and the intelligentsia, on the one hand, and the masses, on the other. Since Independence this chasm has widened instead of being bridged. But unless this difference between the two worlds with regard to their language, philosophy, allusions and the very canvas of life is obliterated

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> Singh, Charan. *Economic Nightmare of India*. Charan Singh Archives, Delhi. 2020. p. 542.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 545.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. 2020. p. 169.

there can be no communication between the two and, therefore, no understanding and solution of the national problems.”<sup>31</sup>

Charan Singh concludes his last major work agreeing the village as we see it today is not the village he would like to see come about:

“While the writer believes that the villages should be resuscitated and the exodus from the villages to the towns should cease, he does not entertain the idyllic vision of a return to a golden age of happy communal village life. Nor ... did Gandhiji plead for such a village—a village bereft of the gains of science like electric power and telephones or a society without any machines or big machines at all. ....Needless to say, privation, dirt, drudgery and dead habit will disappear from the villages that are envisaged in these pages. Women will emerge into their own. The moneylender and bonded labour will be things of the past. Of course, landlordism will have been abolished lock, stock and barrel.”<sup>32</sup>

## In Conclusion

Paul Brass is a self-confessed, though not an uncritical, admirer of Charan Singh:

“My own perception of Charan Singh is of a flawed political leader, who achieved much, but also much less than he hoped, partly because of his relentless drive to exercise power and his contempt for most of his political associates and rivals. Flawed though he was, he stood apart from most of his political opponents – and the urban intellectuals who hated him - in intellect, personal integrity, and in the coherence of his economic and social thought.”<sup>33</sup>

“It is no secret that I admired Charan Singh in many ways, even though I did not always share his views on contemporary Indian politics. .... I do admire those few persons in political life who see politics as their vocation, pursue clearly stated goals, and do not enrich themselves in the process. The numbers are tiny in my country and in India. Charan Singh was such a man.”<sup>34</sup>

Charan Singh was indeed a ‘flawed political leader’ though none of us grandchildren saw flaws in the man.<sup>35</sup> I started to engage seriously

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p. 560.

<sup>32</sup> Singh, Charan. *Economic Nightmare of India* (1981), Charan Singh Archives, Delhi. 2020. p. 560.

<sup>33</sup> Brass, Paul R. *An Indian Political Life: Charan Singh and Congress Politics*, Volume I. Sage India, New Delhi. 2012. p. 16.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. Preface, p. xxi.

<sup>35</sup> Charan Singh was my mother Ved Wati’s father, see <https://charansingh.org/ccs-family>. From the time he moved from Lucknow to Delhi in 1976, we were at his home almost daily.

with his world of ideas since my early retirement from a corporate career in 2011 and connected this to the loving family man we knew so well. I studied his life deeply – from his birth in a tenanted peasant's home; his deprived childhood and education; his ethics and character grounded in the ideals of Swami Dayanand, the Vedas and Mahatma Gandhi; an abhorrence of rituals and religiosity; his ethical and incorruptible life; his incessant work ethic and acute sense of family. While he informs my thinking in myriad ways, I am very much of the urban elite class educated in English and all the baggage of urban bias that comes with it. It is, therefore, only proper I share his writings to help bridge this divide.

I have liberally borrowed from Praveen Dhanda's analysis of Charan Singh's intellectual heritage from the former's article in EPW of April 2019. This article is based on his Ph.D. at JNU (2015) where he studied Gandhi, Lohia and Singh's alternative approaches to development. Not only that, many of the Praveen's ideas, words and quotations have been integrated in this Foreword, with his approval, for which I am ever thankful.

The base summaries for this book is the handiwork of Binit Priyaranjan, an exceedingly perceptive and talented post-graduate of Delhi University who has laboured long and hard to construct each of these. My sincere thanks to him.

None of my investigation of Charan Singh's life would have progressed one bit without Paul Brass' seminal scholarship on Uttar Pradesh politics since 1961 and his three volume biography of Singh. I am eternally thankful to Paul for introducing me to Charan Singh in an idiom I understood, without any of the hagiography so familiar in Indian political biographies. Paul, his gentle wife Sue and I met in Delhi when they were here to launch the first volume of the biography in 2012, though of course his name was familiar to me. This has since grown into a warm friendship, one I so wish we had commenced earlier. Paul's wide knowledge of political science, his meticulous research methods, precise arguments and language and a principled life remind me much of Singh.

I complete this foreword a week after the passing of Ajay Singh. Ajay was a dear friend and inspiration for this journey into Charan Singh's intellectual legacy since meeting Paul together in 2012. Ajay was co-opted by Singh in 1980 to lead the Kisan Trust that published books and newspapers ('*Asli Bharat*' in Hindi, '*Real India*' in English) bringing the

village closer to the city. Post his return to Gurgaon in 2007 from Fiji as High Commissioner, we spent many score relaxed days catching up on his warm, admiring and colourful reminiscences of Charan Singh and other prominent politicians of those times. We were of similar mindset, married happily outside the bondage of caste (me outside the religion) with an international education; acutely aware of our privilege amidst the multiple inequalities in our society. Ajay was one of the few who truly understood the importance of Charan Singh and would have been delighted seeing this book in print as a tribute to the man he loved and respected. I will miss Ajay's brotherly company and warm presence.

These summaries of Charan Singh's books are being made available at a pivotal moment in Indian history when the images of distressed villagers fleeing the cities are yet fresh in our urban minds. These texts remain a beacon for the potential regeneration of an organic world.

*Gurgaon*  
July 2020

Harsh Singh Lohit  
Editor

## Section I

---

### **Summary**

Abolition of Zamindari. 1947  
Joint Farming X-Rayed. 1959  
India's Poverty & Its Solution. 1964  
India's Economic Policy. 1978  
India's Economic Nightmare. 1981  
Land Reforms in U.P. & The Kulaks. 1986





1940

# Abolition of Zamindari

## Two Alternatives<sup>1</sup>

BY CHARAN SINGH

### Background

No question has been more central to the development of post-colonial economies than the question of redistribution of land, and none with its promise unrequited for the most part. The monopoly of land, held between the government and landlords, had perpetuated the colonial exploitation of the many in the interest of the few. The *zamindar* (landlord) was granted ownership of land by the government in exchange for being an intermediary to collect rent from these lands, and for his services he reserved the right to extract from tenants tilling his land virtually as much rent as he could. Thus the British government squeezed the *Zamindar* for revenues, the *Zamindar* the tenant who had no recourse against the powerful machinery of oppression of the government and its law. The collaboration for mutual benefit between the colonist and the *Zamindar* resulted in an extreme concentration of power and wealth in the hands of this nexus.

Indian agriculture under colonialism was deeply exploitative of the peasantry, the bulk of the state revenue generated from it appropriated largely by the *Zamindar* intermediaries. Until the turn of the twentieth century, land revenue accounted for half of the colonial state revenue, making it dependent on these intermediaries. Thus landlordism flourished, and upon Independence in 1947 more than 60% of total cultivable land was owned by a small number of landlords.

By comparison, over 60% of the rural households either did not own any land or were in possession of uneconomic holdings of a hectare (2.5

---

<sup>1</sup> Published 1947 by Kitabistan, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh. 263 pages. Charan Singh was 45 when he wrote *Abolition of Zamindari*, his first substantive book. Parliamentary Secretary in Uttar Pradesh from 1946 to 1951, Chief Minister Govind Ballabh Pant appointed him Chairman of the committee to formulate the U.P. Zamindari and Land Reforms bill ('Every single para, section, term was made according to my thinking' as Singh recounted in an interview to Manchanda of NMML in February 1972) that Singh piloted into law in 1951. Singh considered this – the empowerment of tens of millions of peasant farmers and landless on 67 million acres of land in Uttar Pradesh, along with the peaceful destruction of the exploitative class of landlords – the primary achievement of his political life.

acres) or less, the total area under their collective possession being a mere 8% of the total area of the country.<sup>2</sup> These conditions, accentuated by the ever increasing pressure on agriculture to provide employment on account of the colonial destruction of Indian handicrafts and industry, created the ideal conditions for rack renting and tenancy. Absentee *zamindars* and subinfeudation<sup>3</sup> ran rampant, while rents levied on the tenants ran routinely in excess of 50% of the crop, going as high as 85% in some areas. In addition, the landlord resorted to numerous exactions in cash, kind or labour (*begar*) which put a severe burden on the peasant. A particularly vile form of this exploitation developed in the form of a class of moneylenders who lent capital on exorbitant rates to the peasant so he could meet the demands of the landlord, perpetuating the cycle of indebtedness.

Lastly, under these conditions the *zamindar* made far more profits by extraction of rents and other illegal exactions to have any incentive to develop agricultural production. For example, 97% of the ploughs used in India as late as 1951 were wooden, the other 3% being iron, whereas the use of improved seeds and irrigation was virtually non-existent. As a result, agricultural output by the decades of the 30s and 40s was in decline, following long-term stagnation, leaving India at Independence with an acute food shortages and famine-like conditions in large parts of the country. Import of these grains formed about half of the government's capital expenditure in the first Five Year Plan (1951-1956).

Wherever *zamindari* was patronised by colonial governments, the results had been debilitating for the colonies' economies, especially their agriculture. Public sentiment had been building against it in the colonies much before the Second World War which led to the independence of many of these countries. In India, for example, the Indian National Congress<sup>4</sup> had adopted the abolition of *zamindari* as a resolution as early

<sup>2</sup> Bipin Chandra et al, *India Since Independence*, Penguin Ibid, p. 510.

<sup>3</sup> In English law, subinfeudation is the practice by which tenants, holding land under the king or other superior lord, carved out new and distinct tenures in their turn by sub-letting or 'alienating' a part of their lands.

<sup>4</sup> The Indian National Congress, formed in 1885, was the broad-based umbrella political party that dominated the popular Indian struggle for independence from colonial Great Britain. The Congress was a widespread political organisation, with deep roots in all communities in Indian rural and urban society and formed all of India's governments at the Center and the score plus States for decades post-Independence.

as 1935<sup>5</sup> on the back of mass peasant agitations under the leadership of the Congress and Mohandas Gandhi.

The Congress' election manifesto in the 1937 provincial elections cited "the appalling poverty, unemployment and indebtedness of the peasantry" as the most important and urgent problem of the country, which it argued was "due to antiquated and repressive land tenure and revenue systems."<sup>6</sup> Gandhi's dictum that "land and all property is his who will work it", given in 1937, embodied the direction a solution was to take. Gandhi went so far as to predict that the landlord's property would be seized by his tenants sooner or later, with the prospect of compensating the landlord being economically infeasible.

By 1945, after the end of World War II, peasant movements emerged with new vigour and the demand of Zamindari abolition was made with greater urgency. The Congress election manifesto issued by the Congress Working Committee called for "an urgent reform of the land system to be undertaken which involved the abolition of intermediaries between the peasants and the state i.e. the *Zamindars* and *Talukdars*."<sup>7</sup> The reformed policy, the Congress government of 1947 envisioned, would meet "the great challenge of building real democracy in the country... based on equality and social justice"<sup>8</sup>, and the task of formulating such a policy without any prior model was the colossal task facing India.

As a member of the Congress' Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Committee (ZALRC)<sup>9</sup> tasked to abolish landlordism in

---

<sup>5</sup> A Kisan Conference held at Allahabad in April 1935, under the Presidentship of Sardar Patel, passed a resolution which among other things recommended "the introduction of a system of peasant proprietorship under which the tiller of the soil is himself the owner of it and pays revenues to the Government without the intervention of any *zamindar* or *talukdar*. At its 50<sup>th</sup> Session, held at Faizpur in 1935, the Indian National Congress adopted a resolution on the agrarian programme which inter alia recommended that "fixity of tenure, with heritable rights, along with the right to build houses and plant trees should be provided for all tenants."

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 516.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 519.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 520.

<sup>9</sup> The ZALRC comprised Chief Minister Govind B Pant, key cabinet and junior ministers. Charan Singh, the most active member and a favourite of Pant, wrote the report in the face of stiff opposition of powerful supporters of *zamindari* in the UP Congress legislature party, and was forced to compromise on the recommendations. He subsequently wrote a dissenting note to the CM which, to Pant's credit, formed the basis of Charan Singh being given the herculean task of preparing a law in Uttar Pradesh to abolish *zamindari*. Singh considered this law, as well as his subsequent work as Revenue and Agriculture minister, the defining work of his entire career. He worked closely with Pant from 1945 to 1955-6 when the latter left for Delhi as Home Minister after the death of Vallabhbhai Patel.

Uttar Pradesh, Charan Singh inherited the task of formulating an alternative to *Zamindari* at the age of 44. He had been first elected to the U.P legislative assembly precisely a decade before, at 34, winning 78% of the vote against the candidate of the National Agriculturalist Party of *Zamindars*. He had, since then, distinguished himself by formulating “multiple rural and peasant supportive legislation in the Assembly”<sup>10</sup> such as the Agricultural Produce Market Bill, 1939 and Land Utilization Bill, 1939<sup>11</sup> which called “for the transfer of land ownership to all tenants or actual tillers of the soil who chose to pay an amount equivalent to 10 times the annual rental on the land they cultivated”<sup>12</sup>.

Charan Singh’s background as the son of an impoverished tenanted peasant provided him a unique insight to the realities of the exploitation of the peasantry and the myriad forms of their oppression. This defining experience, coupled with Singh’s later education in History and Law and his penchant for wide-ranging reading and research in an age where education was the prerogative of a microscopic urban and high-caste elite, made Singh a unique intellect of value to the phlegmatic Govind Ballabh Pant<sup>13</sup>, the first (and yet the longest serving) Chief Minister of U.P. as well as Singh’s mentor. Singh’s passion and intellect was ably directed by Pant, a calm and equanimous leader of people.

Singh’s intimate knowledge of the psychology of the peasantry and of the ground realities of the village enabled him formulate policies to replace the *zamindari* system. Following the success of the October Revolution<sup>14</sup> many countries had adopted the Marxist doctrine of development after the model of the U.S.S.R., whose aid they relied on heavily in the fragile years of their infancy as nation-states. Marxism had been critical in dealing landlordism a fatal political and philosophical

<sup>10</sup> Lohit, Harsh S. (2018), *Charan Singh: A Brief Life History*, Charan Singh Archives, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Govind Ballabh Pant (1887 – 1961) was a key figure, alongside Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel, in the movement for India’s independence from the British colonial state. He was pivotal in governments in the critical state of Uttar Pradesh where he was Chief Minister (1946-1954) and later in Delhi where he was Home Minister (1955-1961) ranked next only to Nehru.

<sup>14</sup> The October Revolution, officially known in Soviet historiography as the Great October Socialist Revolution, was a revolution in Russia led by the Bolshevik Party of Vladimir Lenin that was instrumental in the larger Russian Revolution of 1917.

blow across the world, and its influence on the freedom struggles of most post-colonial economies had been immense.

By 1947, when Charan Singh wrote this book, the Marxist view was by far the common wisdom in postcolonial economies, and India was poised to follow in these footsteps. Singh disagreed with Marxist principles when applied to agriculture, especially in Indian conditions. In the preface he describes this as an attempt to “swim against the tide”<sup>15</sup>, and goes on to explicitly mention his views are not concurrent with the U.P. state government of which he was a part. He goes on to outline in the book’s first half reasons necessitating the abolition of *zamindari* and his case against the adoption of the alien Russian methods in the Indian milieu.

Typical to Singh’s analytical and argumentative style, the book doesn’t limit itself to a critique (which is long and thorough) and the second half lays out the alternate route to be taken. His model, based on peasant proprietorship and the marrying of land ownership with cultivation, would become the backbone of the Abolition of Zamindari and Land Reforms Act, 1950, whose passing Singh later in life described as the greatest achievement of his political career<sup>16</sup>. He acknowledged Chief Minister Pant’s active support, without which the powerful landed interests in the Congress would have had their way. This sustained and intense engagement with land reforms from the mid-1930s and the conversion of his ideas into a Law in the 1950s reflect the principles that would guide all future writings by Singh. These were – his faith in the independent small peasant as the bulwark of a democratic society and the antithesis of concentration of wealth in society, his opposition to authoritarian State Marxism and his deep commitment towards the democratic project that independent India had chosen for herself at a time where the vast majority of its inhabitants were illiterate and lived in its villages.

## Summary

As the title of the book, *Abolition of Zamindari: Two Alternatives* indicates, Charan Singh predicated his work on the atmosphere against *Zamindari*

<sup>15</sup> Singh, Charan (1947), *Abolition of Zamindari*, Kitabistan, p. vii.

<sup>16</sup> Lohit, Harsh S. (2018), *Charan Singh: A Brief Life History*, Charan Singh Archives, p. 8.

prevalent at the time of the Independence of India from the British. Two enormous questions concerned her immediate future: industrialization of the country and re-organisation of its agriculture, the latter of which Singh held to be the precursor of the former. The Preface, which states these principles as a primer to the work to follow, wastes no time in declaring the dire necessity of the abolition of *Zamindari*. Singh points out the purpose of his work is an analysis of the two possible alternatives that would replace *Zamindari*, along with the provision of a blueprint for the shape that the new machinery would take given the uniquely Indian conditions of economy, population, psychology and political ambitions.

Singh lists the two possible options to be (i) the nationalization of land and collectivization of agriculture, or (ii) a decentralised model with the tenant proprietor which would “make the worker the owner of his tools and the means of production with or upon which he works”<sup>17</sup>. In the first half, Singh details the history and importance of the question of distribution of land and the arguments put forward in favour of collectivization. The second half of the book is dedicated to Singh’s argument for the latter option.

### **Land: An Intellectual History**

Land, Singh argues, has occupied a pivotal place in agricultural India as “the private ownership of land confers upon its owner a power over his fellow citizens which, when exercised, is greater than the power possessed by the owner of any other form of private property”<sup>18</sup>. Land is non-alienable to settled living, and unlike the other resources of capital and labour, its quantity is limited. This makes land ownership a zero-sum game, as land acquired by one is necessarily taken from another. He goes on to say, unlike any other resource, land’s abundance is inexhaustible (it certainly must have seemed so in 1947) if cared for with the principles of natural farming. Land is largely immune to the vagaries of chance or security concerns, and therefore ownership of land provides a sense of security Singh summarizes in a telling comment told to him by a farmer: ‘The best thing to give one’s son is land. It is living property. Money will be used up but land never’.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Singh, Charan (1947), *Abolition of Zamindari*, Kitabistan, p. iv.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

Any further production of industry or commerce presupposes the utilization of land for fulfilling the basic food needs of the population, as well as the production of surpluses which can be gainfully employed by other industries. Thus the optimal utilization of land towards meeting these needs becomes the single most important question for the development of a country, and puts the tiller of the soil for these ends in the position of the principal architects of this future. Singh writes of farming as a moral endeavour and social service, in a language strange to our nature-alienated ears:

“Agriculture is not merely a way of making money by raising crops; it is not merely an industry or a business; it is essentially a public function or service performed by private individuals for the care and use of the land in the national interest and farmers in the course of their pursuit of a living and a private profit are the custodians of the basis of the national life. Agriculture is, therefore, affected with a clear and unquestionable public interest, and its status is a matter of national concern calling for deliberate and far-sighted national policies, not only to conserve the natural and human resources involved in it, but to provide for national security, promote a well-rounded prosperity and secure social and political stability.”<sup>20</sup>

Ancient Indian scriptures were sensitive to these principles, and Singh cites the *Purva Mimamsa*’s<sup>21</sup> conception of land as belonging equally to all enjoying the fruits of their labour on it. The king, therefore, was not owner but custodian of the land in the interest of its utilization for the benefit of the whole kingdom. For this labour the king extracted of the peasants a land revenue which he collected directly from the village panchayat as a unit of peasant organisation. In addition, Singh goes on to say, the king reserved the right to punish those who failed to till their land towards the benefit of the whole, and this right was advocated by Kautilya and Manu in their codified laws.

By the medieval period, a class of intermediaries had cropped up who were employed by the *Badshah* to collect revenue on his behalf in exchange for a commission extracted in proportion to the land granted to them. These *Ijaredars* or *Talukdars*, as they were called, were hereditary

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 4-5.

<sup>21</sup> The *Purva Mimamsa* Sutras (ca. 300–200 BCE), written by Rishi Jaimini is one of the most important ancient Hindu philosophical texts. It forms the basis of *Mimamsa*, the earliest of the six orthodox schools (*darshanas*) of Indian philosophy.



rent-collectors for the state, and it was this class that crystallised into the *zamindars* familiar to us from the colonial period. The colonial British government, however, went many steps further and granted these intermediaries permanent and hereditary rights to ownership of land upon which they collected rent on behalf of the government. The peasant was left at the mercy of these intermediaries, who performed no function on the land they owned but appropriated larger and larger portions of the wealth generated from it. Singh compares *zamindars* to “parasites”, and “drones doing no good in the public hive” a summation he would repeat in several of his works.

The *zamindars* had no concern for his land beyond the commercial returns and the insecurity of tenantry meant that the tiller didn’t really care for the land either. His exploitation made the tiller’s condition “gloomy, discontented, coarse, slavish – a hapless missing link between a beast of burden and a man”<sup>22</sup>. Thus, the *Zamindari* system had failed the collective responsibility it had towards the benefit of the country, and Singh pronounces the necessity of its departure.

### **The Russian Alternative**

Moving from qualifying the problem, Singh proceeds on an analysis of the option of collectivization of agriculture on the model of the U.S.S.R based on “total abolition of private ownership of land and national acquisition thereof”<sup>23</sup>. This option may sound strange to our ears in 2020CE when communism in all its forms has been buried since 1990, but collectivisation was an accepted dogma with many ideological intellectuals in the 1940s. Singh starts with the conditions prevailing in Russia the time of India’s Independence and the evolution of the collectivist farms.

Peasants in Russia had been under serfdom, with conditions bordered on slavery, until the eighteenth century of the common era. Legally bound to their landlords by royal decree, they could be bought, sold, in families or singly, and were viewed as a source of property apart from land. For taxation purposes they were formed into “Communes”, collectively responsible for revenue from their land as a whole, with individuals responsible for their share within it.

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 18.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 22.

“The communal system necessarily involved a good deal of communal control of the community’s farming activities, so that not only were the times of sowing and harvesting, hay-making and the like very dependent on the decision of the commune as a whole, but the crops to be sown, what area to be left fallow, etc. were similarly dictated.”<sup>24</sup>

Reforms of this system occurred partly in The Act of Emancipation of 1861 which released peasants from bonded status and provided them an alternative of owning their respective lands in exchange for some liabilities towards the state. Decisive reforms came in 1906 under Stolypin<sup>25</sup>, which gave the peasant the right to separate from the commune, upon which they were given a consolidated piece of land they could till or sell at will. By 1917 these reforms created, for the first time in Russia, a class of prosperous rural peasants called the *Kulaks* who were producing a saleable surplus.

The Revolution of 1917 abolished all private ownership of land including that of peasant proprietors. The Stolypin reforms were regarded as an antisocial measure designed to strengthen capitalism, and all land was forcibly reintegrated into the commune. The revolutionaries tried to win over the vast hordes of peasants by encouraging violent and often irresponsible seizing of land, and as the populism expanded the targets of these redistributions expanded from landlords and the gentry, to the rich peasants and *kulaks* as well by 1918.

These policies were largely populist, designed to win over the peasantry’s support. The real agenda of the Bolsheviks, Singh argues, was the creation of nationalized state farms, operated by large machinery which Marxist principles declared were the inevitable means of progress in agriculture much like industry. Singh writes:

“It was proclaimed that all ownership in land was abolished and that the land was transferred to all the working people for their use; that all land was to be distributed on the principle of equalized land possession, according to the consumptive needs of the people who work it, or according to the labour resources of families working on land. Every citizen in principle acquired the right to use the land and all dealings in land were forbidden.”<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 25.

<sup>25</sup> Pyotr Arkadyevich Stolypin, (1862-1911), was a conservative statesman who, after the Russian Revolution of 1905, initiated far-reaching agrarian reforms to improve the legal and economic status of the peasantry as well as the general economy and political stability of imperial Russia.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 31.

Many new peasants got possession of land as a result of these reforms, but they hardly made productive use of it. Without the incentive of personal gain associated with a marketable surplus in the absence of markets, efficiency of the peasants dwindled and they stopped producing more than required for personal consumption. The state had envisioned exchanging the proletariat's industrial products in exchange for surplus grain, but as it happened there wasn't much by the way of these products for the state to share.

Nonetheless, the peasants had to keep parting with their produce in the interests of Marxism's treasured industrialist, urban proletariat, seen as the key of progress on the historical materialist model of progress. Under Lenin, and then Stalin, the peasantry had to be coerced into working against its own benefit and even that did not deliver the desired results. By the latter half of the 1920s the government had conceded its abstract ideals had not changed the peasant's psychology and that later programs would take this into account. The independent peasant's 'capitalist' tendencies were said to be the reason for this, and the state used this excuse in favour of further collectivization and the application of heavy farm machinery.

The truth was that the collective or state farm was the only way for the government to sustain its industrial project whilst keeping with communist principles. Under these state farms the rewards and punishments could be arbitrarily set by the government, so that the expanding industrial proletariat could be sustained even if the grain output was not enough for both peasants and the urban workers. Thus, despite overt and covert measures by the state to coerce more peasants into collectivization, the peasants lapsed into proprietorship whenever they got the chance. Singh summarises:

"The Revolution was frankly a proletarian movement led by a small body of men belonging to the intelligentsia who were wanting in appreciation of peasant needs and sympathy for irrepressible peasant longings. The Bolsheviks stood for an alliance with the middle peasants...,but only such an alliance as 'guaranteed the leadership of the working class, consolidated the dictatorship of the proletariat and facilitated the abolition of classes'. Few, if any, of the competent Bolshevik leaders were of genuine peasant origin and they seem to have thought the peasants ought to reach to the new order in much the same way as the industrial proletariat."<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 49.

## Soviet Russia

Singh undertakes a comprehensive survey of the existing model of the Russian *Kolhoz* (collective farm) and *Sovhoz* (state-farm) in the 1930s. He outlines the constitution of an ideal '*Artel*'<sup>28</sup> or *Kolhoz* adopted by the government in 1935, following revisions in policy which allowed the peasants to deal with the surplus beyond the state mandate whichever way they liked, including selling it at uncontrolled market prices.

Singh summarises in some detail the aims and objectives, means of production, land, operations & administration, membership conditions and the organisation, payment and discipline of labour in the *Artels*. Their objectives include "extermination of the *kulaks*" and acknowledge collectivization as the "only true path for peasants to follow". All boundaries of individual land were to be abolished in favour of an amalgamation held by the State but transferred permanently to the *Artel* for its use. Land could not be bought, sold or leased. Moreover, if someone wished to leave, no land was to be given to them as land could only be given by the State.

"All working cattle, agricultural implements (ploughs, drills, harrows, etc.), seed stocks, fodder in quantities sufficient to supply the needs of the collective livestock, farm buildings necessary for carrying on the work of the *artel*, and all enterprises for working up the products of the farm"<sup>29</sup> were held in common, whereas individual households, private livestock and its housing and basic farming equipment etc. were retained by individuals. Workers of both sexes above the age of 18 were eligible for membership, except the *kulaks* and "all persons deprived of civil rights"<sup>30</sup> with minor exceptions.

The *Artel* was to follow a plan in concert with the government's plan for agricultural production, involving crop farming and caretaking of livestock. Its first priority was to handover to the state its mandated share

---

<sup>28</sup> *Artels* were united not merely the labour force, but also the ownership of the capital employed. The members retained their own houses, small garden plots and some livestock and lived separately, but pooled the land and working stock and shared in the proceeds of joint farming. Its members worked under the direction of an elected management and its methods of production were very similar to those of the agricultural commune, while in the methods it employed for the distribution of produce it closely resembled the *toz*, the co-operative for the farming of land in common.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 54.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 57.

at a price fixed by the State (usually a tenth of market value), following which the wages of each of the members was calculated according to rules agreed to in the General Assembly. Wages varied according to labour share and specialization of labour, and the general assembly reserved the right to punish or expel members who failed to observe the rules, which was tantamount to “treason towards the community and as support of the enemies of the people”.<sup>31</sup> Offenders could be handed to the authorities, to be tried in accordance with state mandated rules.

These consolidations were all aimed towards the deployment of large machinery such as tractors, whose machine-tractor stations which lay at the heart of the *Kolhoz*’s organisation. The state supplied the communes with heavy machinery and scientific expertise from these centres, as well as served as the point of contact for engineers, planners, agricultural experts and so on. Moreover, the state exercised its control and propaganda through these stations where it could count on mass outreach into the peasants. Access to tractors and better seeds & equipment were also used as methods of explicit and implicit coercion by the state to incentivize yet more peasants into collectivization.

The Machine-Tractor stations formed the basis of the state-farms or *Sovhozs* as well, where, Singh writes, “the socialist principles find their complete expression.”<sup>32</sup> The peasant of a *Sovhoz* was a wage-earner tilling the state land on state’s plan, with no say in the matters of agricultural production. These farms were created mostly on reclaimed land, and comprised of thousands of peasants forming farms as big as townships, with their own schools, hospitals, nurseries, recreation grounds etc. Here education was also carried out for all members, as well as those of the *Kolhozs*, and the amenities available on paper matched the lifestyle of cities.

However, the farms failed at their economic objective of increasing grain production on account of being too big to be managed effectively. Collectivised peasantry lacked the incentive required for careful use of the lands, livestock and tools provided on the farms. Without state intervention, many state farms lapsed into individual patterns of landholding.

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 63.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 76.

### **Collectivization Rejected**

In the final section of Singh's analysis of the collectivist option, he emphatically rejects it as a model for Indian agriculture. His argument is multi-pronged, and employs criticisms of the Marxist doctrine on ideological, psychological, economic, social and political planes. These aspects of Singh's criticism recur across his writings throughout his life virtually unchanged, and offer an overwhelming argument against the suitability of collectivization of agriculture in Indian conditions. A deep-seated distrust of Communism and Communists remained a recurring theme in his intellectual framework decades after collectivisation was dead and buried.

Singh points out, to begin with, that the task of an agricultural policy is to merge economic interests with a way of living, not just chase after material profits. The overhaul that a collectivist model would cause to the existing peasantry's way of life would take away from the peasant the land and independence he seeks most and seek to replace it with a purely material pursuit. Psychologically it would be devastating for the peasant, and socially it would be inimical to familial and interpersonal relations. The Bolshevik model deprived the peasant of a sense of individuality and ownership, which are necessarily for a rigorous tilling of land and animal husbandry. His life became subservient first to the dictates of other members of his commune, but even more so of the machines that the farm enjoys. The farms themselves were run largely on state guidelines and prepared the ground for totalitarianism inimical to the democratic project India had chosen for herself.

Even if all of this be done, Singh argues that the principle of "economies of scale" which Marxism imports from industry in favour of large farms and machinery does not work in agriculture. Farming is an organic process and the employment of machinery does not increase output indefinitely as in the case of industry. The crop cycles of agriculture cannot be altered mechanically, nor can the variable factors associated with it be regulated as strictly as in industry. On the other hand, machines such as tractors deplete the soil in the long run, and their employment replace labourers from work in a country with unemployment and endemic under-employment.

Most importantly, the Marxist model maximises yield with machines whereas Indian conditions of geography and population dictate that land

utilization be maximised with the application of labour. Thus, even in principle, the Marxist model cannot be adopted for Indian conditions. Even if all of these adjustments were done, the collective farm fails to deliver increased productivity which is the basis of its existence. Singh demonstrates how productivity of farms does not increase with size like the Marxist doctrine predicts and debunks the popular perception of its proponents that better machinery meant necessarily larger machines. He argues based on the success of the Japanese model that technology can be made suitable for small-scale intensive farming as well, whereas the advances in seeds and soil fertilizers do not vary by size of land.

Singh corroborates his claims with data available at the time (1947) from the U.S.S.R., as well as from various other sources spanning many disciplines. He lists the benefits from collectivization, especially in the health, education and rise in standard of living for the peasants, but pronounces that the ills of the policy far outweigh the benefits.

### The Remedy

Having criticised both *Zamindari* and nationalization of land on collectivist principles, Singh declares that “peasant proprietorship is the only system which can provide a workable solution to the land problem of this country”<sup>33</sup>. He advocates a model based on limited ownership, or permanent State tenancy based on two cardinal principles: (i) that land should not be seen as a source of rent, but for employing labour whose occupation is its tilling, and (ii) owning of land should “necessarily attach the obligation to use it in the national interest”<sup>34</sup>. Singh here is influenced by Gandhi and his philosophy of Stewardship, where owning land or capital or indeed wealth of any kind is subservient to the needs of society.

In Singh’s model, the tenant is given limited ownership of the land he tills, such that he is able to alienate it if he wishes, but he occupies the land as a trustee of the government, tilling it in the national interest. Should he fail to deliver on his duties, the State would reserve the right to seize his lands, whereas if they deliver over a considerable period of time, they gain the right to ownership. Singh goes on to identify the middle

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 127.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

path between two extremes, one ideally suited to Indian conditions and one that became his 'uniquely Indian' solution:

"In this scheme there is scope both for private effort and also for fulfilment of the social objectives. It eschews dogma – the two extremes of laissez-faire and totalitarian control. The struggle between the forces of an outworn, undiluted individualism and the new collective order has been overwhelming. We have to strike a balance."<sup>35</sup>

Singh argues his model would be psychologically as good for the peasant as collectivization would be bad. It would give the peasantry a boost of ownership and individuality which characterise the peasant's historic attachment to his land and animals. He would be able to employ his family as free extra hands on the soil, employ animals reared and cared for better than any collectivist project can hope, and take better care of the soil using traditional machinery along with innovations suited to the small farmer. Not only would this engender democratic instincts in the country, more than three-fourths of whom lived in villages in 1947 and over 85% in his home state of Uttar Pradesh, it would also increase production per acre which was of critical importance for the material progress India had in mind. Moreover, it would do so while utilising labour more than capital, thus employing India's millions and saving on capital which was scarcely available at the time. Singh argues against the Marxist ideological conception of the peasant as a 'capitalist', and his small farm as a mere stage in pre-capitalist production soon to be overwhelmed by the large farms and their technology.

He moves on to categorise peasant proprietorship's superiority over landlordism. Abolition of Zamindari would release the difference in revenue lost between the tillers and the State due to the landlord's appropriation. Linking the tiller directly to the State would ease the peasant's burden and this increase in capital and mobility would generate demands for entrepreneurship and education alike among them. A peasant freed from the landlord would be a democratising project in rural India, and its effects on the produce, Singh points by example to various European countries, are visible to see wherever in India and elsewhere the independent peasant tills the soil. In conclusion, he writes:

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 129.



“So we have to keep to the small family farm as the basis of our land system, with this improvement that all tenants have to be raised to proprietorship and steps have to be devised to ensure that no middleman interposes himself again between the State and the tiller. Large farms, if any, have certainly to go.”<sup>36</sup>

### **A New Agricultural Model**

The rest of the book is dedicated to steps needed to establish peasant proprietorship on this model and see to it that the model is maintained over time. From the first cardinal principles listed above flow the raising of existing tenants to ownership and prevention of it passing into hands of non-agriculturists in the future, while the second principle dictates reclamation of land, its distribution amongst holders of uneconomic farms, and regulation of the size of holdings. Singh discusses these one at a time.

He lists the idea that the landlord’s land be appropriated without compensation but rejects it as it would inevitably lead to problems of execution and legality, tying the measures to courts of law moved by the landlords and running the risk of violent class warfare. Furthermore, it did not sit easy with the principles adopted by the Congress. Therefore, Singh proposes fixing “some rough and ready method which would obviate litigation, delay and unnecessary expense.”<sup>37</sup> as fixing prices of land is a business complicated by “speculative, social, sentimental or ethical value.”<sup>38</sup>

Singh advocates rent paid by the erstwhile tenants as an adequate measure, and suggests land bonds guaranteed by the Government as compensation to the landowner.

“In view of so many arguments for downright confiscation and in view of the fact that the zamindar’s right is in the ultimate analysis a right of collection only and that price has to be so fixed that its payment would fall lightly on the shoulders of the new peasant proprietors, we consider that a sum which is the equal of rent multiplied by three, i.e., net profit multiplied by ten, would meet the justice of the case.”<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 140.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 167.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 169.

Upon payment of this sum, the peasant was to acquire ownership of the plot on which he was a tenant. Singh estimates that most peasants would be able to provide for this sum somehow; for those who could not Singh proposes instalment payments and simple loans. As to the objections of expropriation made by the landlord, he points to above-mentioned peculiarities of land ownership which preclude their ownership of their lands. In a rare moment of agreement he quotes from Marx about the landlord's useless position, and reminds them of their class' genesis as mere rent-collectors, not owners. He writes with a tone of finality that the landlord's time was up, cautions them of the march of history against their cause and advises them to "voluntary liquidate their order"<sup>40</sup> like the Japanese *Samurai*.

He then moves on to the problem of reclamation of land and its improvements for agricultural purposes noting that the land of India, in its present state, was sick. Furthermore, of the 214 million acres available for cultivation at the time, only 170 million acres were under the plough. Reasons for this were lack of water and drainage, poor soil fertility, alkalinity of soil and poor health conditions of cultivators. The average Indian was severely undernourished, and unable to work at the efficiency required of him to work the soil best to alleviate his suffering. This formed a cycle which kept India perpetually in food scarcity, and Singh urges remedies to end the situation as quickly as possible through bringing more area under the plough. This would create employment, improve conditions of soil and health, and provide much needed food security, besides encouraging industry and commerce by and by.

Singh suggests one-time, limited use of tractors to bring more area into cultivation, and taking steps to check diseases such as malaria which discouraged workers from other lands. He notes that "conversion of marshes, swamp and heaths into cultivable areas has provided means of living to thousands of families in Europe"<sup>41</sup> and suggests that the State intervene in bringing more area under cultivation or assist the peasants themselves in doing so. Irrigation, soil erosion and alignment of state machinery such as roads and railways in accordance with the cultivable land surrounding it.

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 176.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 186.

### Peasant proprietorship

In order to perpetuate his model, Singh notes that land be prevented from going back to non-cultivators, easily the biggest of whom would be the moneylenders engendered by the *Zamindari* system. These lenders mortgaged the peasant's land against exorbitant rates, and when the peasant's loan lapsed, seized the land. Steps against this eventuality must be taken, and Singh lists measures taken by countries in the past.

These include forbidding of alienation for debt of a peasant's land up to a certain minimum, the state reserving to itself the right to pre-emption of holdings, transferring of lands only to *bona fide* cultivators, and forbidding of letting. Of this Singh endorses only the last, as the other measures, while tying the State in legislation and other hassles, would not prevent letting and sub-letting which he felt was at the heart of the problem.

He proposes, instead, that the State take over holdings at a fair price from those who do not wish to cultivate it and leases on land be annulled with exceptions for minors, widows, etc. Furthermore, land should be allowed to be mortgaged or surrendered only on loans advanced by the state or state-recognised institutions, and no ex-proprietary rights of occupancy to be granted to those whose lands have been surrendered to or confiscated by the court. He concludes:

"A supreme merit of these proposals lies in the fact that the most vital possession of the nation becomes secure against the secret and sinister operations of the private usurer, for, in view of the provision requiring a person holding the land to till it himself, land will cease to be an object of speculation and an attractive field of financial investment. The possibility of middlemen exploiting the labour of the peasantry is thus eliminated, and 'an iron pen dipped in the blood of the *mahajan*'<sup>42</sup> need not be used."<sup>43</sup>

### Size of land holdings

Singh now turns his attention to the regulation of existing holdings.

---

<sup>42</sup> Sir Daniel Hamilton, a Scottish businessman who made Bengal his second home, wrote "What India requires is an Act written not with a goose quill dipped in milk and water, but with an iron pen dipped in the blood of the Mahajan".

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 202.

Measures like these had proven notoriously arduous and expensive to the State due to myriad complications, and Singh directs his attention towards simplifying the same.

He proposes consolidating scattered plots of land owned by the same person (*chakbandi*), prevention of holdings too big and abolition of holdings too small and uneconomic beyond a minimum. As a result of subdivisions due to inheritance laws, and the lack of opportunities other than in agriculture for sustenance, land holdings had fallen to a point where cultivating them had become uneconomical for those holding it. If unchecked, further subdivisions were likely to occur destroying further the potential for productivity. In order to remedy the situation, Singh argues for moving villagers to manufacturing and modifying land inheritance laws to prevent their indefinite subdivision.

He warns of the decades long trend in India of income derived from the manufacturing and services sector declining. Only an advance in these opportunities as a result of industrialisation would wean people away from agriculture and land towards more economically viable options, decreasing land holdings per capita in the process. Moreover, migration from villages to cities would effect a change in lifestyle, which was bound to show in population patterns of the country, for the urban masses have fewer children.

To manage uneconomic holdings which would remain even after industrialisation, Singh suggests changing the laws of inheritance such that (i) no holding after partitioning or gift should be allowed such that the total land held by anyone become below 6.25 acres, (ii) if co-heirs can't each get 6.25 acres then all the land be inherited by the eldest male, subject to the caretaking of the minor heirs so excluded and (iii) no land below 6.25 acres in size be partitionable and be held by the same person. As to the fact that such a proposal is manifestly unjust to those excluded, Singh pleads in the national interest that the individual good be sacrificed and that one, instead of two, should suffer from holdings which would be uneconomical in any case. However, he concedes that a final solution is difficult.

Landless labourers were to be utilized on co-operative farms built on reclaimed land by the State. Singh suggests a model of independent peasant proprietors who voluntarily form co-operative societies pooling their resources of advertising, pricing and distribution etc where

cooperation had proven itself effective. However, he steers clear of collectivization, and points out that the Russian or Chinese model of cooperative farms was a misnomer to be avoided.

Having stated these principles and elaborated upon them, Singh ends the book with an appendix giving an outline of a bill based on these principles where critical words of law such as “owner”, “tenant”, “sale” etc are provided. This outline forms a large part of what was later to become the Uttar Pradesh Abolition of Zamindari and Land Reforms Act, 1950 that he himself was to write, pilot through the state legislature and subsequently implement as the Cabinet Minister in charge.<sup>44</sup>

## Conclusion

The principles laid down by Singh went on to form not only the model for abolition of *zamindari* in U.P, it was largely adopted by many other states such as Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Madras, Assam and Bombay. Singh’s work in Uttar Pradesh led to the abolition of *zamindari* in Uttar Pradesh in a democratic and peaceful manner.

Furthermore, assuaging the fears of leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru, G.B. Pant and Sardar Patel who worried that the *zamindars* would engage in years of litigation fighting the reforms, Singh’s blueprint saw to it that virtually no part of its content, when implemented as law, was ever successfully challenged in court in Uttar Pradesh. This is indeed praiseworthy, and demonstrates the labour and meticulous planning invested later in Singh’s legal design of the Law in 1951, and displays the vast research and analysis (historical, economic, psychological, social and ethical) that Singh brought to bear on the subject.

Singh admits to the intractable problem of fixing ceilings on landholdings, which was to prove the biggest thorn in the State administration’s side for years. Some weaknesses of the Bill emerged in implementation and frustrated its cause, such as the loose definition of “personal cultivation” exploited by the land-owning classes in plenty in the following years and its evolution in strengthening the “superior cultivators” or rich peasants. Corruption of state revenue officials and resistance from the tenants shepherded into ownership towards the fixing of ceilings further stymied Singh’s plans.

---

<sup>44</sup> Lohit, Harsh S. (2018), *Charan Singh: A Brief Life History*, Charan Singh Archives, p. 23.

Where Singh is undoubtedly prescient is in his case against Marxism when applied to agriculture, and his opposition to collectivization as India's agricultural policy. Virtually all of his analysis has been borne out by history<sup>45</sup>, and given Singh's arguments based on data available from countries where collectivization was implemented, it seems surprising that he would need to repeat them in his future works as well, decades later. Singh cited urban men planning rural policy as one of the primary reasons for the mismatch between policy and ground realities of rural India throughout his public life. Some part of this thesis is proven by the oversight of his prescriptions regarding joint farming by the country's overwhelmingly urban-elite leadership.

Most importantly, it is the uniqueness of Charan Singh's perspective of the self-cultivating peasant family, on behalf of whom he always argues, which moulds his text and analysis into a unity. He himself belonged to a self-cultivating family that had been tenants. Combined with the erudition few from his background acquired in an age where urban, high-caste men had a monopoly on school and college education, Singh built convictions which enabled him take issue with Marx and his supporters in India, and of course the tenderness he always held for the interests of the tiller of the soil.

---

<sup>45</sup> In 2020 CE.



1960

# Joint Farming X-Rayed The Problem and its Solution.<sup>1</sup>

BY CHARAN SINGH

## Background

When colonialism retreated after the Second World War in the 1950s, many colonial territories emerged as independent nation-states possessing economies ravaged over the centuries by the colonisers. These fragile post-colonial states faced the task of formulating a vision for economic and social development suited best to their unique conditions. Research specific to economies such as these was scant. India, amongst the largest of these, chose for herself the ideals of democracy, self-reliance, and equity in the matters of wealth and land redistribution.

Colonial British exploitation over hundreds of years had left India's agriculture, indigenous industry and social structures devastated. The colonial government patronized *Zamindars* who extracted rent from tenanted peasants, in exchange for ownership of vast areas of land. These landlords enjoyed too many idle privileges to even think of investing in improving their lands or in improving the condition of the tenants toiling on them. Thus, agricultural yields in India had been on the decline and there had been little change in the technological and production base of Indian agriculture for decades prior to Independence. In 1951 there were 93,000 iron ploughs compared to 31.3 million wooden ones and only 11% of cropped lands was under improved seeds, while investment in flood-control, drainage and desalination of soil was virtually non-existent.<sup>2</sup> Not only that, preferential support for British industry at the expense of Indian had left indigenous village industries in tatters, such

---

<sup>1</sup> Published 1959 by Kitabistan, Allahabad. Uttar Pradesh. 322 pages. Written in opposition to the adoption of joint farming as India's agricultural policy, *Joint Farming X-rayed* presents Charan Singh's substantive intellectual break with the political party he had served for 35 years. Charan Singh was Cabinet Minister for Revenue in Uttar Pradesh from December 1954 to April 1959 and publicly opposed the resolution for adopting collective farming as India's agricultural policy in a 1 hour speech at the All India Congress Committee plenary session in Nagpur on 9 January 1959. This opposition to Nehru's policy was at great personal cost to his political career as he sat out of the Congress Cabinet for 19 months. The proximate reason for his resignation was his principled opposition to the State Government's decision to supply energy at preferential prices from the Rihand Dam to an Aluminium project of the Birla group rather than to peasants for irrigation.

<sup>2</sup> Bipin Chandra et al, *India Since Independence*, Penguin, 2000. p. 15.



that a vast number of rural artisans were forced back into agriculture leading to further unemployment and rampant underemployment.

These conditions, coupled with rapidly rising rates of population growth, meant that India was in the unenviable position of catching up on industrialisation centuries after the West had achieved it with very limited capacity for capital formation. Land reforms, State planning, and a transformation in agricultural production were expected to create the surplus required for import of capital-intensive heavy industries in the public sector as the base of further industrialization. How exactly this was to be done was the great puzzle facing these post-colonial nations, the solution for most involved adopting the Marxist model on the lines of the USSR or China or neocolonialism at the hands of capitalist countries whose capital and corporations flooded their incipient markets.

Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister<sup>3</sup> and by far her most influential leader since the death of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948 was heavily influenced by the socialist model on the lines of the USSR and China. So were many public intellectuals, political leaders and influencers of the Congress governments at the Center and States buoyed by the part Marxism had played in forming the ideological and philosophical backdrop for the abolition of *Zamindari* and the resistance against colonial rule. The urban elite believed that institutional changes in agriculture such as the introduction of cooperative farming, in conjunction with land reforms, would automatically increase agricultural production without significant outlays on behalf of the government.

The influential Kumarappa Committee in 1949<sup>4</sup> recommended the state should be empowered to enforce cooperative farming, even though till then the Congress government had not shown any signs of its intent to coerce the peasantry. Enthusiasm for these reforms was not shared by the peasantry but the stature and conviction of Nehru meant that by 1956 the Second Five Year Plan declared that its main task was to take

---

<sup>3</sup> Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964) was India's best-known and amongst the most charismatic leaders of the movement to gain Independence from the colonial British state, next only to Mohandas Gandhi. He was the first and longest serving (1947–1964) Prime Minister of India, and a towering figure in Indian politics before and after Independence.

<sup>4</sup> The Indian National Congress' Agrarian Reforms Committee, 1949. J. C. Kumarappa, senior Congress leader from Tamil Nadu and a Gandhian, led this Committee that recommended comprehensive agrarian reform measures.

essential steps as will provide solid foundations for the development of cooperative farming so that over a period of ten years or so a substantial proportion of agricultural lands are cultivated on cooperative lines.

In the same year two delegations of the Indian Union Ministry of Food and Agriculture were sent to China to study how they organized their cooperatives. Their reports stated China had registered remarkable increases in food grain production using cooperative farming. Following this, Nehru's Cabinet launched a full-blown promotion of cooperative farming in the face of resistance by state governments. Matters came to a head at the Nagpur meeting of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) which stated that the agricultural future should be one of cooperative joint farming, and it was to be implemented in just three years.

Charan Singh, Cabinet Minister of Revenue, Scarcity, Irrigation, Power & Power Projects in the UP government at the time, was in attendance at Nagpur and delivered a rousing speech in opposition to the resolution. This speech was to earn him his only time out of the Congress State government since 1937 and was the harbinger of his political sidelining in the factionally fragmented State Congress party.<sup>5</sup> He published *Joint Farming X-rayed* to detail his opposition and present a vision of an alternate agricultural plan he believed India should adopt. In the Third Five-Year Plan the government significantly toned down its cooperative ambitions, settling for "service cooperatives" to be set up in three years, while advocating cooperative farms to be set up "voluntarily wherever conditions became mature" (emphasis in original).<sup>6</sup> However, Singh's critique of the fundamentally misguided nature of the measure was ignored, and, more egregiously,

---

<sup>5</sup> Charan Singh sat out of the Congress ministry in Uttar Pradesh from 22 April 1959 to December 1960, and had time to write *Joint Farming X-Rayed* from his experience of implementing the Zamindari Abolition Act. Giani Zail Singh, former President of India, wrote in *Kitni Khoobiaan Thi Is Insaan Mein, Asli Bharat*. December 1990, p. 20. CS Papers NMML. "I got an opportunity to hear Chaudhary Saheb's inspiring speech at the Nagpur session. ... Chaudhary Saheb vigorously opposed the Collective Farming proposal brought by Panditji. I was spell bound by Chaudhary Saheb's hour-long fluent speech. Panditji listened carefully to Chaudhary Saheb's powerful speech, and even smiled. In the pandal, there was all round clapping when Panditji moved the resolution, but after Chaudhary Saheb's speech it seemed as if the tables had been turned. Panditji replied to Chaudhary Saheb, and though not agreeing with Panditji, we had to support him because such was the force of his personality then. I know for sure that had I been in Panditji's place I would not have been able to argue the case put forth by Chaudhary Saheb."

<sup>6</sup> Bipin Chandra et al, *India Since Independence*, Penguin, 2000. p. 554.

so was his alternate developmental proposal. The lopsidedness of the government's investments and their detrimental impact on rural India continued unabated.<sup>7</sup>

This book fulfills a cause more constructive than mere criticism, visible in the table of contents. The first part, a third of the book, defines the history and critical aspects of the problem that a suitable agricultural policy for India would solve. The rest of this book is dedicated to charting an alternative for the Indian economy on Gandhian principles – an alternative rejected by Jawaharlal Nehru's 'top-down' policy which came to dominate Indian politics and economics, relegating all alternatives to the sidelines, with ramifications that are visible in the political, agricultural and economic picture of India to this very day.

*Joint Farming X-rayed* derives its dissenting convictions from an endangered perspective in Indian politics: that of a rural, self-cultivating peasant. Charan Singh had an intimate understanding of this life, being the son of a tenant peasant one of "locally dominant peasant community of the cultivating middle classes known for their industriousness and expert skill in the methods of farming, though he started off as a landless peasant".<sup>8</sup>

Ironically, it was the rarity of his perspective that relegated Charan Singh's ideas and politics to the sidelines, with few willing to accept his rigorous academic capability.<sup>9</sup> That has not taken away from its prescience in the light of the course that the agricultural landscape of

---

<sup>7</sup> Singh often cited Gandhi and Nehru's fundamental differences, made crystal clear in these letters exchanged in October 1945. Gandhi to Nehru ([http://www.mkgandhi.org/Selected Letters/Selected Letters1/ letter13.htm](http://www.mkgandhi.org/Selected%20Letters/Selected%20Letters1/letter13.htm)), and Nehru's reply to Gandhi (<http://www.gandhiashramsevagram.org/selected-letters-of-mahatma/gandhi-letter-from-jawaharlal-nehru.php>) Singh saw this critical fork in the road as fundamental to the 'industrialised' trajectory of India under Nehru after 1947. Singh pointed out Nehru came to accept this error in 1963 in speeches in the Indian Parliament, but it was simply too late as he passed away a year after, his spirit broken by the China War.

<sup>8</sup> Lohit, Harsh S. (2018), *Charan Singh: A Brief Life History*, Charan Singh Archives, p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> Byres, Terence. *Charan Singh (1902-87): An Assessment*, Journal of Peasant Studies, 1988. 15:2, 139-189. "More significantly, during a six-month visit to India I made in 1978-79, when I travelled extensively throughout the country, an earlier book, *India's Economic Policy: The Gandhian Blueprint* [Singh, 1978] had recently appeared. Had it been published some three or so years earlier – before the Emergency – it would scarcely have been noticed (indeed, his *Economic Nightmare of India*, published in 1981, received little attention outside of Lok Dal circles). But, in 1978-79, there was Charan Singh on the national stage, challenging for the highest office in the land. He could hardly be ignored. I was reading it and mentioned it to several people. A common response was to suggest that he could not possibly have written it himself. Among the doubting were some prominent urban intellectuals."

India has taken since. This book reads like a forewarning of the many policy pitfalls and disasters that have become the stuff of history since its publication. An examination of its elements, therefore, bear serious consideration, especially since agrarian distress continues to haunt the Indian countryside to the present day.

### Surveying the problem

The book begins with a summary of the historic, social and economic reasons for the abolition of *Zamindari* in his home state of Uttar Pradesh. He places land reform in the pivotal place that it was universally held in the transformation of India and other postcolonial nations and relegates landlords to their deserved title of “parasites” and “drones doing no good in the public hive”<sup>10</sup>. Having stated the reasons why land redistribution reforms were imperative, Singh states clearly that the concrete policy question of “future agrarian organisation as an economic, technical and also a social problem”<sup>11</sup> which the abolition of the Zamindari system brought upon the country had yet to be resolved.

Singh lists three options: an independent peasantry cultivating small land holdings, large private farms operated with hired labour, and joint farms “constituted by peasant farmers pooling their holdings voluntarily or under compulsion and worked with joint or collective labour”<sup>12</sup>. He therefore considers the nuances of the first two options largely self-evident and moves on to an analysis of the policy that was to be his country’s future.

That Charan Singh considered the superiority of small peasant proprietors’ yield as opposed to collective farms is evident in the preface itself. Over the course of the book, Singh criticises Marxism’s conclusion about the nature of agriculture, as well as its conception of the peasant as a ‘doomed’ class. However, that is not to say that the book does not examine the prospect it dismisses thoroughly. Quite the contrary. Singh was an unusually erudite leader for his times from the peasant community, and he had held diverse ministries in his tenures in the UP Cabinet.<sup>13</sup> He combined experience and insight from these experiences

<sup>10</sup> Singh, Charan. *Joint Farming X-Rayed*. Kitabistan, Allahabad. 1959. p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Lohit, Harsh S (2018), *Charan Singh: A Brief Life History*, Charan Singh Archives, p. 24.

with an analytical, empirical data-based approach and his eyes fixed on the ground realities of India.

The following sections, beginning with a historical account of the most notable contemporary forms of collective farming including that of Russia and China whose model Indian agriculture was trying to emulate with modifications, dissect the organisation of the Russian *Kolkhoz* (collective farm), Mexican *Ejido* and the Israeli *Kibbutz*, their similarities and differences, and the extent to which the collectivization of individual resources, occurs in each of these forms. These were all collectives built on Rochdale Principles, characterized by voluntary and open membership, non-discrimination, distribution of surplus in proportion to trade and political & religious neutrality. Members pooled in their resources such as irrigation facilities, land, farming equipment etc., and in return they earned a wage equivalent to their labour or produce provided, as determined by a General Assembly of all the members in charge of rewards and punishments binding on each member.

These collectives further got assistance from the government regarding technical and financial expertise, and in various degrees derived their powers and objectives from the same. Thus, the supposed independence of decision-making of a collective envisioned on paper in collective farms invariably degenerated into coercion by the government, whether direct or indirect. Singh makes particular note of this and explains by way of the Chinese model of “advanced cooperatives” which had “spontaneously” exploded in number under Chairman Mao’s ‘Great Leap Forward’ the impact of collectivization on the member’s psychology and independence and anticipates the need for coercion required to perpetuate such a collective.

The disastrous results of Chairman Mao’s policy in rural China weren’t as fully known in 1959 as they were later, but he warns nevertheless of the course leading to the Chinese that India had envisioned for herself. The word ‘cooperative’ which occurred as the final phase of Mao’s policy was taken to be the golden mean between the Capitalist and Collectivist programs in India. It was to harmonize individualism with voluntary collectivization as per the second Five Year Plan, but Singh warns that the label of a ‘cooperative’ between members who are not economically autonomous would merely be a misnomer. He places much more emphasis on the similarities.

“Both are joint enterprises. Land, labour and capital resources are pooled both in a cooperative and a collective farm, and whatever production technique can be applied to one may be equally applied to the other. The effect on peasants-cum-labourers constituting the farm is similar in both cases and, from the point of view of agricultural production; there is nothing to choose between them.”<sup>14</sup>

Aside from minor differences, the cooperative vision regresses to collectivization on the Chinese model, and “Whatever criticism applies to one applies equally to the other”.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, India’s second Five Year Plan’s insistence that “co-operative farming necessarily implies pooling of lands and joint management”<sup>16</sup> at an appropriate time in the future prompts the rigorous analysis that occupies center stage for the rest of the book. Before embarking on the evaluation, Singh considers it axiomatic that India’s agricultural policy should be shaped by its unique natural conditions and commitments as a nation. Any dogmatic implementation of solutions from elsewhere, which didn’t take account of these unique conditions, could not simply be copied and implemented in India.

Singh identifies the four conditions a solution would address: increase of total wealth/production, elimination of unemployment and underemployment, equitable distribution of wealth and the success of democracy. These, with the exception of the last, were the requirements of many postcolonial economies many of whom had taken to the Communist agricultural project as the blueprint for their development.

### **Marx and the Peasant**

Charan Singh’s critique of Marx comes from the same place as the one for Nehru: they are both urban men, who do not understand the visceral nature of a peasant family’s attachment to its land and the impact this relation brings to their productivity. Marx formulated his theory in industrialized England’s economy, where hardly anybody was engaged in agriculture, let alone the hundreds of millions engaged on Indian soil.<sup>17</sup> For Singh, Marx generalized conclusions he arrived at in his

<sup>14</sup> Singh, Charan. *Joint Farming X-Rayed*. Kitabistan, Allahabad. 1959. p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 18.

<sup>17</sup> Around 20% of Britain’s population was engaged in agriculture through the decades Marx formulated his theories, compared to 74% of India’s workforce in 1959.

analysis of industry and factories into the organic realm of agriculture, where the “economies of scale” argument – Marxism’s entire argument for collectivization of land into large farms where mechanisation would inevitably lead to higher productivity – does not apply. Instead agriculture is constrained by land, and the cycle of productivity which is an organic process which no amount of mechanisation or technology can accelerate. Marx’s predictions on agriculture and the future of the peasant are rubbished by Singh, and he cites that Marx himself had come to doubt his theory’s predictions in post-colonial economies.

In any case, even if the Marxist doctrine were correct, it asked the wrong question as far as India’s requirements were concerned, for it sought to maximize productivity per unit of labour. This was the same as the approach of advanced capitalist countries such as the USA, New Zealand, Australia and Canada where there is a vast surplus of land over the labour available to till it. India’s agricultural population, relative to its land, dictates an optimization of productivity per unit acre, as land becomes the limiting factor with so many families to be employed on a relatively fixed amount of area. According to this yardstick, an adequate agricultural policy would seek to maximize productivity per acre at the relative cost of land and capital, pointing towards intensive rather than extensive farming methods.

This requirement alone makes collectivization on Marxist principles flawed in India; combined with the Law of Diminishing Returns, which dictates that rise in productivity on a fixed agricultural area diminishes with the addition of each new member, it becomes counterproductive. India’s foremost requirement since Independence from colonial Britain was food security for its ballooning population and would remain for decades after the publication of this book. Famines were all too familiar in recent history, and concern about it was omnipresent in the thoughts of all thinkers. Maximizing overall production was a dire requirement, even at the expense of labor, and small farms were the way to go to achieve it. Singh declares with confidence:

“However, while in sheer theory, the size of the farm, in and of itself, did not affect production per acre, in actual practice and for reasons following, given the same resource facilities, soil content and climate, a small farm produces, acre for acre, more than a large one – howsoever organised, whether cooperatively, collectively or on a capitalistic basis.

And it will continue to produce more, until a device is discovered which can accelerate nature's process of gestation and growth."<sup>18</sup>

These 'reasons following' include the peasant's attachment to his land, animals and poultry which motivate the peasant beyond the incentives provided on collective farms or to labour on large capitalist farms. A peasant's family helps out on the land, charging nothing for it from the peasant, and it takes better care of the animals, poultry and soil which occur recurrently in the productivity cycle as an ecosystem. The collectivized farm, whose whole *raison d'être* of increased productivity stood refuted for Indian requirements, performs poorly on these fronts. It relies more on machinery which produces less per acre than the bullock plough, and artificial fertilizers that deteriorate the quality of soil over the long term. Charan Singh makes little of the last of the arguments for collectivization, viz., access to government machinery and credit, better technologies available on larger farms etc. and bitterly criticises the dogmatic acceptance of the "economies of scale" principle in agriculture, equating bigger with more productive.

### **Men versus Machines**

For a country like India where agriculture was by far the largest employer<sup>19</sup>, Singh maintains the use of machinery would lead to lesser employment for those joining the workforce as the population grew. Only if the wealth grew faster than the population growth would the net welfare of the country go forward, and for that to happen agriculture would have to gainfully employ its millions towards the ultimate goal of maximising returns per acre of land. These conditions necessitated production in small, independently owned holdings of land which were to strike a balance between the area of land and the number of peasant family units tilling it. Owing to the law of diminishing returns, collectivization could not produce these results if a large number of people were employed per unit of land. Furthermore, it would lead to disguised unemployment and underemployment, as the use of machinery reduces the need for labour in a scenario where labor is the most easily available of all the means of production: land, capital and labor.

<sup>18</sup> Singh, Charan. *Joint Farming X-Rayed*. Kitabistan, Allahabad. 1959. p. 25.

<sup>19</sup> As per the 1951 census, 74% of India's labour force was engaged in agriculture.



Cheap labour, then, needs to be leveraged to produce the agricultural surplus, trade of which could be the road to industrialization and the expansion of the manufacturing and services industries in India. These expansions were imperatives as they were drivers of wealth and created more economic value per unit labour. To catch up with the West in competitive markets, an increase in the share of population engaged in the two sectors had to be driven up, mounted on an increase in the agricultural output and the availability of capital and labour released from agriculture. For that time, then, the resources available to India dictated a strategy which did not demand investment in industry or technology, whilst it provided employment to as many as it could at the cost of maximum yield where necessary. According to Singh, collectivization's benefits were predicated on large machinery and industry, which are both capital intensive and lead to freed surplus labor. These were simply not up to the mark to address India's problems.

### **Authoritarian Footsteps**

Singh goes on to criticise the collectivist policy for its antipathy to the democratic principles India had adopted for herself. These principles are predicated on the individual, and Singh argues the bureaucratic and opaque superstructure that collectivization brings works against the democratic flow. In the case of China and Russia, where forced collectivization was implemented, it was a diktat of ideology and not of efficiency. The form of agricultural organisation was selected to conform to Communist principles and led to greater concentration of power in the hands of the government and Party officials through its access to means of production and the power to coerce membership by offering benefits, either directly or indirectly, to collective farms as opposed to small, independent ones.

Not only that, the State obtains a monopoly on production and purchase, deciding unilaterally the rewards and punishments for the commune, as well the price at which the peasants would sell to government, over and above a government-fixed limit the commune was obliged to give. Whether in China or the USSR large collectives facilitated an exploitation of the rural interests for the benefit of the urban and the overall regression of the government towards a full dictatorship. Singh's analysis is once again prescient and foretells the close relations

between collectivization and authoritarian control in the hands of the government that was to rear its ugly head in these nations.

The last chapter of the first half, titled “Impracticability of Large Scale Farming” makes a summary of his arguments, and although Singh leaves it to the readers’ discretion if the government’s policy meets all its challenges as defined, he does not leave his opinion secret. Psychologically and culturally for the Indian peasant, collectivization implies the uprooting of a whole way of life, which is bound to be met with resistance by the peasantry. A quick survey of the outcome of collectivization on output reveals that the policies did not meet desired results, and in large cases were carried out under orders from dictatorial regimes, or by aid of the USSR, whose assistance came at its price in policy. Wherever circumstances made allowances for it, the peasant sought to abandon the communes; perpetual coercion, therefore, had been required for their sustenance all along, even in the parent countries of USSR and China. Singh finishes with contemporary findings about the *Ejido* and *Kolkhoz* having proved failures in their respective countries and pronounces joint farming as inadequate to India’s needs.

### **An Alternate Vision**

The latter and larger portion of the book geared towards solutions sets for itself the same yardsticks by which it evaluates joint farming. It identifies land as the limiting factor in capital production that precedes mechanization and identifies surplus labour as a result of population as the means to generate that capital in India. Cheap labor could be dedicated to getting more land under cultivation and using the existing land to the fullest by intensive farming methods. This would generate capital which would, in turn, lead to better technologies to follow for both land and labour, slowly weaning the population away from agriculture to manufacturing and services, while population control would ensure that the increase in productivity is not drowned out by the increase in numbers to feed and sustain. Singh boils the essentials of the solutions down to “reclamation and redistribution of land, emigration to foreign countries, development of non-agricultural resources, intensive utilisation of our land resources and population control.”<sup>20</sup> The chapters following each

---

<sup>20</sup> Singh, Charan. *Joint Farming X-Rayed*. Kitabistan, Allahabad. 1959. p. 130.

handle these aspects one after the other in an interconnected manner.

Reclamation of land and emigration turn out to be of little help on examination, as India already uses most of its arable land for cultivation, and the prospects of life as an emigrant for an Indian made Singh believe that the Indian immigrant would not find himself welcome in many parts of the world, certainly not in large numbers. He advocates land redistribution wherever possible but does not see much improvement in productivity resulting from it, as the land to be distributed in practical terms would not turn out to be a lot once all the government and state regulations are taken into account. Nevertheless, he proposes measures to organize land-redistribution for better results and lists out some of the possible dangers of the redistribution policy.

Singh's solution focuses simultaneously on the intensive utilization of land and developing non-agricultural livelihoods. Singh reiterates his comment that his strategy is not to promote agriculture-heavy interventions at the cost of the secondary and tertiary forms of employment and insists that the path to economic development goes inevitably through a decrease in the percentage of the population engaged in agriculture and other primary sector employment opportunities in favor of an increase in the Manufacture, Commerce and Services sector. Economically developed countries without exception demonstrate this distribution in their economic blueprints, and Singh regards this as a law:

“Land and mineral resources per head of the population being equal, and the quality of these resources and climatic conditions being similar, that country or region is comparatively more prosperous than others where more men are employed in non-agricultural activities than in agricultural”.<sup>21</sup>

Unlike agriculture, manufacture is a mechanical process, where for a fixed input a fixed outcome can be expected more or less in a fixed amount of time. It is also more flexible to changes in environment and markets, which agriculture – being an organic process – cannot guarantee. Agriculture is dependent on the crop-cycle, soil-conditions and the various levels of care taken of the soil and the produce. Power and machinery aren't available to increase production indefinitely to the agriculturist, putting a ceiling on his productivity in a given time

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 192.

or piece of land. He also works fewer hours than his counterpart in the manufacturing and services sector owing to the nature of his employment. Lastly, agriculture suffers from a lack of demand for its product and a superfluity of workers using suboptimal land for cultivation in the absence of other employment opportunities, especially in post colonialist economies, even more so in India.

Singh warns against more of the workforce engaging in agriculture in India, which had been on the rise since 1881.<sup>22</sup> He traces the beginning of the decline to colonial Britain's policies, which privileged Britain's markets and economy at the expense of once-flourishing Indian handicrafts and industry connected closely to agriculture. Thus, colonization turned India from an agriculture and village industries economy to a largely agricultural colony. He warns against the continuation of the trend even after Independence from Britain and posits diversification of labour as a prerequisite for economic growth.

Nehru's top-down economic development plan favors immediate large-scale industrialization as the means of boosting this diversification involving large-scale capital investments by the State for producing the infrastructure for heavy industry and machinery. Singh's approach, influenced by Gandhi, argues for a 'bottom-up approach' where, in his own words, on "small-scale decentralised industry geared in with agriculture should predominate. The latter would also lay great emphasis on handicrafts and cottage or village industries."<sup>23</sup>

The two visions for growth are as sharply distinguished in approach as they are from the quarters they come from. Singh's and Gandhi's India lived in the villages, while Nehru's and the government's effort was informed by the vast chasm between urban and rural interests and approaches. Apologists for industrialization gave the example of developed countries' economies, their scales of production and their standards of living as self-evident proofs of the impact of mechanization on production and population control. Industrialism was deemed to usher in new employment opportunities away from just agriculture, and the large amount of Indian population was seen in and of itself as an asset in the form of a virtually inexhaustible workforce and internal market for the production and consumption of the fruits of industrialization. Singh

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 153.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 157.

was a soothsayer, for we know today that large scale manufacturing has destroyed jobs in India in the past three decades. In addition, increased mechanisation in production as well as the implementation of robotics and other technological advances has put even these fewer jobs at risk into the future.

Industrial thinking posits that migration to urban centers and a readjustment of the psychological and cultural conditions of the rural agricultural Indian would automatically lead to smaller families, higher education and population control, engendered by life in the city. Higher rates of taxation for the rich, coupled with the per capita increase in real income that comes from employment in non-agricultural sectors, would prove a source of equitable distribution of wealth, and the ultimate flourishing of democracy. Singh lists the above commonly cited reasons by the messiahs of Industrialism, before he takes on a closer look at the fault lines surrounding each of the reasons.

His biggest target is the assumption that India's large population, in and of itself, would prove a boon to industrialization as the Keynesian postulate "labour itself is capital"<sup>24</sup> dictates. Singh disagreed with this assumption and thought a vast unemployed population per unit land, with little ways to generate capital on its own, could never deliver the results on which Keynes' predictions were made. For the industrialised economies, labour and demand were scarce, whereas availability of capital and supply were much less of a problem. India had an acute shortage of both capital and purchasing power per capita, and the increasing population would only make things much worse if not checked.

Similarly, India could not aspire to emulate the developed countries' model, as its conditions of capital formation were abysmal, and therefore the vast investments made on heavy industry and machinery would come at a dear cost to the country's capital and foreign exchange, both of which would be tied up long term in the projects. It had no colonies to exploit to sustain industrialization's hunger for capital and would need to produce all that it needed from a surplus on its agricultural output based on better yields from existing land and labour. Furthermore, insofar as industrialization would not be able to absorb all the surplus hands from agriculture at a fast-enough rate, the migration to cities envisioned in

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 166.

population control and socio-psychological readjustment thereof would also likely not occur.

Therefore, the conditions that led to industrialisation in the West could never be emulated in India, and industrialism could not be preferred to bottom-up schemes that took into account India's realities. For any solution to work, it would have to incorporate these specifics: it would involve high labor-to-capital ratios, low investments on capital-intensive industries, (with the exception of the absolutely essential ones like that of steel, iron, electrification, railways etc.), and overall, as a target, optimization of output (and employment) per unit capital over output per head. From this point of requirement, small industries outperformed the ones based on heavy machinery, and cruder forms of technology than the "capitalist."

Singh argues this goal assures proportionate rewards to a wider net of people for whom this form would generate employment, as opposed to the few for whom employment in the capital-intensive sectors indeed led to better wages, but whose number forever struggled to catch up with the rising rate of population. Singh's summary is succinct: "In a way, unemployment and consequent misery of millions of persons is the price that the country pays for profits of a few at the top."<sup>25</sup>

### **India Bottom Up**

Singh champions an economy based on an ecosystem of small scale, decentralised and cottage industries which would employ enhanced machinery on a smaller scale than massive mechanized farms or heavy industries. Singh divorces this from the myth that bigger machinery automatically meant more output over all factors of concern. His arguments point repeatedly to Japan, where intensive farming on small farms was implemented along with capital investments on the improvement of farming methods and technology, which had provided innovation opportunities for machinery that was designed for small-scale enterprises. Singh points to the reversal in trend of ballooning machinery and factory sizes already underway in his time, and keeps a forward-looking approach to the decentralizing prospects of electricity, railways, better seeds etc. In fact, some of the most far-reaching predictions of

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 159.

the growing use of automation anticipate problems of today, long after Singh's time, whereas some of his hopes such as those from nuclear energy are far too optimistic.

Along with advancements in technology, Singh argues next for measures to increase the productivity of agricultural labor, both by handing him better technology and by initiating changes in his training and attitude. Singh points to the productivity of an average farmer of Japan and China, and worries that the peasantry of India, owing to religious outlooks geared towards otherworldly rewards more than the material world, is too fatalistic for its own good. He also blames illiteracy, and lack of capital for the lack of innovation in agricultural technology and suggests investment in education and health sectors to remedy the same.

Lastly, Singh proposes measures to enhance productivity of the land itself by proper soil conservation and utilization. He critiques the assumption that machinery equaled 'advanced technology' compared to the bullock cart in terms of yield and its effect on the topsoil. He stands against the use of artificial fertilizers which have an adverse effect on fertility and crop resistance to diseases. Instead he remarks upon the resources available in the peasant ecosystem itself, with special mention for cow dung, which serves as excellent manure and is readily available to farmers.

The final section of the book talks about the rise of population, which, if unchecked, would undo all the efforts of increasing wealth by providing a proportionate amount of mouths to feed. It leads to rise in unemployment and inflation, and an overcrowding in the agricultural sector and villages of the country beyond the ability of the land to sustain. He explains "underdevelopment" and "overpopulation" as relative concepts, each dependent on resource utilization per capita, and argues against apologists who insisted that increase in population could be sustained by proportional increase in technology and yield, as well as those holding the prejudice that Indians had higher rates of population increase than Western countries. Nevertheless, he advocates State measures to incentivize smaller families via propaganda and policy. Singh's usual methods derive from his Gandhian training of self-discipline, but Singh does not shy away from discussing other solutions of population control. He proposes postponement of the average

marriage age by five years and includes for good measure his thought that the procedure of vasectomy being much easier for men, it should take the lead in voluntary methods of family control the State should incentivize. Sensitization of the country about the impact of population growth and the need for birth control is advocated, until such time as the Industrialization project can be achieved, which would bring about a change in attitude that leads to urban nuclear families – an automatic, though roundabout, way of birth control.

## Conclusion

Books by politicians don't hold much water amongst academicians regarding intellectual rigor and one that is titled *Joint Farming X-rayed* and argues against the overwhelming consensus of its time becomes even more likely to be misjudged. To be sure, Charan Singh's dissenting analysis suffers on account of these prejudices of his contemporaries. However, this title detracts from a work of scholarship that far exhausts its title in scope and ambition.

Why joint farming occurs in the title nevertheless is made clear by the emphasis Singh's blueprint for the Indian economy places on maximal land utilization as the sine qua non for progress at the time the book was written. It is by this principle that he organises his critique, and from which an organic picture of his proposed solution grows out. Much of Singh's thought is structured in this organic way, one factor connecting to the other, and ultimately grounded in earthly reality, like an ecosystem. This lends the book's arguments a cohesive quality as it transitions from a discussion of the problems to one of solutions and gives it an air of intellectual honesty belying the political circumstances in which it came out.

The feeling is further bolstered by Singh's scholarship, which presents a dispassionate analysis of a vast amount of empirical data, comprising myriad disciplines across different continents, geographies, and stages of development as economies. Indeed, much of history's march since the publication of the work to our present day has borne out Charan Singh's analysis of the impact of collectivization on democracy and agricultural output. Collective farming is today nowhere to be seen, and when viewed from the clarity of this work's prism, it does not come as a surprise.



Singh's analysis anticipates, at least in part, the horrors of which the world was to become aware after news finally broke about the price Mao's China had paid for 'The Great Leap Forward', or Stalinist Russia for her own agricultural needs and outputs, as a result of forced collectivization with the incentive to accelerate industrialization. Furthermore, it presents a fair amount of evidence available to his contemporaries before the news from China or Russia became common knowledge, shedding unique light on the impact of ideology (in this case Marxist) and the personality of India's pre-eminent leader Nehru on national policy at the cost of empirical data. As for the issues it addresses, *Joint Farming X-Rayed* makes common cause with the agrarian crisis that today worries the government and citizenry alike on burning issues like unemployment, urban-bias in government, the impact of chemical fertilizers on soil fertility, and of deforestation on soil-erosion.

For all the worth of the analysis, the solutions Singh proposed in 1959 have been relegated to the policy graveyard. Nehru's conviction about industrialization as the only way forward sidelined the incipient Gandhian project, of which Charan Singh was a lifelong defender. Not only that, a prototype economy on Gandhian principles doesn't exist anywhere on the globe today and unlike joint farming it has never been duly tested. Singh's decentralised, individualistic model for the economy borrows generously from the Gandhian blueprint and derives much of the intellectual force of its critique of both Industrialism and Marxism from this perspective which puts a premium on individualism above all else. Here is a merger of Singh's peasant upbringing and the all-pervading influence of Gandhi's worldview, one that vowed to remake India on principles that are closer to her home in the village and her office in the fields.

Some criticism of fellow Gandhians, such as Vinoba Bhave and his Bhoodan movement, show that despite Gandhi's deep influence on Charan Singh's thinking on economic and social issues, his commitments were also guided by personal experience and empiricism which led him to mix Gandhian ideas with modifications of his own. How these ideas would have worked out if implemented at Independence will never be known, and Gandhian economics has been criticised for its utopianism, protectionism, and aversion to technology. But, in the absence of empirical evidence, and the radicalism of Gandhian economies when considered

from Capitalist or Marxist principles alike, an assessment of the future of any society should the Gandhian plan have been implemented, is eminently worth speculating.

Singh's book makes a compelling case for a path to India's development on his alternate model, and it asks much of both the rich and the poor in order to get there. It also provides an alternative which works against the lopsidedness that the modern version of 'development' as progress brings, with its cities impoverishing the villages over the long term. More importantly, it speaks earnestly and scholarly on behalf of the interests it represents: the village and the peasantry that bears the brunt of this lopsidedness, and whose poverty of credible representatives amongst the circles of influence makes this an important work as a unique alternative picture of India.



1971

# India's Poverty and its Solution<sup>1</sup>

BY CHARAN SINGH

## Background

When colonialism retreated after the Second World War in the 1950s, many colonial territories emerged as independent nation-states possessing economies ravaged over the centuries by the colonisers. These fragile post-colonial states faced the task of formulating a vision for economic and social development suited best to their unique conditions. Research specific to economies such as these was scant. India, amongst the largest of these, chose for herself the ideals of democracy, self-reliance, and equity in the matters of wealth and land redistribution.

Colonial British exploitation over hundreds of years had left India's agriculture, indigenous industry and social structures devastated. The colonial government patronized *Zamindars* who extracted rent from tenanted peasants, in exchange for ownership of vast land. These landlords enjoyed too many idle privileges to even think of investing in improving their lands, or in improving the condition of the tenants toiling on them. Thus, agricultural yields in India had been on the decline and there had been little change in the technological and production base of Indian agriculture for decades prior to Independence. In 1951 there were 93,000 iron ploughs compared to 31.3 million wooden ones and only 11% of cropped lands was under improved seeds, while investment in flood-control, drainage and desalination of soil was virtually non-existent.<sup>2</sup> Not only that, preferential support for British industry at the expense of Indian had left indigenous village industries in tatters, such

---

<sup>1</sup> Published 1964 by Asia Publishing House, Bombay. 527 pages. *India's Poverty and its Solution* is Charan Singh's most substantive work, its title signalling a larger canvas for his bold ideas. Singh states "no changes in the arguments or conclusions reached in the first edition is being made. Only some new evidence in favour of the old conclusions has been brought forward. ... Three or four chapters alone may be said to have been rewritten" - chapters on the industrial sector and agriculture. Singh had been re-inducted into the Uttar Pradesh Cabinet in December 1960, ending his 19-month political exile. Dissatisfied with being passed over as Chief Minister, he later attributed this to his opposition to Jawaharlal Nehru's obsession with collective farming and not to his 'capability or commitment to the people.' Singh completed this book in May 1963, just short of 61, and it was published in 1964 months before the passing of Nehru.

<sup>2</sup> Bipin Chandra et al, *India Since Independence*, Penguin, 2000. p. 15.

that a vast number of rural artisans were forced back into agriculture leading to further unemployment and rampant underemployment.

These conditions, coupled with rapidly rising rates of population growth, meant that India was in the unenviable position of catching up on industrialisation centuries after the West had achieved it with very limited capacity for capital formation. Land reforms, State planning, and a transformation in agricultural production were expected to create the surplus required for import of capital-intensive heavy industries in the public sector as the base of further industrialization. How exactly this was to be done was the great puzzle facing these post-colonial nations, the solution for most involved adopting the Marxist model on the lines of the USSR or China, or neocolonialism at the hands of capitalist countries whose capital and corporations flooded their incipient markets.

Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister<sup>3</sup> and by far her most influential leader since the death of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948 was heavily influenced by the socialist model on the lines of the USSR and China. So were many public intellectuals, political leaders and influencers of the Congress governments at the Center and States buoyed by the part Marxism had played in forming the ideological and philosophical backdrop for the abolition of *Zamindari* and the resistance against colonial rule. The urban elite believed that institutional changes in agriculture such as the introduction of cooperative farming, in conjunction with land reforms, would automatically increase agricultural production without significant outlays on behalf of the government.

The influential Kumarappa Committee in 1949<sup>4</sup> recommended the state should be empowered to enforce cooperative farming, even though till then the Congress government had not shown any signs of its intent to coerce the peasantry. Enthusiasm for these reforms was not shared by the peasantry but the stature and conviction of Nehru

---

<sup>3</sup> Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964) was India's best-known and amongst the most charismatic leaders of the movement to gain Independence from the colonial British state, next only to Mohandas Gandhi. He was the first and longest serving (1947–1964) Prime Minister of India, and a towering figure in Indian politics before and after Independence.

<sup>4</sup> The Indian National Congress' Agrarian Reforms Committee, 1949. J. C. Kumarappa, senior Congress leader from Tamil Nadu and a Gandhian, led this Committee that recommended comprehensive agrarian reform measures.

meant that by 1956 the Second Five Year Plan declared that its main task was to take essential steps as will provide solid foundations for the development of cooperative farming so that over a period of ten years or so a substantial proportion of agricultural lands are cultivated on cooperative lines.

In the same year two delegations of the Indian Union Ministry of Food and Agriculture were sent to China to study how they organized their cooperatives. Their reports stated China had registered remarkable increases in food grain production using cooperative farming. Following this, Nehru's Cabinet launched a full-blown promotion of cooperative farming in the face of resistance by state governments. Matters came to a head at the Nagpur meeting of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) which stated that the agricultural future should be one of cooperative joint farming, and it was to be implemented in just three years.

Charan Singh, Cabinet Minister of Revenue, Scarcity, Irrigation, Power & Power Projects in the UP government at the time, was in attendance at Nagpur AICC and delivered a rousing speech in opposition to the resolution. This speech was to earn him his first time out of the Congress State government since 1937 and was the harbinger of his political sidelining in the factionally fragmented State Congress party.<sup>5</sup> He published *Joint Farming X-rayed* in 1959 that detailed this opposition and presented his vision of an alternate agricultural plan he believed India should adopt. In 1964, he was again a Cabinet Minister – this time for Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries and Forests in the UP government. Much of his opposition to the policies reflected in the Nagpur Resolution had found credence amongst some political quarters. In the Third Five-Year Plan the government significantly toned down its cooperative ambitions, settling for “service cooperatives” to be set up in three years, while advocating cooperative farms to be set up “*voluntarily* wherever conditions became mature”

---

<sup>5</sup> Charan Singh sat out of the Congress ministry in Uttar Pradesh from 22 April 1959 to December 1960, partly on account of his policy differences with the then Chief Minister and mainly on account of his daring in publicly opposing Nehru's vision of a collective farming peasantry. Posterity can thank this period when he had time on his hands to write *Joint Farming X-Rayed* in 1959 from his deep experience of implementing the Zamindari Abolition Act for a decade.

(emphasis in original).<sup>6</sup> However, Singh's critique of the fundamentally misguided nature of the measure was ignored, and, more egregiously, so was his alternate developmental proposal. The lopsidedness of the government's investments and their detrimental impact on rural India continued unabated.<sup>7</sup>

Singh published this updated edition of *Joint Farming X-rayed* in 1964, where, in his own words, "no change in the arguments or conclusions reached in the first edition"<sup>8</sup> was made. However, he rewrote four chapters entirely with new evidence. These four chapters go into the nitty-gritties of making agriculture productive, the inappropriateness of the industrialising model for India and how to create alternate livelihoods in rural India. As the architect for the abolition of *Zamindari* in UP in the previous decade, Singh held an intimate understanding of the interests of the peasantry, as well as the distance of the urban elite in government from rural ground realities. Even more so, he intensely scrutinises the dogmatic adoption of the industrialising policy in the face of ever-growing empirical data to the contrary and the India's unique conditions of geography, population, capital and social structure.

This book fulfills a cause more constructive than mere criticism, visible in the table of contents. The first part, a third of the book, defines the history and critical aspects of the problem that a suitable agricultural policy for India would solve. The rest of this book is dedicated to charting an alternative for the Indian economy on Gandhian principles – an alternative rejected by Jawaharlal Nehru's top-down policy which came to dominate Indian politics and economics, relegating all alternatives to the sidelines, with ramifications that are visible in the political, agricultural and economic picture of India to this very day.

The distance between orthodox Marxist thinking and Gandhi's emphasis on *Sarvodaya* where the individual subsumes his freedom in the larger community informs the gulf between the two pictures down

<sup>6</sup> Bipin Chandra et al, *India Since Independence*, Penguin, 2000. p. 554.

<sup>7</sup> Singh often cites Gandhi and Nehru's fundamental differences in defense of his own alignment with Gandhi, made crystal clear in letters exchanged in October 1945: Gandhi to Nehru, and Nehru's reply to Gandhi. Singh saw this critical fork in the road as fundamental to the 'industrialised' trajectory of India under Nehru. Singh points out that Nehru came to accept his errors much later by 1963 in speeches in the Indian Parliament, but it was simply too late as he passed away a year after his spirit broken by the China War.

<sup>8</sup> Singh, Charan (1964), *India's Poverty and its Solution*, Asia Publishing House, Preface to the Second Edition, p. xv.

to their fundamental principles, but that is not all. This book derives its dissenting convictions from an endangered perspective in Indian politics: that of a self-cultivating peasant. Charan Singh had intimate understanding of this life, being the son of a tenanted peasant one of “locally dominant peasant community of the cultivating middle classes known for their industriousness and expert skill in the methods of farming, though he started off as a landless peasant”.<sup>9</sup>

Ironically, it was the rarity of his perspective that relegated Charan Singh's ideas and politics to the sidelines, with few willing to accept his capability of the intellect.<sup>10</sup> That has not taken away from its prescience in the light of the course that the agricultural landscape of India has taken since. This book reads like a forewarning of the many policy pitfalls and disasters that have become the stuff of history since its time. An examination of its elements, therefore, bear serious consideration, especially since agrarian distress continues to haunt the Indian countryside to the present day.

### Surveying the problem

The book begins with a summary of the historic, social and economic reasons for the abolition of *Zamindari* in his home state of Uttar Pradesh. He places land reform in the pivotal place that it was universally held in the transformation of India and other postcolonial nations and relegates landlords to their deserved title of “parasites” and “drones doing no good in the public hive”<sup>11</sup>. Having stated the reasons why land redistribution reforms were imperative, Singh states clearly that the concrete policy question of “future agrarian organisation as an economic, technical and

<sup>9</sup> Lohit, Harsh S. (2018), *Charan Singh: A Brief Life History*, Charan Singh Archives, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Byres, Terence. *Charan Singh (1902-87): An Assessment*, Journal of Peasant Studies, 1988. 15:2, 139-189. “More significantly, during a six-month visit to India I made in 1978-79, when I travelled extensively throughout the country, an earlier book, *India's Economic Policy: The Gandhian Blueprint* [Singh, 1978] had recently appeared. Had it been published some three or so years earlier – before the Emergency – it would scarcely have been noticed (indeed, his *Economic Nightmare of India*, published in 1981, received little attention outside of Lok Dal circles). But, in 1978-79, there was Charan Singh on the national stage, challenging for the highest office in the land. He could hardly be ignored. I was reading it and mentioned it to several people. A common response was to suggest that he could not possibly have written it himself. Among the doubting were some prominent urban intellectuals.”

<sup>11</sup> Singh, Charan (1964), *India's Poverty and its Solution*, Asia Publishing House, p. 4.



also a social problem”<sup>12</sup> which the abolition of the *Zamindari* system brought upon the country had yet to be resolved.

Singh lists three options: an independent peasantry cultivating small land holdings, large private farms operated with hired labour, and joint farms “constituted by peasant farmers pooling their holdings voluntarily or under compulsion and worked with joint or collective labour”<sup>13</sup>. He therefore considers the nuances of the first two options largely self-evident and moves on to an analysis of the policy that was to be his country’s future.

That Charan Singh considered the superiority of small peasant proprietors’ yield as opposed to collective farms is evident in the preface. Over the course of the book, Singh criticises Marxism’s conclusion about the nature of agriculture, as well as its conception of the peasant as a ‘doomed’ class. However, that is not to say that the book does not examine the prospect it dismisses thoroughly. Quite the contrary. Singh was an unusually erudite leader for his times from the peasant community, and he had held diverse ministries in his tenures in the UP Cabinet.<sup>14</sup> He combined experience and insight from these experiences with an analytical, empirical data-based approach and his eyes fixed on the ground realities of India.

The following sections, beginning with a historical account of the most notable contemporary forms of collective farming including that of Russia and China whose model Indian agriculture was trying to emulate with modifications, dissect the organisation of the Russian Kolkhoz (collective farm), Mexican Ejido and the Israeli Kibbutz, their similarities and differences, and the extent to which the collectivization of individual resources, occurs in each of these forms. These were all collectives built on Rochdale Principles, characterized by voluntary and open membership, non-discrimination, distribution of surplus in proportion to trade and political & religious neutrality. Members pooled in their resources such as irrigation facilities, land, farming equipment etc., and in return they earned a wage equivalent to their labour or produce provided, as determined by a General Assembly of all the members in charge of rewards and punishments binding on each member.

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Lohit, Harsh S (2018), *Charan Singh: A Brief Life History*, Charan Singh Archives, p. 24.

These collectives further got assistance from the government regarding technical and financial expertise, and in various degrees derived their powers and objectives from the same. Thus, the supposed independence of decision-making of a collective envisioned on paper in collective farms invariably degenerated into coercion by the government, whether direct or indirect. Singh makes particular note of this and explains by way of the Chinese model of “advanced cooperatives” which had “spontaneously” exploded in number under Chairman Mao’s ‘Great Leap Forward’ the impact of collectivization on the member’s psychology and independence and anticipates the need for coercion required to perpetuate such a collective.

The disastrous results of Chairman Mao’s policy in rural China weren’t fully known in Singh’s time as they are now, but he warns nevertheless of the course leading ultimately to the Chinese that India had envisioned for herself. The word ‘cooperative’ which occurred as the final phase of Mao’s policy was taken to be the golden mean between the Capitalist and Collectivist programs in India. It was to harmonize individualism with voluntary collectivization as per the second Five Year Plan, but Singh warns that the label of a ‘cooperative’ between members who are not economically autonomous would merely be a misnomer. He places much more emphasis on the similarities. Adequately summarised in his own words:

“Both are joint enterprises. Land, labour and capital resources are pooled both in a cooperative and a collective farm, and whatever production technique can be applied to one may be equally applied to the other. The effect on peasants-cum-labourers constituting the farm is similar in both cases and, from the point of view of agricultural production; there is nothing to choose between them.”<sup>15</sup>

Aside from minor differences, the cooperative vision regresses to collectivization on the Chinese model, and every criticism that applies to one applies to the other. Nevertheless, India’s second Five Year Plan’s insistence that “co-operative farming necessarily implies pooling of lands and joint management”<sup>16</sup> at an appropriate time in the future prompts the vast and rigorous analysis that occupies center stage for the rest of the book. Before embarking on the evaluation, Singh

<sup>15</sup> Singh, Charan (1964), *India's Poverty and Its Solution*, Asia Publishing House, p. 28.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 29.

considers it axiomatic that India's agricultural policy should be shaped by its unique natural conditions and commitments as a nation. Any dogmatic implementation of solutions from elsewhere, which didn't take into account these unique conditions, could not simply be copied and implemented in India.

Singh identifies the four conditions a solution would address: increase of total wealth/production, elimination of unemployment and underemployment, equitable distribution of wealth and the success of democracy. These, with the exception of the last, were the requirements of many postcolonial economies many of whom had taken to the Communist agricultural project as the blueprint for their development. Charan Singh couldn't disagree more.

### **Marx and the Peasant**

Charan Singh's critique of Marx comes from the same place as for Nehru: they are both urban men who do not understand the visceral nature of a peasant family's attachment to its land and the impact this relation brings to their productivity. Marx formulated his theory in industrialized England's economy, where hardly anybody was engaged in agriculture, let alone the hundreds of millions engaged on Indian soil.<sup>17</sup> For Singh, Marx simply generalized conclusions he arrived at in his analysis of industry and factories into the organic realm of agriculture, where the "economies of scale" – Marxism's entire argument for collectivization of land into large farms where mechanisation would inevitably lead to higher productivity – do not apply. Instead agriculture is constrained by land, and the cycle of productivity which is an organic process which no amount of mechanisation or technology can accelerate. Marx's predictions on agriculture and the future of the peasant are rubbished by Singh, and he cites that Marx himself had come to doubt his theory's predictions in post-colonial economies.

In any case, even if the Marxist doctrine were correct, it asked the wrong question as far as India's requirements were concerned, for it sought to maximize productivity per unit of labour. This was the same as the approach of advanced capitalist countries such as the USA, New

---

<sup>17</sup> Around 20% of Britain's population was engaged in agriculture through the decades Marx formulated his theories, compared to 74% of India's workforce in 1959.

Zealand, Australia and Canada where there is a vast surplus of land over the labour available to till it. India's agricultural population, relative to its land, dictates an optimization of productivity per unit acre, as land becomes the limiting factor with so many families to be employed on a relatively fixed amount of area. According to this yardstick, an adequate agricultural policy would seek to maximize productivity per acre at the relative cost of land and capital, pointing towards intensive rather than extensive farming methods.

This requirement alone makes collectivization on Marxist principles flawed in India; combined with the Law of Diminishing Returns, which dictates that rise in productivity on a fixed agricultural area diminishes with the addition of each new member, it becomes counterproductive. India's foremost requirement since Independence was food security for its ballooning population and would remain for decades after the publication of this book. Famines were all too familiar in recent history, and concern about it was omnipresent in the thoughts of all thinkers. Maximizing overall production was a dire requirement, even at the expense of labor, and small farms were the way to go to achieve it. Singh declares with confidence:

"However, while in sheer theory, the size of the farm, in and of itself, did not affect production per acre, in actual practice and for reasons following, given the same resource facilities, soil content and climate, a small farm produces, acre for acre, more than a large one—howsoever organised, whether cooperatively, collectively or on a capitalistic basis. And it will continue to produce more, until a device is discovered which can accelerate nature's process of gestation and growth."<sup>18</sup>

These "following reasons" include the peasant's attachment to his own land, animals and poultry, which motivates the peasant beyond the incentives provided on collective farms or capitalist labour on large farms. A peasant's family helps out on the land, charging nothing for it from the peasant, and it takes better care of the animals, poultry and soil which occur recurrently in the productivity cycle as an ecosystem. The collectivized farm, whose whole *raison d'être* of increased productivity stood refuted for Indian requirements, also performs poorly on these fronts. It relies more on machinery which produces less per acre than

---

<sup>18</sup> Singh, Charan (1964), *India's Poverty and its Solution*, Asia Publishing House, p. 39.

the bullock plough, and artificial fertilizers that deteriorate the quality of soil over the long term. Charan Singh makes little of the last of the arguments for collectivization, viz., access to government machinery and credit, better technologies available on larger farms etc. and bitterly criticises the dogmatic acceptance of the “economies of scale” principle in agriculture, equating bigger with more productive.

### **Men vs Machines**

For a country like India where agriculture was by far the largest employer<sup>19</sup>, Singh maintains the use of machinery would lead to lesser employment for those joining the workforce as the population grew. Only if the wealth grew faster than the population growth would the net welfare of the country go forward, and for that to happen agriculture would have to gainfully employ its millions towards the ultimate goal of maximising returns per acre of land. These conditions necessitated production in small, independently owned holdings of land which were to strike a balance between the area of land and the number of peasant family units tilling it. Owing to the law of diminishing returns, collectivization could not produce these results if a large number of people were employed per unit of land. Furthermore, it would lead to disguised unemployment and underemployment, as the use of machinery reduces the need for labour in a scenario where labor is the most easily available of all the means of production: land, capital and labor.

Cheap labour, then, needs to be leveraged to produce the agricultural surplus, trade of which could be the road to industrialization and the expansion of the manufacturing and services industries in India. These expansions were imperatives as they were drivers of wealth and created more economic value per unit labour. To catch up with the West in competitive markets, an increase in the share of population engaged in the two sectors had to be driven up, mounted on an increase in the agricultural output and the availability of capital and labour released from agriculture. For that time, then, the resources available to India dictated a strategy which did not demand investment in industry or technology, whilst it provided employment to as many as it could at the cost of maximum yield where necessary. According to Singh, collectivization’s

---

<sup>19</sup> As per the 1951 census, 74% of India’s labour force was engaged in agriculture.

benefits were predicated on large machinery and industry, which are both capital intensive and lead to freed surplus labor. These were simply not up to the mark to address India's problems.

### **Authoritarian footsteps**

Singh goes on to criticise the collectivist policy for its antipathy to the democratic principles India had adopted for herself. These principles are predicated on the individual, and Singh argues the bureaucratic and opaque superstructure that collectivization brings works against the democratic flow. In the case of China and Russia, where forced collectivization was implemented, it was a diktat of ideology and not of efficiency. The form of agricultural organisation was selected to conform to Communist principles and led to greater concentration of power in the hands of the government and Party officials through its access to means of production and the power to coerce membership by offering benefits, either directly or indirectly, to collective farms as opposed to small, independent ones.

Not only that, the State obtains a monopoly on production and purchase, deciding unilaterally the rewards and punishments for the commune, as well the price at which the peasants would sell to government, over and above a government-fixed limit the commune was obliged to give. Whether in China or the USSR large collectives facilitated an exploitation of the rural interests for the benefit of the urban and the overall regression of the government towards a full dictatorship. Singh's analysis is once again prescient, and foretells the close relations between collectivization and authoritarian control in the hands of the government that was to rear its ugly head in these nations.

Because the ambitious projects of industrialization dependant on the surplus produced by large-scale mechanized collectivized agriculture never took off on account of reduced productivity, the expansion of industry was exploitative of the rural peasantry whose living standards could be rationed by the government. For the sake of the individualism and democracy that Singh so cherished in an Indian citizen, and even more so in a self-cultivating peasant on his own land, these ramifications were abhorrent and he declared collectivization a failure.

The last chapter of the first half, titled "Impracticability of Large Scale Farming" makes a summary of the arguments cited above, and although

Singh leaves it to the readers' discretion if the government's policy meets all its challenges as defined, he does not leave his opinion secret. Psychologically and culturally for the Indian peasant, collectivization implies the uprooting of a whole way of life, which is bound to be met with resistance on the peasantry's part. It will reduce his productivity, and his willingness to care for collective land, animals and manure. A quick survey of the outcome of collectivization on output reveals that the policies did not meet desired results, and in large cases were carried out under orders from dictatorial regimes, or by aid of the USSR, whose assistance came at its price in policy. Wherever circumstances made allowances for it, the peasant sought to abandon the communes; perpetual coercion, therefore, had been required for their sustenance all along, even in the parent countries of USSR and China. Singh finishes with contemporary findings about the *Ejido* and *Kolkhoz* having proved failures in their respective countries and pronounces joint farming inadequate to India's needs.

### **An Alternate Vision**

The latter and larger portion of the book geared towards solutions sets for itself the same yardsticks by which it evaluates joint farming. It identifies land as the limiting factor in capital production that precedes mechanization and identifies surplus labour as a result of population as the means to generate that capital in India. Cheap labor could be dedicated to getting more land under cultivation and using the existing land to the fullest by intensive farming methods. This would generate capital which would, in turn, lead to better technologies to follow for both land and labour, slowly weaning the population away from agriculture to manufacturing and services, while population control would ensure that the increase in productivity is not drowned out by the increase in numbers to feed and sustain. Singh boils the essentials of the solutions down to "reclamation and redistribution of land, emigration to foreign countries, development of non-agricultural resources, intensive utilisation of our land resources and population control."<sup>20</sup> The chapters following each handle these aspects one after the other in an interconnected manner.

---

<sup>20</sup> Singh, Charan (1964), *India's Poverty and its Solution*, Asia Publishing House, p. 176.

Reclamation of land and emigration turn out to be of little help on examination, as India already uses most of its arable land for cultivation, and the prospects of life as an emigrant for an Indian made Singh believe that the Indian immigrant would not find himself welcome in many parts of the world, certainly not in large numbers. He advocates land redistribution wherever possible but does not see much improvement in productivity resulting from it, as the land to be distributed in practical terms would not turn out to be a lot once all the government and state regulations are taken into account. Nevertheless, he proposes measures to organize land-redistribution for better results and lists out some of the possible dangers of the redistribution policy.

Singh's solution focuses simultaneously on the intensive utilization of land and developing non-agricultural livelihoods. Singh reiterates his comment that his strategy is not to promote agriculture-heavy interventions at the cost of the secondary and tertiary forms of employment and insists that the path to economic development goes inevitably through a decrease in the percentage of the population engaged in agriculture and other primary sector employment opportunities in favor of an increase in the Manufacture, Commerce and Services sector. Economically developed countries without exception demonstrate this distribution in their economic blueprints, and Singh regards this as a law:

“Land and mineral resources per head of the population being equal, and the quality of these resources and climatic conditions being similar, that country or region is comparatively more prosperous than others where more men are employed in non-agricultural activities than in agricultural”.<sup>21</sup>

Unlike agriculture, manufacture is a mechanical process, where for a fixed input a fixed outcome can be expected more or less in a fixed amount of time. It is also more flexible to changes in environment and markets, which agriculture – being an organic process – cannot guarantee. Agriculture is dependent on the crop-cycle, soil-conditions and the various levels of care taken of the soil and the produce. Power and machinery aren't available to increase production indefinitely to the agriculturist, putting a ceiling on his productivity in a given time

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 192.



or piece of land. He also works fewer hours than his counterpart in the manufacturing and services sector owing to the nature of his employment. Lastly, agriculture suffers from a lack of demand for its product and a superfluity of workers using suboptimal land for cultivation in the absence of other employment opportunities, especially in post colonialist economies, even more so in India.

Singh warns against more of the workforce engaging in agriculture in India, which had been on the rise since 1881.<sup>22</sup> He traces the beginning of the decline in colonial Britain's policies, which privileged Britain's markets and economy at the expense of once-flourishing Indian handicrafts and industry connected closely to agriculture. Thus, colonization turned India from an agriculture and village industries economy to a largely agricultural colony. He warns against the continuation of the trend even after Independence from Britain and posits diversification of labour as a prerequisite for economic growth.

Nehru's top-down plan of economic development favors industrialization as the means of boosting this diversification. It involved large-scale capital investments by the State into producing the infrastructure for heavy industry and machinery, while Singh's approach, influenced by Gandhi, argues for a 'bottom-up approach' where, in his own words, on "small-scale decentralised industry geared in with agriculture should predominate. The latter would also lay great emphasis on handicrafts and cottage or village industries."<sup>23</sup>

Singh adds 100 additional pages in this edition on why capital intensive industrialisation is not suitable for India, why agriculture is the means for economic progress and how to achieve this. Referring to Nehru's speech to the All India Congress Committee in September 1969, Singh says "The Prime Minister's argument about the relation or sequence between employment and production is naive, indeed. It assumes that, while handicrafts or small enterprises may provide comparatively more employment, they produce little or very little compared with large enterprises. It is this assumption which is responsible for an undue emphasis on heavy or capital-intensive industries in our country." He quotes Gandhi again and again in vivid juxtaposition to Nehru, as here "Perhaps, it would be a correct representation of Gandhiji's position

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 204.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 209.

to say that he approved establishment of heavy or capital-intensive industries for – and only for – purposes which could not be carried out on small scale, or for production of things which could not be manufactured by hand labour, that is, on the scale of handicrafts, or cottage industries. “But heavy industries,” he emphasized, “will occupy the least part of the vast national activity which will be carried on mainly in villages”.<sup>24</sup>

The two visions for growth are as sharply distinguished in approach as they are from the quarters they come from. Singh's and Gandhi's India lived in villages, while Nehru's and the government's effort was informed by the vast chasm between urban and rural interests and approaches. Apologists for industrialization gave the example of developed countries' economies, their scales of production and their standards of living as self-evident proofs of the impact of mechanization on production and population control. Industrialism was deemed to usher in new employment opportunities away from just agriculture, and the large amount of Indian population was seen in and of itself as an asset in the form of a virtually inexhaustible workforce and internal market for the production and consumption of the fruits of industrialization. Singh was a soothsayer, for we know today that large scale manufacturing has destroyed jobs in India in the past three decades. In addition, increased mechanisation in production as well as the implementation of robotics and other technological advances has put even these fewer jobs at risk into the future.

Industrial thinking posits that migration to urban centers and a readjustment of the psychological and cultural conditions of the rural agricultural Indian would automatically lead to smaller families, higher education and population control, engendered by life in the city. Higher rates of taxation for the rich, coupled with the per capita increase in real income that comes from employment in non-agricultural sectors, would prove a source of equitable distribution of wealth, and the ultimate flourishing of democracy. Singh lists the above commonly cited reasons by the messiahs of industrialism, before he takes on a closer look at the fault lines surrounding each of the reasons.

Singh's biggest target is the assumption that India's large population, in and of itself, would prove a boon to industrialization as the Keynesian

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 210.

postulate “labour itself is capital”<sup>25</sup> dictates. Singh disagreed with this assumption and thought a vast unemployed population per unit land, with little ways to generate capital on its own, could never deliver the results on which Keynes’ predictions were made. For the industrialised economies, labour and demand were scarce, whereas availability of capital and supply were much less of a problem. India had an acute shortage of both capital and purchasing power per capita, and the increasing population would only make it worse if not checked.

Similarly, India could not aspire to emulate the developed countries’ model, as its conditions of capital formation were abysmal, and therefore the vast investments made on heavy industry and machinery would come at a dear cost to the country’s capital and foreign exchange, both of which would be tied up long term in the projects. It had no colonies to exploit to sustain industrialization’s hunger for capital and would need to produce all that it needed from a surplus on its agricultural output based on better yields from existing land and labour. Furthermore, insofar as industrialization would not be able to absorb all the surplus hands from agriculture at a fast-enough rate, the migration to cities envisioned in population control and socio-psychological readjustment thereof would also likely not occur.

Therefore, the conditions that led to industrialisation in the West could never be emulated in India, and industrialism could not be preferred to bottom-up schemes that took into account India’s realities. For any solution to work, it would have to incorporate these specifics: it would involve high labor-to-capital ratios, low investments on capital-intensive industries, (with the exception of the absolutely essential ones like that of steel, iron, electrification, railways etc.), and overall, as a target, optimization of output (and employment) per unit capital over output per head. From this point of requirement, small industries outperformed the ones based on heavy machinery, and cruder forms of technology than the “capitalist.”

Singh argues this goal assures proportionate rewards to a wider net of people for whom this form would generate employment, as opposed to the few for whom employment in the capital-intensive sectors indeed led to better wages, but whose number forever struggled to catch up with

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 223.

the rising rate of population. Singh's summary is succinct: "In a way, unemployment and consequent misery of millions of persons is the price that the country pays for profits of a few at the top."<sup>26</sup>

### India Bottom Up

Singh champions an economy based on an ecosystem of small scale, decentralised and cottage industries which would employ enhanced machinery on a smaller scale than massive mechanized farms or heavy industries, but Singh divorces this fact from the myth that bigger machinery automatically meant more output over all factors of concern. His arguments point repeatedly to Japan, where intensive farming on small farms was implemented along with capital investments on the improvement of farming methods and technology, which had provided innovation opportunities for machinery that was designed for small-scale enterprises. Singh points to the reversal in trend of ballooning machinery and factory sizes already underway in his time, and keeps a forward-looking approach to the decentralizing prospects of electricity, railways, better seeds etc. In fact, some of the most far-reaching predictions of the growing use of automation anticipate problems of today, long after Singh's time, whereas some of his hopes such as those from nuclear energy are far too optimistic.

Along with advancements in technology, Singh argues next for measures to increase the agricultural workforces' productivity, both by handing him better technology and by initiating changes in his training and attitude. This part of the work is the largest addition Singh makes to the text of his earlier 1959 work, and it serves to explain why the new work is titled *India's poverty and its solution*. Singh articulates in detail the changes in the attitudes and innovations with respect to agriculture imperative for economic growth, explains agriculture's primacy over industrialism as the number one priority for a densely populated agricultural sub-continent, and finally details precise ways for increasing agricultural production in keeping with the conditions and endowments prevalent in the Indian countryside.

He begins by cautioning against "the idea that economic development is primarily a matter of investment or introduction of new machines

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 255.

and production processes.”<sup>27</sup> Development of the quality of the human factor is equally important as the vigor, intelligence and character of a country’s workforce can either sail or sink its endowments of capital and other natural resources. Singh points towards the rehabilitation of Japan and Germany after World War I as an example of the same and worries about the innovative propensity and capabilities alike of the Indian population on account of their literacy, health, social organization and religious attitudes. The government, too, by its lopsided preference for heavy industry and its composition based largely on urban, foreign-educated men (mostly), had not helped matters either by failing to spend enough on education and health of the average citizen, as well as failing to inspire a change in the attitudes of the peasantry by their personal lives and conduct like Mahatma Gandhi had done.

As a result, the peasant was caught in a vicious cycle: he is unable to produce more on account of ill health, and because he doesn’t receive enough nutrition his health does not improve. Similarly, because only agricultural surplus can lead to capital formation in an agricultural economy the peasant needs to produce more, but in order to produce more he needs to invest capital towards improved technology and tools which lead to better yields. Thus, while production remains at subsistence level the peasant is wont to spare any of his produce for capital production, and hence his propensity to innovate, as well as the tendency for small industry to grow around the use and processing of surplus produce, is negligible.

Added to these is the illiteracy of the average peasant, which prevents him from innovating on his own, and makes it harder for the government to introduce new methods and technologies. Opportunities for technical education, in agriculture especially, were few and far between, while wherever higher education was available it served to engender an attitude geared towards the thinking of the West and a revulsion towards taking to the soil. As a result the educated men and women of the also contributed little towards agricultural innovation, while their enchantment with the West led to an aspiration to replicate their standards, visible in the wages of industrial workers or treatment of prisoners in a country that can ill afford to follow those standards.

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 312.

Singh points to the attitudes of the peasantry itself, which considered the material world as something to be shunned instead of mastered owing to the religious attitudes prevalent in India for millennia. Absent this attitude, as in North America before colonization, there can be plenty of resources and yet no propensity for innovation and development, despite all efforts at the governmental level which assume that the country is interested in alleviating its conditions of poverty and contribute towards national development. In fact, Singh contends that the caste system so thoroughly divides the Indian society into self-serving strata that it precludes any development of a national feeling or propensity for cooperation so critical to increasing agricultural productivity. He asks for concerted effort to change the attitudes of the peasantry towards hard work and cooperation, while urging the government to think of health and education as investments in themselves at par, or better, than capital-intensive industries.

Singh calls clearly for the demolition of caste in Indian society, naming it a “cultural inheritance that is out of date” and “the caste system, leading directly to the fragmentation of Indian society is a great hindrance to common economic endeavour” and “thus, represents a most thorough-going attempt known to human history to introduce absolute inequality as the guiding principle in social relationships.”<sup>28</sup>

He then advances to explain how agricultural production as a priority would lead to economic development. He argues that only a rise in real income per capita can work as a driver of progress of a country with abysmal rates of capital formation like India, and since such a rise can only occur through a priority given to agriculture. Agriculture not only provides the basic necessities of food for the country, but also furnishes raw material for consumer industries such as textiles, jute, tobacco, oilseeds etc. While Singh concedes that it benefits from the consumer goods (shoes, clothes, books etc.) and capital goods (iron tools, diesel pumps, fertilizers etc.) industries respectively, along with the growing demands of an urban industrialized population which provide a market for agricultural products, in the final analysis, agriculture can subsist without the fruits of industrialization as it had before the advent of machinery. By contrast, industry must necessarily

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 328.

depend upon agriculture to feed its workers and provide raw materials for its products.

Furthermore, in India where agriculture was by far the largest source of income and employment, only an increase in surplus agricultural output could put money in the pockets of the masses, leading to the creation of an internal market for the products of industrialization. Surplus agricultural produce could be exported to gain crucial foreign exchange instead of spending it as India did on importing food grains. It contributed to capital formation for innovation and further growth in indigenous agricultural industries, and a decrease in vast unemployment and underemployment as a consequence. This growth, in turn, would increase output per unit land and unit labour, leading to the freeing of labour employed in agriculture to take up occupation in non-agricultural sectors, leading to a stop in the subdivision of land holdings to the point that they became uneconomical for agriculture.

Singh points, once again, to intensive farming on small farms with the help of innovations in technique and better utilization of natural endowments as opposed to tractors and artificial fertilizers. He advocates masonry wells, tanks and contour *bundhies* in the place of large, capital-intensive irrigation projects which tie in capital and precious foreign exchange, while providing delayed returns. Such delays lead to rise in prices in the short run, while the peasantry which is to use the resource cannot do much to accelerate its creation. By contrast, mason wells and *bundhies* can be made by the farmers themselves, are cost-effective and finish in a short span of time.

Lastly, Singh proposes measures to enhance productivity of the land itself by proper soil conservation and utilization. He critiques the assumption that farm machinery equaled 'advanced technology' compared to the bullock cart in terms of yield and its effect on the topsoil. He is against use of artificial fertilizers which have an adverse effect on soil fertility and crop resistance to diseases. Instead he suggests material available in the peasant ecosystem itself, including cow dung, which serves as excellent manure and is readily available to farmers.

The final section of the book discusses the rise of India's already large population, which, if left unchecked, would undo all the efforts of increasing wealth by providing a proportionate number of mouths to

feed. It leads to rise in unemployment and inflation, and an overcrowding in the agricultural sector and villages of the country beyond the ability of the land to sustain human life. He explains “underdevelopment” and “overpopulation” as relative concepts, each dependent on resource utilization per capita, and argues against apologists who insisted that increase in population could be sustained by proportional increase in technology and yield, as well as those holding the prejudice that Indians had higher rates of population increase than Western countries. He advocates State measures to incentivize smaller families via propaganda and policy. Singh’s usual methods derive from his Gandhian training of self-discipline, but Singh does not shy away from discussing other solutions of population control that the State should incentivize. He proposes postponement of the average marriage age by five years and includes for good measure the procedure of vasectomy being much easier for men should take the lead in voluntary methods of family control. He advocates sensitization of the country on the impact of population growth and the need for birth control, until such time as the industrialization project can be achieved, which would bring about a change in attitude that leads to urban nuclear families – an automatic, though roundabout, way of birth control.

## Conclusion

Separated from its preceding edition *Joint Farming X-rayed* by five years, *India's Poverty and its Solution* indicates Charan Singh’s increased confidence in his analysis of the problems and solutions of India’s progress since 1947. We see clearly the larger canvas to which Singh’s mind had moved by 1964. He saw the mistakes made by Nehru in 1945 by rejecting Gandhi’s understanding of India as a rural nation, and felt it was yet possible to correct course. The name and enhanced content of this edition puts its purpose front and centre at a time when India was rapidly acquiring the reputation of a beggar in the international community on account of its growing food scarcity and dependence on foreign aid. What this edition retains is its commitments to intellectual rigor, objectivity, and an immense scope and ambition so rare in a work by any politician, especially one who swims so vigorously against the tide of common thought.

The book retains an emphasis on maximal land utilization as the sine



qua non for progress. It is by this principle that he organises his critique, from which a picture of his proposed solution grows. Much of Singh's thought is structured in this organic manner, one factor connecting to the other, and ultimately grounded in ground reality, like an ecosystem. This lends the book's arguments a cohesive quality as it transitions from a discussion of the problems to one of solutions and provides it an unusual intellectual honesty. Singh presents a dispassionate analysis of a vast amount of empirical data from myriad disciplines and societies across different continents, geographies, and stages of economic development. The additions he makes provide a view to problem-solving for rural areas as well as industry that can only be the product of a mind well-versed in extraordinary detail with the village way of life, their ethos and their factor endowments.

When Charan Singh delivered his speech in opposition to the Nagpur Resolution, former President of India Giani Zail Singh<sup>29</sup> had remarked upon the formidable nature of Singh's arguments, bolstered by facts, saying he could see no way for the case to be refuted given the evidence.<sup>30</sup> In this edition, Charan Singh adds to his blunt opposition to this Resolution when he states 'While it betrays a confusion of thought there are several aspects that are sinister in the implications' and goes on to point out specific inconsistencies in the text and specifically quotes Nehru's 'confused' thought at some length. It is remarkable how firmly he yet stands by his principles, with direct and measurable cost to his standing in the Congress party and thus the advancement of his political career. Much of history's march since the publication of this work has borne out Zail Singh's observation and Charan Singh's analysis of the impact of collectivization on democracy and agricultural output.

---

<sup>29</sup> Giani Zail Singh (1916–1994) was the seventh President of India from 1982 to 1987. A lifelong Congressman, he had held several ministerial posts in the Union Cabinet including that of Home Minister. He wrote in *Kitni Khoobiaan Thi Is Insaan Mein*, Asli Bharat. December 1990, p. 20. CS Papers NMML. "I got an opportunity to hear Chaudhary Saheb's inspiring speech at the Nagpur session. ... Chaudhary Saheb vigorously opposed the Collective Farming proposal brought by Panditji. I was spell bound by Chaudhary Saheb's hour-long fluent speech. Panditji listened carefully to Chaudhary Saheb's powerful speech, and even smiled. In the pandal, there was all round clapping when Panditji moved the resolution, but after Chaudhary Saheb's speech it seemed as if the tables had been turned. Panditji replied to Chaudhary Saheb, and though not agreeing with Panditji, we had to support him because such was the force of his personality then. I know for sure that had I been in Panditji's place I would not have been able to argue the case put forth by Chaudhary Saheb."

<sup>30</sup> Lohit, Harsh S. (2018), *Charan Singh: A Brief Life History*, Charan Singh Archives, p. 24.

Collective farming is today nowhere to be seen and when viewed from the prism of this work it does not come as a surprise.

In a short year from the printing of this book, the great Nehru would be gone, and three years on Singh would desert the political party to which he had given all of his life and energy. His decisive intellectual break in 1959 led gradually to his political break in 1967.

Singh's analysis anticipates, in part, the horrors of which the world was to become aware after news finally broke about the price Mao's China had paid for 'The Great Leap Forward', or Stalinist Russia for her own agricultural needs and outputs as a result of forced collectivization with the incentive to accelerate industrialization. It presents a fair amount of evidence available to his contemporaries before the news from China or Russia became common knowledge, shedding unique light on the impact of Marxist ideology and the personality of India's pre-eminent leader Nehru on national policy at the cost of empirical data. As for the issues it addresses, this text makes common cause with the agrarian crisis that today worries the citizenry on burning issues of unemployment, urban-bias in government, the impact of chemical fertilizers on soil fertility<sup>31</sup> and deforestation on soil-erosion.

For all the analysis available to us today, the solutions Singh proposed have been relegated to the junkyard of policy history. Nehru's conviction about industrialization as the only way forward for the economy sidelined the incipient Gandhian project of which Charan Singh was a lifelong defender. Not only that, a prototype economy on Gandhian principles doesn't exist anywhere on the globe today and unlike joint farming it has never been duly tested. Singh's decentralised, individualistic model for the economy borrows from Gandhi and derives much of the intellectual force of its critique of Industrialism and Marxism from this perspective which puts a premium on individual effort above all else. Here is a merger of Singh's peasant upbringing and the all-pervading influence of Gandhi's worldview, one that vowed to remake India on principles that are closer to her home in the village and her office in the fields.

Some criticism of fellow Gandhians, such as Vinoba Bhawe and

---

<sup>31</sup> Charan Singh is the only Indian politician of stature I know of who had read all of Albert Howard's *Agricultural Testament* (written in 1943) and who has quoted it at length to buttress his own views on the necessity of chemical-free soil and agriculture. Howard is the acknowledged 'father' of Western organic farming.

his *Bhoodan* movement, indicate despite Gandhi's deep and abiding influence on Charan Singh's thinking on economic and social issues, his modifications were guided by personal experience and empiricism. Gandhian thought has often been criticised for its supposedly utopian and protectionist nature, including of course its aversion to technology that eliminates human labor. How these ideas would have worked out if implemented after Independence will never be known, though it is certainly worth speculation.

Singh's book makes a compelling case for a path to India's development on his alternate model. It asks much of the rich and the poor, the urban and the rural in order to walk the Gandhian path. It provides an alternative which works against the lopsidedness that the modern version of 'development' as progress brings, with its cities impoverishing the villages over the long term. More importantly, it speaks earnestly and scholarly on behalf of the interests it represents: the village and its population that bears the brunt of this lopsidedness, and whose poverty of credible representatives amongst the circles of influence makes this an important work as a unique alternative picture of India.



# India's Economic Policy

## The Gandhian Blueprint<sup>1</sup>

BY CHARAN SINGH

### Background

Charan Singh wrote this book in 1978 when he was Chairman of the Janata Party's<sup>2</sup> Economic Policy Committee to present his thoughts on radically changing the course of the Indian economy away from the top-down capital-intensive industrialization pursued since 1947 under various Congress<sup>3</sup> governments. Singh proposes a redirection towards a bottom-up Gandhian blueprint based on peasant agriculture and 'cottage' industries with decentralised production. Singh shares his analysis of an entrenched urban bias in India's governance since Independence, the neglect of the rural in favor of the urban and industrial, and the consequent misunderstanding and mismanagement of agriculture. He presents precise policy prescriptions which offer hard choices for policy makers.

The task of building a new nation and economy after the devastation wrought by centuries of colonial exploitation, along with the acute crises of capital formation and technological backwardness, was the herculean task facing leaders of newly independent post-colonial nations. Latin America, for example, saw neo-colonialism (Black Skins, White Masks) quickly fill the space colonialism had vacated, and dictatorships propped

---

<sup>1</sup> Published 1978 by Vikas Publishing House, Delhi. 131 pages. *India's Economic Policy* lays out a clear, alternate model for India's development. The Janata Party was the first non-Congress political party elected to power in Delhi, 76 year-old Charan Singh was Union Home Minister as well as the Chairman of Janata Party's Cabinet Committee on Economic Policy in 1978. Charan Singh put together a common socio-economic vision to try and bind together the disparate political coalition that was the Janata Party.

<sup>2</sup> Bipin Chandra et al, *India Since Independence*, Penguin, 2000. p. 458.

<sup>3</sup> The Indian National Congress, once the broad-based umbrella political party of India. Formed in 1885, the Indian National Congress dominated the Indian movement for independence from Great Britain which it gained in 1947 under the guidance of Mohandas Gandhi. It subsequently formed most of India's governments from the time of independence till 1991, and then from 2004-14. It had a strong presence in state governments till 1967, when it lost elections and vote share in a number of States. At the time of this writing, the Congress political reality and future is at its nadir. Betraying the complete control of India's policy by industrialising, metropolitan elites its political opponent the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) follows exactly the same urban-oriented policies.

by foreign capital emerged as the new exploitative order. India, amongst the largest of these economies, had chosen for herself a democratic path upon getting rid of the British, and her vision for economic progress was bound to be more complex.

Jawaharlal Nehru's<sup>4</sup> plan of top-down centralised planning by the State and the model of industrialization won over the bottom-up, rural and handcrafted vision shown to us by Mohandas Gandhi.<sup>5</sup> Nehru established a broad consensus on the nature and path of development to be followed, a strategy based on self-reliance in manufacturing, preventing the domination of imperialist and foreign capital, growth with equity, and land reforms. This vision of public-sector based industrialisation was implemented with vigor till his passing in 1964 and carried forward by his daughter Indira Gandhi.<sup>6</sup>

Gandhi's vision of India saw its society, culture and economy based on self-sufficient villages and hand-driven cottage industries, focused on alleviating unemployment of the masses dependent on agriculture as their primary occupation. He wanted to build India from the bottom up, without much involvement of the state, although he never articulated a precise policy framework. Nehru, by contrast, was influenced by the marvels of Western industry, especially heavy industry, and famously believed these industries to be the 'temples of modern India'. The Congress, which ruled India for three decades since Independence in 1947, followed the Nehruvian approach despite an earlier conviction that the poverty and indebtedness of the peasantry was the most important

---

<sup>4</sup> Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964) was India's best-known and amongst the most charismatic leaders of the movement to gain Independence from the colonial British state, next only to Mohandas Gandhi. He was the first and longest serving (1947–1964) Prime Minister of India, and a towering figure in Indian politics before and after Independence.

<sup>5</sup> Singh often cited Gandhi and Nehru's fundamental differences, made crystal clear in these letters exchanged in October 1945. Gandhi to Nehru ([http://www.mkgandhi.org/Selected Letters/Selected Letters1/ letter13.htm](http://www.mkgandhi.org/Selected%20Letters/Selected%20Letters1/letter13.htm)), and Nehru's reply to Gandhi (<http://www.gandhiashramsevagaram.org/selected-letters-of-mahatma/gandhi-letter-from-jawaharlal-nehru.php>) Singh saw this critical fork in the road as fundamental to the 'industrialised' trajectory of India under Nehru after 1947. Singh pointed out Nehru came to accept this error in 1963 in speeches in the Indian Parliament, but it was simply too late as he passed away a year after, his spirit broken by the China War.

<sup>6</sup> Indira Gandhi (1917–1984), daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, was a prominent politician and stateswoman in Independent India and became the central figure of the Indian National Congress from 1967. She served as Prime Minister (1966–1977) and again from 1980 till her assassination in October 1984, making her the second longest-serving Indian Prime Minister after her father.

and urgent problem of the country on the heels of Independence. The focus of the first four Five Year Plans remained fixated disproportionately on heavy industries as the engines of India's economic progress. This strategy damaged India's commitment to equity, self-reliance and aversion to foreign capital, creating in effect two nations urban and rural, industrial and non-industrial with vastly different conditions of sustenance and hope.

Charan Singh was in opposition to the emphasis on heavy industry at the expense of agriculture his entire public life. His prescription, articulated in various books, pamphlets, newspaper articles as well as the laws he wrote into the statute books, had been a return to the Gandhian vision. Singh's predictions about the dangers of the capital-intensive model of industrialization went largely ignored. By the latter half of the 1960s, however, the fault lines of this approach had become self-evident, as the economy was in the grip of a massive crisis and India had acquired the reputation in international circles of a beggar and a basket case.

This was primarily a result of India's declining agricultural production, which made her dependent on imports of food grains, paid for by foreign capital and aid which came with strings attached. For example, at the behest of the World Bank and the US, India had to devalue its currency in 1966, while the balance of payments and food shortages were so acute that India had to abandon its Socialist Five-Year Plans for annual plans between 1966 and 1969. "It was at this most vulnerable time for the Indian economy, with high inflation, low foreign exchange balance, food stocks so low as to threaten famine in some areas and nearly half the imports being met from foreign aid that the US decided to suspend its aid in response to the Indo-Pak war (1965) and India's stand on Vietnam"<sup>7</sup>.

These developments brought into sharp relief that inadequate food production was at the heart of India's dependency on foreign nations as well as the biggest constraint on industrialization. Crises of unprecedented unemployment, high inflation and scarcity of food continued long after Indira Gandhi's 1971 election on the "*garibi hatao*" platform and its promises which "did little and accomplished less"<sup>8</sup>, so that the added burden of feeding 10 million Bangladeshi immigrants and back-to-back monsoon failures in 1972 and 1973 led

---

<sup>7</sup> Bipin Chandra et al, *India Since Independence*, Penguin, p. 458.

<sup>8</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garibi\\_Hatao](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garibi_Hatao)

to terrible droughts throughout the country, leading to an economic recession and widespread civil unrest. It was with this backdrop Indira Gandhi announced the infamous Emergency in June 1975 that severely curbed civil liberties of the citizenry, jailed thousands of political leaders, workers and civil society members, shackled the judiciary and emaciated the Constitution of India. Indira Gandhi's authoritarian hopes were dashed to the ground by the people in a snap Parliamentary election in 1977, which led to the electoral victory of the hastily put-together opposition coalition of the Janata Party as India's first non-Congress government of India.

Almost a decade after he left the Congress following a long period of disillusionment with the party's "widespread corruption, incorrect development policies and moral decay"<sup>9</sup>, Charan Singh's Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD) provided "the principal electoral base for the decimation of the Congress in North India"<sup>10</sup> in the 1977 Lok Sabha (parliamentary) elections. Singh was appointed the Union Home Minister in the Janata government, and was also tasked by the Cabinet to formulate the economic vision of the new government that he lays out in *India's Economic Policy: The Gandhian Blueprint*.

Charan Singh comes across as one of the few politically prominent decolonisers of the Indian mind.

### Misplaced Priorities

Before detailing his blueprint, Singh provides a succinct summary of the reasons he advocates a complete reversal of the economic policies the country had followed since Independence under Nehru and subsequently Indira Gandhi. He starts with an assertion of the primacy of agriculture – by Singh's economic definition for "the utilization or exploitation of land" – over industry.

Agriculture not only provides the basic necessities of food, it also furnishes raw material for consumer industries such as textiles, jute, tobacco, oilseeds etc. Singh agrees that it benefits from consumer goods (shoes, clothes, books etc.) and capital goods industries (iron tools, diesel pumps, fertilizers etc.), along with the growing demands of an

<sup>9</sup> Lohit, Harsh S. (2018), *Charan Singh: A Brief Life History*, Charan Singh Archives, p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.12.



urban industrialized population which provide a market for agricultural products. However, in the final analysis, agriculture can subsist without the fruits of industrialization as it had before the advent of machinery. By contrast, industry must necessarily depend upon agriculture to feed its workers and provide raw materials for its products.

Furthermore, in India where agriculture was by far the largest source of employment<sup>11</sup> and one of the biggest sources of income, then only an increase in surplus agricultural output could put money into the pockets of the masses, leading to the creation of an internal market for the products of industrialization. Surplus agricultural produce could be exported to gain crucial foreign exchange instead of spending it as India did on importing food grains. It contributed to capital formation for innovation and further growth in indigenous agricultural industries, and a decrease in unemployment and underemployment as a consequence. This growth, in turn, would increase output per unit land and unit labour, leading to the freeing of labour employed in agriculture to take up occupation in non-agricultural sectors, stopping the subdivision of land holdings to the point that they became uneconomical for farming.

Singh demonstrates that such a migration is essential to economic progress and reiterates that his intention is not to advocate the prioritization of agriculture to the *neglect* of industry as the two are interdependent – he questions the *kind* of industry appropriate for India. He boldly declares that it was in Nehru's emphasis on the prioritization of heavy industries, "the first strategy he adopted in trying to ape the USSR, that his mistake lay which ruined the economy"<sup>12</sup>. Effects of this policy had caused a shortage in agricultural production which forced India to import food as aid, most notably from the US. It had formed, in Singh's words, "the biggest constraint on further industrialization or development of non-agricultural resources"<sup>13</sup>, caused a rise in prices and a shrinking of the internal market, fomented unrest in the cities and vitiated the climate for investment.

Thus, Singh declares, for India to progress "there is no escape from agriculture"<sup>14</sup>, and puts forward a two-pronged plan: "first, increase in

---

<sup>11</sup> And remains so, with close to 50% of India's population engaged solely in agriculture in 2020 CE.

<sup>12</sup> Singh, Charan (1978), *India's Economic Policy*, Vikas Publishing House, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

agricultural productivity per acre and simultaneous reduction of the number of workers per acre; secondly, a transformation of our national psychology”<sup>15</sup>. Leaving the latter for analysis elsewhere, Singh moves on to address the former.

### **Agrarian Structure**

An increase in agricultural productivity means an increase in the efficiency of utilization of the three factors of production: land, labour and capital. In Indian conditions, where the land to population ratio was low and subject to little or no increase through either reclamation of land or exploitation of overseas colonial empires, circumstances dictated the maximisation of productivity per unit of land not of labour. In contrast, the productivity model in Western countries and in the USSR, where land was plentiful and labour the limiting factor, maximised per unit of land.

Thus, these economies made extensive use of machinery, and advocated farming on large farms with the help of this machinery. The USSR's policies, motivated by theories of “economies of scale” which argued that mechanized farming on large farms would automatically increase agricultural productivity as they had done in industry, adopted large cooperative farms as their agricultural strategy. India had done the same under the influence of Marxist ideology in vogue amongst the urban elite intelligentsia in the Fifties and Sixties. Singh, however, rejects machine-based farming, whether in large private farms or cooperative farms, and puts his weight behind an independent peasantry tilling small farms directly under their possession as the *sine qua non* of increasing agricultural productivity. He stands with the bullock cart and plough economy in farming.

He cites a broad range of reasons for his stance, beginning with fixing a yardstick for the evaluation of these policies: maximisation of production of wealth or eradication of poverty, provision of full employment, equitable distribution of wealth or avoidance of undue disparities in income, and promotion of the democratic way of life India had chosen for herself. These goals remain unchanged in all of Singh's writings throughout his public life. His objections, as well as his

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

solutions, evolve from the considerations of these four factors and he places evidence for small farm cultivation based on these criteria.

First, Singh demonstrates data gathered in favour of the higher yield on small farms as opposed to larger ones. Agriculture being an organic process, no amount of machinery or labour can increase productivity per acre beyond a point whereas large farms, whether tilled by hired labour or in cooperative farms, cannot invest the tillers with enough motivation to farm it to its full potential. Furthermore, the use of machinery took away from employment and worked to concentrate power in the hands of fewer men, whether in capitalist or socialist structures. Lastly, large farms worked against the grain of democracy as evidenced in the Communist nations of U.S.S.R. and China.

Singh advocates small, independent peasant proprietorships where each tiller is the owner of the land he tills in the national interest. The self-cultivating peasant is attached to the care of his land, and this along with his family's inputs of labor leads to maximization of yields. This provides the most employment and the independence of the peasant provides the bulwark for the development of democracy and equitable distribution of the fruits of increased production.

Programmes for land reform were framed across India, though the coalition of powerful interests lobbying against these measures in the Congress party had led to shoddy implementation in many states. Uttar Pradesh, where Singh had been the founding architect of Zamindari abolition, had set the right example. However, many states had allowed for the erstwhile landlords acquire large farms under the guise of personal cultivation and erstwhile tenants and subtenants were thrown off their lands in collaboration with minor government officials and the legal system. Singh observes that "there is no sphere where the gulf between official policy and performance has been as wide as in the case of land reforms"<sup>16</sup>, and cites this as the main reason for the rise of violent forms of Communism in many states of the country.

He approves of the suggestions of the World Bank for reforming the agrarian structure: "First, preparation of record of tenancies; second, fixation of cash rents as a multiple of land revenues; third, abolition of right of resumption by landlords for personal cultivation or permitting

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 11.

it only in exceptional cases; and fourth, regulation of surrenders by the tenants.” As for the size of an ideal farm, he advocates a balance between holdings too small to be economically viable and too large to be fully utilized because of lack of labour. After surveying data from various demographics, Singh advocates an upper limit of 27.5 acres and a floor of 2.5 acres, with variations accounting for regional variance in irrigation, quality of soil and climate.

Lastly, he stresses on the need for the consolidation of a peasant's scattered land holdings with a view to increasing the efficiency of their cultivation, as well as the extension of technical facilities such as irrigation, better seeds, fertilizers which work just as well on small farms as they do on large ones. The idea, Singh states, is to combine “the incentive of individual land use and private ownership of land with the advantages of a large farm”<sup>17</sup> and advocates the creation of service cooperatives in the fields of purchase, processing and sale while striving for the “creation and maintenance of independent existence of individually worked but linked or bound together by the principle of cooperation, rejecting both economic anarchy (prevalent in our country today) and collectivism (that has been ushered in the U.S.S.R. and China).”<sup>18</sup>

### **Labour, Capital, and Innovations**

The question of land being settled, Singh moves on to the remaining factors of production: labour and capital. As Indian agriculture was already a labour-surplus enterprise employing vastly more than it needed to, there was much underemployment and disguised unemployment already in it, so that an increase in labour was unlikely to increase production significantly. However, an increase in the utilization of this labour capacity, as well as an increase in capital investment (Singh lists farming equipment, better seeds, machinery and fertilizers as forms of capital) would indeed lead to more production. This would produce a surplus which would set in motion the development pattern outlined earlier. Further, innovations in agricultural technology and practice contributed greatly to increased production, besides land, labour and capital. Singh cites the Green Revolution as an example of the kind of

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 25.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 26.

technological improvement India needed to implement, and states “as a rule of thumb that the degree of economic development of India turns on the extent of improvement in agricultural practices we are able to effect and the amount of capital we are able to invest in land.”<sup>19</sup>

Despite this dire necessity, Singh laments that Indian agriculture had been “deliberately starved of capital”<sup>20</sup> since Independence, despite the government’s rhetoric of priority for agriculture and shares a wide and damning set of statistics including governmental sources in support of his charge. He demonstrates the disparity in funds for industry versus agriculture since Independence, including sectors such as power, education, medical relief, roads and transport, etc. which both sectors availed but where industry was vastly preferred over agriculture by both private and public sectors, so much so that private investment in agriculture decreased with each Five-Year plan since the Second in 1956.

### **Adequate Remuneration**

Singh turns his sights to urban bias in government and the impact it had on incentives to the peasantry which are responsible for maintaining production. He takes issue with the Agricultural Prices Commission’s basis of a ‘reasonable profit’ for the farmers when calculating farm prices for the same. It is not profit but ‘relative profit’ that the farmer is concerned with so if the relative profit is more in cash crops he will not grow food grains. This fact is institutionally missed by an urban-led government, Singh laments, even as he rubbishes the “fallacy of confusing cause with effect”<sup>21</sup> which leads to the commonly cited argument that a rise in farm prices would lead to an increase in inflation. Typical of Singh’s works though, and especially an economic blueprint, he proposes a solution to the farm prices’ conundrum which balances the interests of all parties concerned: the producer, the consumer, the trader, and the government.

Singh recommends the government not resort to import of food grains except in extreme conditions of scarcity, and that the whole country be treated as one food zone allowing for the free movement of

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 28.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 29.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 35.

food grain from one part of the country to another. Next, it calls for the selection of a “parity price”, arrived at by fixing the ratio of the price of sale versus that of production for a particular year (considered the base year). Once this price for key produce is fixed, he advocates that the government not intervene in food grain trade so long as the trading price stays between 85 and 115 percent of this “parity price”. If the price should fall below 85% the government would purchase the stock directly from farmers at 85%, while above 115% it would do the same from traders. Lastly, it calls for the setting up of *Vikas Kendras* where a farmer could promptly sell his produce at 85%, subject to withdrawing it at a later time upon payment of storage charges and the advance with interest.

Apart from this scheme, though, Singh argues against the fixation of a minimum support price except on select crops and short durations, even though he concedes that it appeals to the farmer community. The idea, he says, is borrowed from the West where only a very small proportion of the population is engaged in agriculture and can therefore be subsidized at a minimum price by the majority. In India that was far from the case and the cost of this subsidy would ultimately be financed by the State exchequer, which is largely the peasantry themselves. Besides, it would lead to a large staff needed to be paid, as well as the wastage in storage. As always, he remained opposed to the growth of government bureaucracy.

Singh is equally opposed to the state trading in food grains or state control over distribution of food as it invites the presence of the state in the economic life of its citizens, thus falling into the Communist trap which fixes the agricultural prices arbitrarily, and often to the advantage of urban interests. Besides, fixing of prices doesn't work historically and leads inevitably to the state taking over the production of food on the lines of the U.S.S.R. As for the dilemma of what to do with increased production without leading to a fall in prices for the cultivator, Singh advises five solutions: (a) export of agricultural products to other countries, (b) more consumption by our own countrymen, (c) a change in the cropping pattern, (d) industrial use of agricultural products within the country itself, and (e) a decrease in the number of agricultural workers. The last of these he considers as the goal of economic progress, as it frees up labour for non-agricultural sectors as is inevitably required for further economic progress and industrialization.

Despite the higher income opportunities in non-agricultural sectors, the farmer stays in his profession largely for lack of fluid capital and the unavailability of better jobs. With increased surplus production and the consequent price drop, fluid capital will develop for investing in cottage industry, leading to job creation and migration to non-agricultural sectors. However, he also cites that the farmer stays in his profession also for lack of knowledge about better prospects, and thus is likely to stay in his profession even if better opportunities arise.

Singh reiterates that, in order to achieve development, increased agricultural production must coexist with the requisite social and cultural attitudes. Therefore, he advocates that “the government and public workers will have to educate the farmers, through the various means and media at their disposal, that diversification of employment is in their own good and that, in the ultimate analysis, land is limited and cannot support an indefinite number of people whereas no such limitation applies to the non-agricultural sector.”<sup>22</sup>

**Urban bias:** Before moving on, Singh blames the village farmer’s lack of knowledge regarding his own betterment on the government’s systematic neglect of India’s villages and the lives of those who dwell in it. The per capita income of rural India, when compared to its urban counterpart, had been diminishing since Independence, and Singh illustrates its systematic genesis in the attitude of the government, reflected “in the discrimination it makes in provision of social amenities like health, housing, transport, power, and, above all, education available to the urban and rural areas — discrimination in investment in the human factor in the town and the village.”<sup>23</sup>

Vast gulfs existed in these sectors in the treatment of villages and cities, and Singh singles out education as it is a precondition of economic development, not an effect of it. Literacy rates in villages lagged considerably behind their urban counterparts, and the availability of quality education in the village was non-existent. As for other sectors of prime importance, Singh shares some telling statistics: only 13% of the students of a study collected in 12 colleges covering professional education in six disciplines (architecture, engineering, law, management, medicine, and social work) belonged to the rural areas even though most of India’s

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 42.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 45.

people lived in villages<sup>24</sup>. Similarly, “over the decade of 1962-72, the 20 per cent of India that is urban, contributed slightly more than half of all Cabinet Ministers at the Centre, while the contribution of agriculturists remained at around 17%”<sup>25</sup>. Similarly, lopsided figures existed for the civil services, where almost 80% of the cadre came from the urban salaried and middle class, while agricultural labourers were grossly under-represented.

Singh locates this situation at the heart of the lack of imagination in governmental policies of welfare, especially those for the rural sector, and the poor implementation of policies which are, in fact, right headed. He doesn't locate all the blame in wrongheaded best efforts, but notes that “the present bureaucracy is fast developing into a hereditary caste, and the doors of the higher echelons of government employment are virtually closed to the sons of those who are outside the charmed circle, particularly the villagers.”<sup>26</sup> A man's values are determined largely by his surroundings, whatever his intentions and education, and so without passing blame Singh concludes that urban values and leadership, epitomised by Nehru, had hitherto determined policies for a nation dwelling primarily with rural values.

### **Gandhi And Nehru**

Singh opens the next chapter by delineating two opposing options India had at the time of independence: Mahatma Gandhi's bottom-up vision, centered on cottage industries, decentralization and an economy of self-sufficient villages; and Nehru's top-down vision based on heavy-industries, large machinery, central planning, and industrialization on the model of the West.<sup>27</sup> Following the Mahatma's untimely assassination in 1948, his economic ideas, which Nehru thought were terribly wrong when he was alive, were completely sidelined in favour of Nehru's vision. Singh recounts the salient features of the Gandhian vision and compares them with the path taken.

Gandhi believed that in a country such as India with a vast population

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 48-49.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 50.

<sup>27</sup> Gandhi and Nehru had fundamental differences, crystal clear in these letters exchanged in October 1945. Gandhi to Nehru ([http://www.mkgandhi.org/Selected Letters/Selected Letters1/letter13.htm](http://www.mkgandhi.org/Selected%20Letters/Selected%20Letters1/letter13.htm)), and Nehru's reply to Gandhi (<http://www.gandhiashramsevagaram.org/selected-letters-of-mahatma/gandhi-letter-from-jawaharlal-nehru.php>). Also see footnote 5, p. 71.



and limited reserves of land and other resources in comparison, mechanized industry could not provide employment to the villagers which was at the root of their poverty. Therefore, he was a strong advocate of small, cottage industries which could be set up with little capital. He cited the *Charkha* as an emblem of cottage and handicraft industries and placed it at the heart of the Indian civilization. Mechanisation, by contrast, would take away employment, concentrate power in the hands of a few (as it had in the West) and usher in the evils of capitalism. He visualized heavy industries existing side by side with his model but restricted to manufacturing only what these cottage industries couldn't.

Gandhi was always wary of the growing stature of the State, and publicly stated his opinion against the Socialist pattern so in vogue amongst his contemporaries. Nehru, by contrast, was fully committed to the ill-defined 'socialistic pattern' as the future. This vision saw heavy industries as the 'temples of modern India' and believed that the primary thing about an integrated plan was production, not employment, as employment followed production. In order to usher in this socialist pattern, it was necessary to accelerate growth, particularly develop heavy and machine-making industries, expand the public sector, and build a large and growing cooperative sector. It was conceded that heavy industries require large amounts of capital and a long gestation period, but it was argued that without them India would continue importing essential consumer goods which would hamper capital formation. The Five-Year plans since the second one in 1956 were predicated on this primacy of the heavy industries as the engines driving economic progress towards self-sustenance, growth of medium and small-scale industries, and increase in employment opportunities.

As he argued in his earlier works, Singh reiterates that the conditions for capital-intensive industries were, and continued to be, non-existent in India. Capital formation being essentially the difference between income and expenditure constructively spent for a task, say heavy industries, it was extremely difficult to raise it in a poor country like India where consumption was at subsistence level and there was little surplus to save. The planning commission grossly underestimated the capital-to-output ratios (the amount of capital required to be invested for one extra rupee of output) since the second Five Year Plan, and even if they'd been right the rate of capital formation would've been

too slow to grow production faster than the rise of population levels in the same time. Singh writes:

“It is this hard irrefutable fact of low rate of saving arising out of the ratio between our huge population (with its potential growth), on the one hand, and natural resources, on the other, coupled with the quality of our human factor, that advocates of high capital-intensive enterprises or heavy industries have overlooked. This makes them wrong and those of low capital-intensive, decentralized industries, right.”<sup>28</sup>

Industrialization on the model India envisioned had been achieved only in countries which had grabbed colonies to compensate for their paucity of resources or possessed resources richly with respect to their populations. Perhaps if India started her industrialization a hundred years earlier there was a chance for her, but starting when she had, “we arrive at the irrefutable conclusion that capital in a measure required for a capital-intensive structure in India cannot be had, at least, rapidly through domestic savings, whether under a democratic or communist set-up.” This left only foreign capital as an option, and Nehru went for it in his pursuit of industrialisation, besides investing into it every bit of domestic savings at the cost of food, water, clothing, housing, education, and health.

### **Mixed-up Economy**

The economy which emerged in independent India, therefore, sought to combine democracy inherited from the West with the socialist pattern on the lines of Russia in a mixed economy where the private and public sector would coexist. This conception remained vague since the days of its inception. With time, as Nehru's conviction in socialism increased, so did the size and importance of the public sector as it came to own and dominate the most important sectors of the economy. Under the Marxist conception the state held power in order to end capitalist exploitation of workers who have no recourse against it, but Singh points out that Marx's predictions about the proletarianisation of industrial workers did not come true.

Furthermore, the hope that industries would be run better under the state was belied by the performance of government bureaucracy and

---

<sup>28</sup> Singh, Charan (1978), *India's Economic Policy*, Vikas Publishing House, p. 57.

public sector officials. This bureaucracy fell into the trap of human nature's response to power. Even workers' morale, which was supposed to be boosted with the prospect of a part in ownership, proved to be wishful thinking as they just passed from one set of bosses to another. What transpired was a growth in the size and power of the State, along with the inefficiency and corruption that large bureaucratic machineries inevitably bring, so that, "the value added per unit of fixed capital investment in the public sector factories is the lowest—one-sixth of that in the private sector factories."<sup>29</sup> Gandhi had criticised socialism on the grounds of the state turning into a leviathan, curbing individuality and regulating every detail of life. He advocated a decentralisation of power with a minimum of state ownership over a largely self-reliant democratic people managing their own affairs. Singh locates a fulfilment of the Gandhian warning in the ballooning of the state and advocates the Gandhian solution around small and local being beautiful.

### Foreign Debt

Nevertheless, Nehru's idea of finding capital for heavy industries, as well as Indira Gandhi's subsequent nationalization of private industries, had been carried out with the help of foreign capital, leading to a debt which by 1972 was highest in the world at over 20 percent of national income.<sup>30</sup> Besides capital, collaborations were seen as another source of capital, whereby the state would attract private investors interested in establishing plants and factories in India. This method would come with no question of paying back capital or foreign governmental strings, while providing employment and enriching technical knowledge thought to be so critical to development by Nehru and his government.

Private capital investments came with strings attached, and equity of foreign firms in their Indian collaborations were as high as 75% in 1975. Further, public sector undertakings went into collaborations with foreign companies even when the technology was available in India, no doubt through some sweetening for politicians along the way, while the import of new technology was capital-intensive and maximised output per unit labour in a labour surplus economy looking to foreign aid for

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, pp. 64-65.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 66.

capital. The result was a vicious circle leading to the requirement of more capital to sustain industries which served to increase unemployment and concentrated the wealth they created into fewer and fewer hands.

Singh cites the example of Japan which imported technology only when necessary, but not foreign equity capital and management. This created a climate conducive to local entrepreneurship and prevented foreign claws from sinking to the economy as had taken place in India and other developing nations.

### **Dual Economy**

The impact of foreign capital on India could be gauged from the fact that 20-25 companies amongst the largest in India were foreign in 1976, with 15-20% of the assets of the top 20 companies. However, the gains of big Indian firms had been even higher, despite the Congress government's lip service to their commitment to the equitable distribution of wealth, so that in the decade of Indira Gandhi's government the total assets of the top 20 companies increased by 120%.

This was achieved by big companies accruing special favours (familiar 'crony capitalism') such as easy processing of applications, early intimation about projects, lifting of bans on licensing for particular products, expeditious disposal and inadequate scrutiny. More effective, though, was the shutting out of rivals who did not possess the same size as the big fish using licensing red tape on private investments. As for the contributions made by these companies to the economy, Singh demonstrates that they appropriate a lion's share of institutional finance as at least 50% of their projects were financed by public sector institutions. Furthermore, these companies made no efforts to grow indigenous technologies despite their vast resources; instead their growth is dependent upon foreign technology and capital as foreign capital and indigenous capitalists make a symbiotic partnership for the appropriation of wealth. Thus, the industrial houses as a class came to back Indira Gandhi and her imposition of the Emergency as part of their vested interests. Singh points to the role big businesses played in German, American and Japanese history supporting authoritarian politics, and warns that India might be headed for the same if unchecked.

The overall result of capital intensive industries, though, Singh argues, is the creation of a dual economy characterised by vast

inequalities of wealth, rampant unemployment and underemployment and the emergence of monopoly houses with their ever-increasing capital stock and mounting profits in contrast to crores of semi-starved and ill-clad dwellers of hutments in the countryside and slums of the cities. Despite the existence of such a gap before Independence, it had widened in the quarter century since, and Singh contends that this was not by accident but a direct product of India's planning strategy since 1947.

In a dense agrarian economy with vast labour surplus, the adoption of capital-intensive techniques leads to greatly lopsided incomes for those with the skills required to run complex technologies such as managers and engineers, leaving the vast majority behind. Workers in these industries were able to negotiate ever-rising salaries owing to their small numbers and vast demand, along with government bureaucracy in charge of supervising these industries, such that a sweeper in the industrialised sectors was paid Rupees 400 per month while a university teacher made Rupees 650 per month. Thus, white collar and industrial workers formed "a privileged class in a society where hundreds of millions, more than half of the people in any case, eke out an existence below the poverty line."<sup>31</sup>

However, the biggest disaster of the strategy, Singh argues, was the neglect of rampant unemployment. Surplus capital was considered the ultimate driver of economic progress, so that capital-intensive industries which the government privately admitted would concentrate power in fewer hands were encouraged, as it was believed that the profit they accrued would necessarily be invested back into further development of indigenous medium and small public sector industry. For the government it was easier to collect taxes from these large companies, as it was to collect under-the-table kickbacks, and in the long run economic growth from these large corporations would generate employment as an inevitable byproduct. This hope of reinvestment of profits was completely misplaced.

Singh explains the origin of this strategy was not in rational planning but in ideological and psychological captivation of India's leaders with the glitz and glamour of the West which prevented them

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 81.

from seeing that conditions in India were vastly different, and therefore demanded equally different strategies. By the time Nehru came to realise his mistake in 1963 in speeches to the Indian Parliament it was already too late, both for him and the nation, and capital-intensive industries were producing so much surplus that they attracted more business despite ups and downs of the market, much to the detriment of small and cottage industries that produced the same products, hitting employment in the final analysis.

### **Alternate Blueprint**

Having shown the fault lines of the Nehruvian economic policy, Singh lays out his prescription for an alternative framework. He calls neglect of agriculture the “original sin” of India’s economic strategy, and coupled with big machine, names these as the top two sources of distress. Naturally, therefore, his solution entails redirecting resources to the rural and agricultural sectors, a shunning of foreign capital and technology in favour of a strategy based on India’s unique factor endowment aimed towards self-reliance.

Industrialization, wherever it had succeeded, had done so on the back of agricultural and labour-intensive industries as its “root and base”<sup>32</sup>. Trading in agricultural surplus forms the primary pre-requisite, in a strong internal market, for cottage and handicraft industries to develop. The rate of accumulating this surplus is what determines the rate and pattern of growth of the economy. In a labour-surplus and capital-starved economy like India, labour-intensive industries had to form the preliminary forms of industry. The surplus thus generated would come with employment which would raise the purchasing power of the masses. This, in turn, would lead to the creation of internal demand and generate innovations in techniques and new industries leading to further employment until such a point is reached in the indeterminate future when machines become less costly than the labour of an equivalent number of men.

Until this point is reached – and in 1977 Singh predicts it will be a long time – the industrial methods India had adopted could not be sustained; they had to form “the apex of an economic structure with agriculture

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 91.

and handicrafts or village industries as its base.”<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, labor intensive industries, worked with better techniques designed to enhance the capacity of an individual worker, would provide employment, prevent concentration of wealth in few hands, and foster democracy. They produce more per unit capital invested than capital-intensive techniques and can be set up by investing much less initial capital.

Singh rubbishes the “economies of scale” myth prevalent in many circles which deemed mechanization inevitable to increased production and cites cottage and handicraft industries as the only options capable of keeping up with population growth in the workforce. Machines increase output per unit labour upon the investment of capital; therefore, Singh advocates moving away from highly automatic, costly machines in favour of labour-intensive technology which maximises employment per unit capital invested, capital being the limiting factor in Indian conditions. He postulates:

“The one rule of thumb during this period should be to substitute, in the existing set-up, labour for capital, and wherever possible and, virtually, in no case to allow a capital-intensive project to come up in future where a labour-intensive alternative is available.”<sup>34</sup>

Intensive farming on small, independent holdings, along with its allied industries, would also provide ample new employment in the short run. Singh identifies agriculture, rural works (such as irrigation, soil conservation, afforestation) and rural cottage industries as three key areas of employment generation. Improvements such as the Green Revolution in these areas provided new employment, and Singh urges capital investment in the betterment of techniques as a precursor to further growth in employment much like in Japan.

To protect indigenous cottage and small industries, Singh prescribes protection by statute against mechanized large foreign or domestic industries. In his own words:

“No medium or large-scale enterprise shall be allowed to come into existence in future which will produce goods or services that cottage or small-scale enterprises can produce, and no small-scale industry shall be allowed to be established, which will produce goods or services that cottage enterprises can produce”.

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 93.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 102.

Additionally, he advocates regulating trade unions to keep labour cheap during this time, and a demarcation between small and cottage industries as well in the final analysis, so that the latter can be protected against the former. He encouraged construction of roads, buildings, railway and irrigation using manual labour to generate employment opportunities and provide a fillip to further industry development in their vicinity.

In conclusion, Singh argues for trusteeship on the Gandhian model under which “industrialists would work as trustees on behalf of the society”<sup>35</sup> and who “would be allowed to retain the stewardship of their possessions and to use their talent to increase the wealth, not for their own sake but for the sake of the nation, and, therefore, without exploitation”<sup>36</sup>. He finishes by stating the Janata Party’s belief in a

“.... course under which an overwhelming percentage of the people individually earn their own living, that is, avail of their own means of production and are not dependent on anyone else for their livelihood”<sup>37</sup>

## Conclusion

Evaluation of an economic policy can only be made post its implementation over a period of time. Unfortunately, the Janata Party government was an uneasy coalition, riddled with factional politics. It disintegrated in mid-1979, obviating such an estimate. During its brief reign, Singh himself was ousted from his post as Home Minister in 1978 by Prime Minister Morarji Desai due to factional politics. Though reinstated as Finance Minister in 1979, this took away Singh’s ability to drive economic policy from above<sup>38</sup>.

Things are further complicated by the fact that the Gandhian economic experiment has never been carried out faithfully over a significant amount of time in any country, so its policies can only be measured against its criticisms. Gandhi’s integrated vision of economy and morality intertwined has been rejected by all nations in favour of Western capitalist or communist alternatives. Singh’s policy was created

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 121.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

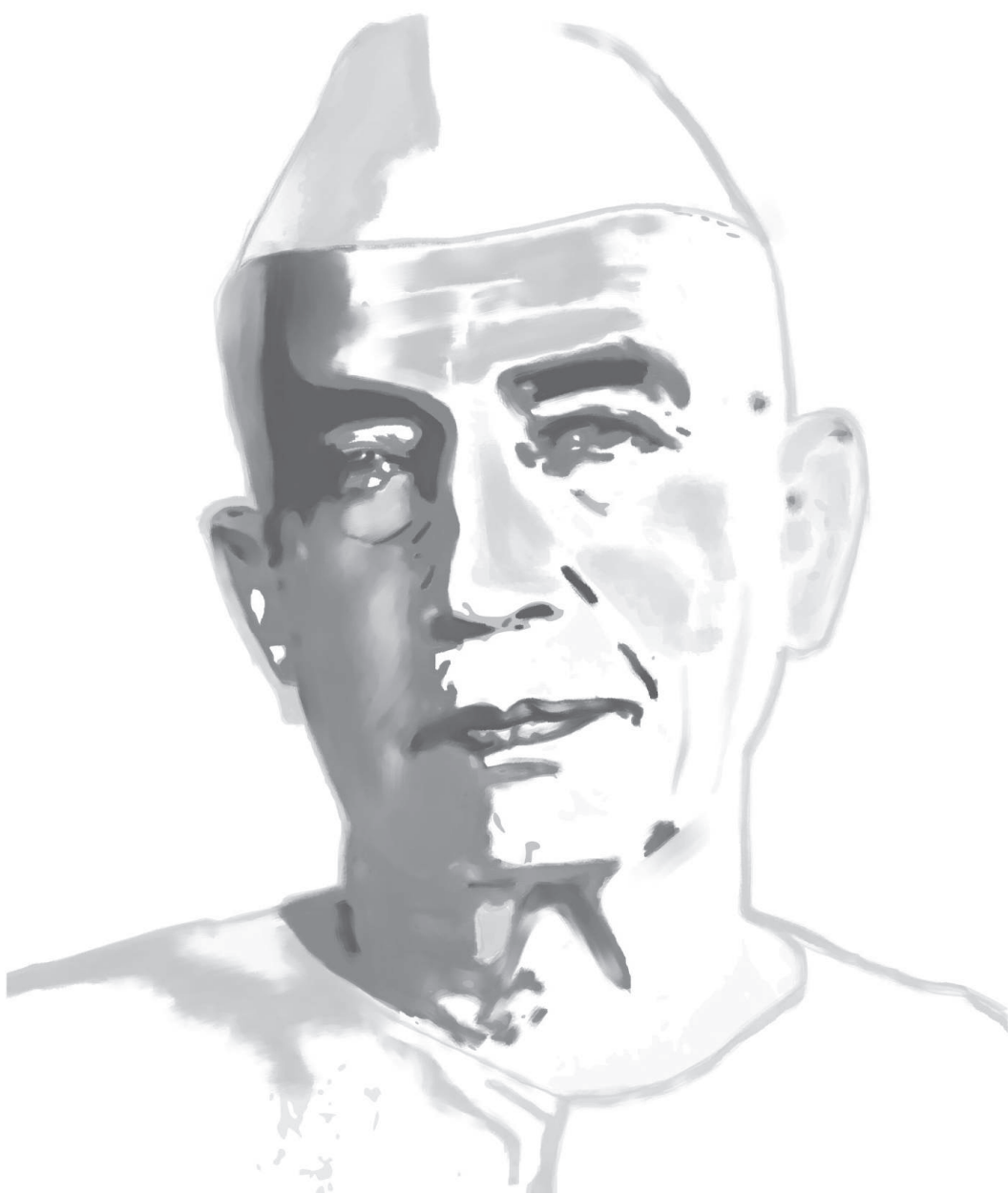
<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Lohit, Harsh S. (2018), *Charan Singh: A Brief Life History*, Charan Singh Archives. <https://charansingh.org/biography>



from the practical point of view of the village and agriculture and represented a substantive break with the global vision of the urban and industrial elite who continue to manage India.

Singh's emphasis on decentralization, social justice, unemployment and growing inequality of wealth have common cause with the multiple crises we see in contemporary India. Much can be learned from the inevitable connections of these misplaced policies with the deplorable conditions of the peasantry and the village that prevail in the country today.



# Economic Nightmare of India<sup>1</sup>

BY CHARAN SINGH

Charan Singh identifies a deeply entrenched urban and industrial bias in India's society and governance that underlays India's development trajectory since Independence in 1947 and the consequent misunderstanding and mismanagement of agriculture. Singh advocates a radical shift to a bottom-up village India Gandhian blueprint, based on 'cottage' industries and decentralised rural production, away from the top-down capital-intensive industrialization directed by the consuming metropolitan centers pursued under all post-Independence Congress<sup>2</sup> governments. The book defines precise policy steps and hard choices entailed in implementing this shift, as well the changes in the social fabric and the mentality of the citizenry which needs to accompany this transformation.

After two centuries of colonial devastation, independent India inherited the herculean task of visioning an economic journey in the midst of acute crises of capital formation, unemployment, illiteracy, technological backwardness, and an intellectual handicap of following the model of industrialization two centuries after it came by in the West. Other postcolonial economies, such as those in Latin America, which had started from similar situations went down authoritarian paths based largely on foreign capital and control, capitalist or communist, and neocolonialism occupied the space vacated by colonialism. India was

---

<sup>1</sup> Published 1981 by National Publishing House, Delhi. 576 pages. Charan Singh was 79 when *India's Economic Nightmare* was published, his heart health seriously impacted due to the stressful conditions of conflictual party politics and the recently completed elections to Parliament. He was deeply anguished that few politicians and even fewer of the ruling elites understood the problems of India as he saw them, and wrote this, his last substantive work, to bring together his learning's and prescriptions for one last time.

<sup>2</sup> The Indian National Congress was once the broad-based umbrella political party of India. Formed in 1885, the Indian National Congress dominated the Indian movement for independence from Great Britain which it gained in 1947 under the guidance of Mohandas Gandhi. It subsequently formed most of India's governments from the time of independence till 1991, and then from 2004-14. It had a strong presence in state governments till 1967, when it lost elections and vote share in a number of States. At the time of this writing, the Congress political reality and future is at its nadir. Betraying the complete control of India's policy by industrialising, metropolitan elites its political opponent the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) follows exactly the same urban policies.

unique in its choice of a democratic setup within which to achieve her transformation, which made the task that much more challenging.

Jawaharlal Nehru's<sup>3</sup> vision of top-down centralised planning by the State and the model of industrialization won over the antithetical vision of a bottom-up rural oriented vision outlined by Mohandas Gandhi<sup>4</sup>. Nehru established a broad consensus on public-sector based industrialisation which was implemented with vigor till his passing in 1964 and carried forward by his daughter Indira Gandhi<sup>5</sup>.

This plan involved development along a 'socialistic pattern' on the lines of the U.S.S.R. and China, but with a broad democratic framework giving a role to private enterprises in a 'mixed economy'. A precise framework was never articulated for this merger though the consensus supported import substitution of capital goods. Nehru ascribed a pivotal role to the public sector not only in control and distribution of key resources but production as well, so that it owned and administered the capital-intensive heavy industries which occupied the 'commanding heights' of the economy.

The Congress, which ruled India for three decades from Independence in 1947, followed the Nehruvian approach despite its earlier conviction that the appalling poverty and indebtedness of the peasantry was the most urgent problem facing India post-independence. Charan Singh opposed this prioritization of heavy industry over agriculture his long public life. Singh came to national notice when he publicly opposed Nehru's muddled proposal for collectivization of agriculture in January

---

<sup>3</sup> Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964) was India's best-known and amongst the most charismatic leaders of the movement to gain Independence from the colonial British state, next only to Mohandas Gandhi. He was the first and longest serving (1947–1964) Prime Minister of India, and a towering figure in Indian politics before and after Independence.

<sup>4</sup> Singh often cited Gandhi and Nehru's fundamental differences, made crystal clear in these letters exchanged in October 1945. Gandhi to Nehru ([http://www.mkgandhi.org/Selected Letters/Selected Letters1/ letter13.htm](http://www.mkgandhi.org/Selected%20Letters/Selected%20Letters1/letter13.htm)), and Nehru's reply to Gandhi (<http://www.gandhiashramsevagaram.org/selected-letters-of-mahatma/gandhi-letter-from-jawaharlal-nehru.php>) Singh saw this critical fork in the road as fundamental to the 'industrialised' trajectory of India under Nehru after 1947. Singh pointed out Nehru came to accept this error in 1963 in speeches in the Indian Parliament, but it was simply too late as he passed away a year after, his spirit broken by the China War.

<sup>5</sup> Indira Gandhi (1917–1984), daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, was a prominent politician and stateswoman in Independent India and became the central figure of the Indian National Congress from 1967. She served as Prime Minister (1966 – 1977) and again from 1980 till her assassination in October 1984, making her the second longest-serving Indian Prime Minister after her father.

1959 at the Nagpur All India Congress Committee.<sup>6</sup> The flaws of the Nehruvian approach were plain as the economy came into the grip of a crisis and acquired the reputation in international circles of a ‘beggar’ and a ‘basket case’.

Crises of unemployment, rampant inflation and scarcity of food continued long after Indira Gandhi’s 1971 election on the “*garibi hatao*” (removal of poverty) platform, and it became clear that low agricultural productivity was at the root of India’s dependence on foreign aid as well as economic recession. Severe droughts in 1972 and 1973 further accentuated this phenomenon. It was with this backdrop Indira Gandhi announced the infamous Emergency in June 1975 that severely curbed civil liberties of the citizenry, jailed thousands of political leaders, workers and civil society members, shackled the judiciary and emaciated the Constitution of India. Indira Gandhi’s authoritarian hopes were dashed to the ground by the people in a snap Parliamentary election in 1977, which led to the electoral victory of the hastily put-together opposition coalition of the Janata Party<sup>7</sup> as India’s first non-Congress government of India.

Singh, whose Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD) provided “the principal electoral base for the decimation of the Congress in North India”<sup>8</sup>, was appointed Home Minister in the Janata government, and wrote *India’s Economic Policy: A Gandhian Blueprint* as the Party’s manifesto for an

---

<sup>6</sup> This speech was to earn Charan Singh his first time out of the Congress State government since 1946 and was the harbinger of his political sidelining in the factionally fragmented State Congress party. Giani Zail Singh (1916–1994), the seventh President of India from 1982 to 1987 and a lifelong Congressman, he had held several ministerial posts in the Union Cabinet including that of Home Minister. He wrote in *Kitni Khoobiaan Thi Is Insaan Mein*, Asli Bharat. December 1990, p. 20. CS Papers NMML. “I got an opportunity to hear Chaudhary Saheb’s inspiring speech at the Nagpur session. ... Chaudhary Saheb vigorously opposed the Collective Farming proposal brought by Panditji. I was spell bound by Chaudhary Saheb’s hour-long fluent speech. Panditji listened carefully to Chaudhary Saheb’s powerful speech, and even smiled. In the pandal, there was all round clapping when Panditji moved the resolution, but after Chaudhary Saheb’s speech it seemed as if the tables had been turned. Panditji replied to Chaudhary Saheb, and though not agreeing with Panditji, we had to support him because such was the force of his personality then. I know for sure that had I been in Panditji’s place I would not have been able to argue the case put forth by Chaudhary Saheb.”

<sup>7</sup> The Janata Party was an amalgam of Indian political parties opposed to the Emergency that was imposed between 1975 and 1977 by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of the Indian National Congress. In the 1977 general election, the party defeated the Congress, and Janata leader Morarji Desai became the first non-Congress prime minister in independent modern India’s history.

<sup>8</sup> Lohit, Harsh S. (2018), *Charan Singh: A Brief Life History*, Charan Singh Archives, p. 10.

alternate economic model. However, Singh was ousted from his post by P.M. Morarji Desai for factional reasons, and the fractious Janata government did not last long enough to see through an implementation of Singh's manifesto. Written in 1981, *Economic Nightmare of India* is the last of Singh's policy works, penned in the twilight of his life, shortly after his brief stay as Prime Minister of India in 1979-80.

The title represents the only one of his many works which bears a tone of despondency, and as early as the preface the reason for this becomes clear when Singh quotes Mazzini<sup>9</sup>:

"I want to see before dying, another Italy, the ideal of my soul and life, starting up from her three hundred years' grave. This is only the phantom, the mockery of Italy that I see passing before my eyes."<sup>10</sup>

In the Indian context, these words reflect Singh's assessment, three decades from independence, of the 'tryst with destiny' Nehru had envisioned for post-colonial India, and the methods its leadership had chosen in order to affect this transformation. With the fall of the Janata Party government and the re-election of Indira Gandhi at the Centre, Singh's chance at implementing the Gandhian blueprint, one he had so assiduously advocated for decades and had come so close to implementing in 1978, had failed. This book represents a recipe for India's economic prosperity so future generations might usher in an India Singh believed he would not see.

His pessimism derives from his conviction that the 'nightmare' India found itself in was unlikely to end. He could not see conditions for either the ideology or the composition of India's urban elite leadership changing, thus preventing even a correct diagnosis of India's distress much less offering appropriate solutions. Singh had written extensively in his long public career in favour of the measures articulated in this work, to be mostly ignored by India's urban, high caste ruling elites. However, Singh was a man of conviction and this his last work is buttressed with an array of facts, statistics, history, research and personal experiences.

<sup>9</sup> Giuseppe Mazzini was an Italian politician, journalist, activist for the unification of Italy, and spearhead of the Italian revolutionary movement.

<sup>10</sup> Singh, Charan (1981), *Economic Nightmare of India*, National Publishing House, Preface p(v).

### State of the Nation

Singh begins with locating the source of the origin of India's economic distress in the systematic destruction of traditional industries since the establishment of British rule in India in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Real wages across labour-classes were "still only between one-third and one-half of what they were under Jehangir"<sup>11</sup> at the time of Independence. This was a result of a continuous drain of wealth and purchasing power from the masses' pockets, coupled with diminishing sources of employment and capital across industries. As a result, the pressure on land for production and agriculture for employment rose unsustainably, while colonial disinterest in technological innovation and capital investment in India precluded any advance in the exploitation of existing resources.

It was against a backdrop of mass illiteracy, stagnancy in agriculture, unemployment and technological backwardness that India adopted its economic plans. Given where she had started from, and the expansion of population since 1947, Singh agrees India made considerable progress. However, he presents a sobering set of figures regarding the dismal progress made despite four Five-Year Plans. For example, India ranked in the lowest decile of the so-called Third-World countries, with figures in per-capita income (~\$10 per capita per month) lesser than some neighboring countries and amongst the lowest in the world. Further, even the meagre income was inequitably distributed, so that islands of wealth in the cities coexisted with slums and abject poverty in the countryside. Wages for most jobs were low, certainly compared with the West but even with countries such as China which had commenced their economic development alongside India's.

Even in industry, where India had concentrated her efforts, growth had not kept up with the rising population, so that "after two decades of planned economic development approximately two-fifths of the rural people were living in stark poverty"<sup>12</sup>, barely receiving their basic calorie intakes, much less a healthy diet. As a result, despite spending two-thirds of the total private consumption expenditures on food, Indians were severely malnourished, possessing deficiencies

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 18.

in proteins, vitamins, calcium and many other essential nutrients, rendering them “defenseless against many health risks, particularly the so-called incipient diseases”<sup>13</sup> when lack of food wasn’t a direct cause of their death, particularly in women and infants. “The result for both individuals and the collective societies of the developing countries is a vicious circle of under-nourishment, inadequate work performance and growing poverty.”<sup>14</sup>

### **Agriculture First**

Having placed the necessity of food at the heart of India’s economic structure, Singh firmly asserts the “obvious”<sup>15</sup> primacy of agriculture over commerce and manufacture, which “of necessity occupy a secondary place.”<sup>16</sup> in the Yin and Yang of interdependence between industry and agriculture. The government’s, as well as the economist’s, classification of agriculture as “primary” concedes as much, but Singh asserts India’s gravest weakness since Independence had been a “failure to realise the role or importance of agriculture in the economic life of our people”<sup>17</sup>. Food formed the most basic of all prerequisites of life, in the absence of which no amount of industrial, scientific, defense or economic progress would capture the imagination of a starving citizenry, much less moral calls to liberty, equality or fraternity.

Undivided India had been a net exporter of food till 1915-20, but by 1946 when the Bengal famine brought food sufficiency to the forefront food grains were being imported, and continued to be imported every year since, even after Independence. Therefore, India imported food at huge costs which could’ve been utilized for industrialization instead when she was not dependent on international aid, compromising internal security and diplomatic capital in the process. Even so, India’s average food intake remained lower than that of prisoners, three decades from Independence, even when specific nutrients such as proteins from pulses were not taken into account. Furthermore, only countries with colonies or industries advanced enough to trade manufactured goods in return

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 22.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 25.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 30.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 30.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 31.



for food could sustain an agricultural policy based on imports, albeit bearing some risks. Having neither, Singh declares the impossibility of sustaining this strategy for India.

Even industrial development necessarily depends on the availability of raw materials from agriculture in a wide range of industries, especially those of dense agrarian economies like India's. Without an increase in agricultural productivity, enough marketable surplus besides that consumed immediately as food is not produced, leading to a rise in the prices of raw materials available for allied industries. This, in turn, makes the final product expensive, both unfit for consumption locally and uncompetitive relative to other countries in the export market. Such industries then employ fewer workers who have no other recourse for occupation other than agriculture, leading to more unemployment and underemployment besides increasing the land under food-crops, leaving little for cash crops which offer better returns both to the farmer and the country.

On the contrary, an increase in this surplus not only reduces prices of raw materials which invigorate industry, it puts money in the pockets of the hundreds of millions engaged solely in agriculture, boosting internal consumption. This consumption is key for the growth of an internal market to be served by industries, which, in turn, create employment and better incomes for those underutilized in the fields, so that the pressure on land can be reduced and capital for innovations in agricultural techniques and allied industries generated. Not only that, without purchasing power for goods and services produced even by industries not related to agriculture would face a failure of demand precluding any expansion in even those industries.

Movement of workers away from agriculture to industry and services is mandatory for economic progress in any country as productivity of labour increases from primary to secondary and tertiary sectors of employment. Yet an insecurity of food availability and low demand for industrial goods kept India's workforce tied to agriculture. Singh writes that this 'Gordian knot' could only be cut by increased agricultural produce as well as productivity, rendering workers on land superfluous while creating a market and capital for industries and services. Such migration would also prevent the formation of uneconomic holdings through subdivisions of holdings, further increasing productivity of agriculture.

Singh concludes:

“On the strength of all that has been said, and of the statistics given above, the irresistible conclusion is reached that in all the countries which are prosperous or economically advanced today, there has been, over a considerable time past, an increasing shift of workers from agricultural to non-agricultural employments. So that the percentage of agricultural workers has gradually declined and continues to decline.”<sup>18</sup>

### Static Economy

This movement of workers away from agriculture was the missing link in India's case, where despite the expansion of industries as the government's top priority since independence the percentage of population engaged in agricultural occupation had remained stagnant at 72% since 1911, as the employment generated in these sectors could not keep up with the growth in the labour force and population. Singh cautions that such a distribution didn't always prevail in India. In fact, in 1881 only 50% of the workforce was agricultural, while the proportion of industry was at 36%, compared to 14% two decades later in 1901.

He traces this decline partially to the advent of railways reducing transportation costs which tilted the terms of trade in favour of agriculture and against local handicraft industries. However, he assigns major blame to draconian colonial policies which treated India as nothing more than an agricultural colony and encouraged British industries at the cost of Indian ones. Indian exports were repressed in Britain by tariffs, while their imports to India were incentivised, so that India was reduced to an exporter of raw materials for British industries as well as an importer of British manufactured goods, wreaking havoc on Indian handicraft and cottage industries.

These policies were institutionalized by “political injustice”<sup>19</sup> in order to “keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he (the British) could not have contended on equal terms”<sup>20</sup>, with the ultimate effect that “*long before 1858, when the East India Company's rule ended, India had ceased to be a great manufacturing country. Agriculture had*

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 68.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 78.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

*virtually become the one remaining source of the nation's subsistence.*"<sup>21</sup> (Italics in original). Furthermore, even though the share of workers in agriculture remained stagnant between 1902-1952, their contribution to national income declined by almost 40%, implying that product per worker actually fell during this time.

By contrast, the share of services in the national product expanded rapidly in the same time, outpacing the primary (agricultural) and secondary (manufacturing) sectors of the economy. An increase in the service sector's share is beneficial in developed economies where basic requirements of food and manufactured goods are adequately met. In India, where this was not remotely the case, this lopsided sectoral growth signified that financial resources had been shifted "from productive to non-productive channels"<sup>22</sup>, which in turn led to an imbalance in prices of products between the tertiary and the other sectors.

### **Misplaced Priorities**

Given the conditions, the top priority for the government formed under Nehru after Independence should have been an increase in agricultural productivity. However, enamored of Socialist ideology, Nehru prioritised heavy industries instead, geared towards ushering a "socialistic pattern of society", and borrowed both the form and content of the Five-Year plans from the U.S.S.R. The strategy adopted was to pursue industrialization, especially heavy industry, while keeping the price of food down by entering into agreements of importing food-grains such as the PL-480 with the U.S.

Expenditure on agriculture was halved between the first and second Five-Year plans, while heavy industries "occupied the entire mental horizon of the Government of India"<sup>23</sup>, even though conditions in India, with chronic food-shortage, a fast-growing population, and deficient in capital resources, were unsuitable for sustaining such a model. Singh describes Nehru's model as having "put the cart in front of the horse"<sup>24</sup>, since India had not gone through the inevitable agricultural revolution preceding industrialization wherever it had been successful, nor did

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 79.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 81.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 84.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 87.

it take into account the conditions of internal demand for the fruits of industrialization.

By the 1960s, Nehru and the communist U.S.S.R. and China acknowledged that agriculture was at the heart of economic progress before industrialization could progress. Gandhi had, in fact, laid down this vision for India decades earlier. Without an increase in agricultural surplus to increase rural purchasing power and without releasing workers from agriculture, heavy industries exacerbated unemployment and caused inequitable distribution of capital and wealth. By contrast, states and districts advanced in agricultural production displayed enhanced economic prosperity.

Singh cites Nehru's emphasis on heavy industry, the "first strategy he adopted in trying to ape the U.S.S.R."<sup>25</sup> as the root of India's economic woes. Lastly, Singh reiterates that he advocates merely a prioritization of agriculture over industry, and not a focus on one to the neglect of the other. However, in the final analysis, agriculture could sustain without industry and not the other way around. Singh calls a shortfall in agricultural production the "greatest constraint on further industrialisation or development of non-agricultural resources"<sup>26</sup>, causing a rise in prices and a shrinking of the internal market, fomenting unrest in the cities and vitiating the climate for investment.

## Land System

An increase in productivity meant increasing the amount or efficiency of the three factors of production: land, labour and capital. In India, the land to population ratio was extremely low and subject to little increase by means of reclamation or acquisition of colonies like the West. These conditions dictated the maximisation of productivity per unit acre of land, instead of labor or capital, making India's ideal strategy fundamentally different from that of the Western countries and the U.S.S.R. where land was plentiful relative to labour. Hence these countries, capitalist and communist, adopted large scale use of machinery on mechanized agricultural farms, backed up by Marxist theories of "economies of scale" which stated that large farms operated

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 91.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 99.

by machinery would automatically lead to increase in productivity as it had done in manufacturing.

This theory was uncritically accepted in the U.S.S.R. as well, where land was collectivised in order to put mechanized farming into practice. Owing to Nehru and his government's fundamental removal from the material conditions of agricultural and rural India, coupled with his fascination with socialist doctrines, India had adopted the same strategy since the Second Five-Year plan even though Marx himself had come to agree that his conclusions regarding agriculture and the peasant's fortune had not materialised.

Agriculture, being a biological process, could not be standardised like manufacturing nor could its yields be made to expand indefinitely with increasing machinery. Crops took time and effort of their own to mature, and individual attention meant large farms, unlike factories, proved harder to manage. Not only that, machines led to a loss of employment for agricultural labourers, exacerbating an already acute employment crisis. Even in the U.S.S.R. the policy was adopted more as a measure of political control than economic productivity and served to advantage the urban proletariat at the expense of the peasantry.

Therefore, Singh rubbishes the idea of mechanized farming, whether in large farms or communes, and asserts his faith in an independent self-cultivating peasant proprietorship working land directly under their possession as the *sine qua non* of increasing agricultural productivity. Before furnishing his reasons, Singh sets the benchmark by which to compare the options available: maximisation of production of wealth or eradication of poverty, provision of full employment, equitable distribution of wealth or avoidance of undue disparities in income, and promotion of the democratic way of life. These benchmarks echo the commitments of the Indian constitution as well as Congress' pre-independence pledge and had remained unchanged throughout Singh's intellectual life.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Charan Singh's commitment to equality and freedom was within the framework of ancient Indian society and a rural way of life. Here is an extract from his 1947 note *Why 60% Government Services Should be Reserved for Sons of Cultivators*: "Not only the administration of the problems will be carried out in the desired spirit if the rural element in the public services is sufficiently strengthened, but further, the efficiency will be greatly increased; it will give them a tone, a virility of character as nothing else will. For, a farmer's son by reason of the surroundings in which he is brought up, possess strong nerves, and internal stability, robustness of spirit and

Based on these criteria, Singh demonstrates that small farms produce more per acre than any other arrangement, and provide more employment, using statistics across countries and economic ideologies, socialist and capitalist. An independent peasant cared for his land and crop much better than disincentivized workers at a private farm or commune, where they could neither employ their families' help nor benefit significantly from a larger yield. An independent peasantry eschewed the totalitarian tendencies borne out in U.S.S.R. and China, forming a bulwark for fostering democracy without damaging an existing way of life in agriculture which had existed in India for centuries.

Land reforms in India were envisaged to affect a redistribution of land from large farms to independent peasant proprietors, and Singh's comprehensive abolition of *Zamindari* in Uttar Pradesh formed an example of the same. Singh alleges that several Congress leaders sided with the big *zamindars* and resulted in a farcical implementation of the promised reforms in many states. Under the guise of personal cultivation erstwhile landlords managed to retain large tracts of land, while thousands of tenant labourers were ejected from the lands they'd been tilling for years, impacting small farmers and agricultural labourers forming the bottom of the hierarchy the worst.

Singh observes that "there is no sphere where the gulf between official policy and performance has been as wide as in the case of

---

capacity for administration which the son of a non-agriculturist or a town dweller has no opportunity to cultivate or develop. Agriculture is a pursuit wherein contest with the forces of nature brings home to the peasant a daily lesson in patience and perseverance, and breeds in him a hardihood and an endurance i.e. a character denied to the followers of other pursuits. An agriculturist's son, has, therefore the strengths and firmness to see decisions through which the non-agriculturist often lacks; his hands and heart will not tremble in a crisis as those of soft person from the city are likely to do. The peasants son can be safely relied upon not only to give orders, but carry them out honestly and in the right spirit, as he is simpler and less sophisticated and less amenable to calls of ease and comfort, than his fellow officer from the urban classes. He will not know how to deceive, or, at least deceive successfully, as his father (for influence of heredity cannot be denied altogether) and he himself in his childhood brought up in the company of those who do not tell lies, viz. land, plants and animals; whereas a non-agriculturist and his son in the work of earning their living have had almost exclusively to deal with fellow men who are in their attempt to over-reach one another, unfortunately, speak untruths and prevaricate. Further, a cultivator's son is, perhaps, less open to corruption than a city dweller because his standard of life is comparatively lower and conforms more nearly to the average and therefore he requires less money than one brought up in the luxurious surroundings of city life." He concludes "it is perhaps not clearly proven that the human social life stuff which is developed in a rural environment is a better quality than that which issues from the city, though there is some reason to suspect that this is true."

land reforms”<sup>28</sup> and cites this as the main reason for the rise of violent Communism in many states of the country. He also criticises policy errors in conceptualization and implementation of ceilings on and consolidation of land holdings, both key aspects of land reforms. True to his work’s nature, though, he provides a solution model fixing an upper limit of 27.5 acres with a floor at 2.5 acres, accounting for variations in land quality and climate. Such holdings would not be too big as to be fully utilized while not being so small as to be rendered uneconomic. He warns presciently against deforestation as a means for enhancing cultivable land owing to its negative externalities long term, which did more harm than good.

Lastly, Singh stresses the need for a consolidation of holdings to affect an increase in productivity<sup>29</sup>, besides making irrigation, seeding and allied activities easier regardless of the size of the farm. Further, he calls for service cooperatives in fields of purchase, processing and sale with a view to combine “the incentive of individual land use and private ownership of land with the advantages of a large farm”<sup>30</sup>, and leverage the golden mean between collectivism and private enterprise.

### **Capital Starvation of Agriculture**

Despite the redistribution of land into the hands of independent peasants, significant increase in agricultural yield would require an increase in technological innovation and capital expenditure towards intensive cultivation of each acre of land. Therefore, a need for investments in irrigation, seeds, fertilizers and agricultural tools geared towards maximising India’s vast unemployed labour was imperative. However, Singh argues that “while in theory India’s planners conceded that the creation of an efficient agricultural system was the indispensable pre-conditions of sustained, self-generating industrial progress, in practice they neglected the land.”<sup>31</sup>

Expenditure on agriculture was neglected between the first and

<sup>28</sup> Singh, Charan (1981), *Economic Nightmare of India*, National Publishing House, p. 126.

<sup>29</sup> Singh was instrumental in passing the UP Consolidation of Holdings Act into law in Uttar Pradesh in 1953 when he was Cabinet Minister for Revenue and Agriculture, and subsequently in implementing it.

<sup>30</sup> Singh, Charan (1981), *Economic Nightmare of India*, National Publishing House, p. 159.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 164.

fifth Five-Year plans, even when food shortages were acute, whereas outlays for industries exceeded those of agriculture by several times. Since Independence, it was only in 1978 during the Janata Party's government that Central funds for agriculture exceeded those for industry for the first time. Subsidies per head of agricultural workers versus those in industries were 9:34 between 1970-78, while income per capita of the same were 1:35 during the same period. Despite the nationalization of banks' for the supposed benefit to agriculture and the agriculturists necessity for priority capital on account of the slow returns and long gestation period in his trade, only 10% of advanced credit went to agriculture in 1978. Regional rural banks, constituted specifically for agriculturists' credit needs, didn't fare any better.

Singh argues this imbalance was the result of a deliberate policy adopted by the government since Independence and produces a vast array of statistics from the government's own records in support of his claims. Vast disparities existed in the treatment of agriculture and industry even in sectors such as transport, power, water, education, medical relief etc., with the ultimate result that capital expenditure in agriculture was disincentivized even for private players. Moreover, of the planned expenditure that did come to agriculture, much was siphoned away by corrupt bureaucrats and agricultural cooperative credit societies, amongst others, leaving the farmer in the clutches of moneylenders for his requirements of credit.

Singh rubbishes the argument made by proponents of industry that industries needed more capital since their capital to output ratio (capital required for one unit of output) was higher than agriculture, as was the rate of savings from industry higher compared to industry. In fact, savings from small farmers were comparable to that from industry, whereas capital put in agriculture not only produced more per unit, it did so quicker and provided more employment. Despite this, Singh concludes, "Many of the resources that have been allocated, or are being allocated, by state actions to city-dwellers for purposes other than industry would have also earned a higher return in rural areas."<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 182.



### Exploitation of the Farmer

Besides lack of capital, low food prices formed the second biggest factor standing against the farmer. Depressed prices of food grains meant that the farmer made little to no profit on his produce, and therefore saved next to nothing to be invested back into his field or tools. Moreover, small and cottage village industries, dependent on the surplus profit from produce circulating in the villages, failed to develop as capital was instead shifted to cities where the urban proletariat worker, the darling of Marxist ideologues, bought food cheaply and managed to save some surplus. Therefore, Singh puts bluntly: “small-scale farming, high productivity and low prices cannot co-exist.”<sup>33</sup> In a country where half the workforce comprises small-scale farmers whose only way out of poverty was increased productivity, low prices simply could not be sustained.

Yet the prevailing ideology amongst the country’s planners was that increased food prices would benefit capitalist farmers. He blames this on the lopsided ideological bias for the urban and industrial in the ethos of the policymakers, which in turn was a product of their urban, elite composition. This bias led to a flight of capital, whether foreign, private, public or human in the form of the best minds, from the villages to cities, so that in effect “the cities live upon the villages. The city people are brokers and commission agents of the big houses of Europe, America and Japan. The cities have cooperated with the latter in the bleeding process”<sup>34</sup>

Food prices were kept low through the public distribution system in the interest of the cities, often with the help of foreign imports at higher prices than paid to Indian farmers for the same. This led to a depression in the earnings of the domestic producers as a result of falling prices, while the imported food grains also mostly benefited cities, so that farmers were “being compelled to make a sacrifice even in the interest of those who are richer, far richer than themselves”<sup>35</sup>. Finally, the prices of non-farm products such as fertilizer and oil rose far quicker in comparison to farm products, so that the purchasing power of the same amount of crop fell continuously, crippling incentives for the peasantry responsible for maintaining production.

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 188.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 162.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 193.

Singh takes issue with the urban bias of the Agricultural Prices Commission's basis of a "reasonable profit" for the farmers when calculating farm prices for the same. It is not "profit but relative profit that the farmer is concerned with," like any businessman, so that if the relative profit is more in cash crops, he will not grow food grains. This fact is institutionally missed by an urban-led government, Singh laments, even as he rubbishes the "fallacy of confusing cause with effect"<sup>36</sup> which leads to the argument, commonly cited at the time, that a rise in farm prices would lead to an increase in inflation.

### **Deprivation of Village India**

This governmental bias in favour of keeping agricultural prices low led to a perversion of the "principle of parity"<sup>37</sup> between farm and non-farm prices, reducing the peasantry, in effect, to "indentured agriculture"<sup>38</sup> serving the factories which put the capitalist-proletariat class divide to shame. The per capita income of rural India, when compared to its urban counterparts, had been diminishing since Independence. Galling inequalities in wealth resulted from the flow of all capital to cities, complete with the negative multiplier effects on the rural economy, so that "the number of wealthy persons in the city of Delhi alone exceeds the number of wealthy ones in the rural sector throughout the country"<sup>39</sup>. Singh illustrates its systematic genesis in the attitude of the government, reflected in the discrimination it makes in provision of social amenities like health, housing, transport, power, and, above all, education available to the urban and rural areas – discrimination in investment in the "human factor" in the town and the village.

Singh singles out education as a precondition of economic development, not an effect of it. Literacy rates in villages lagged considerably behind their urban counterparts, and the availability of quality education in the village was non-existent. The typical successful graduate of prestigious technical institutions such as the IITs invariably hailed from the cities, while agricultural education in school and research in higher institutions were negligible. Dismal job prospects sent those

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 199.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 208.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 217.

few from the villages who did get quality education to cities, with the overall effect that “villagers themselves seem to share the vision of city life as the way of the future”<sup>40</sup>. This mindset had caused a decimation of rural cultural and social life, along with its traditional institutions and festivals, and Singh points out that an exact replica of this process was happening in all South-Eastern countries of Asia.

“There is, however, nothing wicked or conspiratorial about it all. It is the natural play of self-interest and power: to give an important example, industrialists, urban workers, government servants, the intelligentsia – even political leaders – all benefit if the farmer is squeezed to produce cheap food and raw materials for the cities. Nobody conspires or need conspire; all the powerful are satisfied. It is a different matter though that labour-intensive small farmer, howsoever efficient, stays poor and powerless: there is nobody who will weep for him. Cheap food is only one of the many ways in which the city (where most government is) screws the village (where most people are) in India as also in other poor countries. In tax incidence, in investment allocation, in the provision of incentives, in education and research: everywhere it is government by the city, from the city, for the city.”<sup>41</sup>

### Fork in the Road

Singh opens the second of three parts of the book by delineating the options India had at Independence. Both its tallest leader Mahatma Gandhi and his successor Nehru agreed on the principal objectives: the citizenry’s highest possible overall development, equal rights, opportunities and standards of living for all, whether urban or rural, and an end to man’s exploitation of man. However, both leaders laid out antithetical vision to achieve these goals.<sup>42</sup>

Gandhi believed India lived in her villages, and rural unemployment was the root cause of the poverty of the countryside. Given its vast

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 235.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 512.

<sup>42</sup> Singh often cited Gandhi and Nehru’s fundamental differences, made crystal clear in these letters exchanged in October 1945. Gandhi to Nehru ([http://www.mkgandhi.org/Selected Letters/Selected Letters1/ letter13.htm](http://www.mkgandhi.org/Selected%20Letters/Selected%20Letters1/letter13.htm)), and Nehru’s reply to Gandhi (<http://www.gandhiashramsevagram.org/selected-letters-of-mahatma/gandhi-letter-from-jawaharlal-nehru.php>) Singh saw this critical fork in the road as fundamental to the ‘industrialised’ trajectory of India under Nehru after 1947. Singh pointed out Nehru came to accept this error in 1963 in speeches in the Indian Parliament, but it was simply too late as he passed away a year after, his spirit broken by the China War.

population and limited reserves of land, capital and technology, he believed mechanization could not solve India's unemployment problem. It would usher in capitalistic evils like it had in the West, and cause power to accrue into fewer and fewer hands, invariably in the cities where large industries would be set up. Therefore, Gandhi advocated a bottom-up model, based on decentralized small and cottage industries which could be set up with little capital, augmented with appropriate technology that helped maximise productivity of labor while providing vastly more employment to a citizenry living in self-sufficient villages. He cited the Charkha as a symbol of this model and envisioned it at the heart of India's civilizational ethos. That is not to say he wanted to shun all machinery in critical industries such as steel and iron but wanted them restricted to manufacturing goods that small and cottage industries couldn't. Gandhi warned against the growing leviathan of the state in Socialist doctrine, and publicly declared his opposition to the same.

Nehru believed Gandhi's vision to be outdated even while the latter was alive and led the country on a path that clearly rejected his vision. Nehru's top down view believed heart and soul in the 'socialistic pattern', looked upon heavy industries as the 'temples of modern India', and deemed increasing production, not employment, as the cardinal driver of economic progress. Employment would follow production, whereas an absence of industrialization, especially heavy and machine-making industries, rendered newly formed developing countries militarily vulnerable. Therefore, Nehru's vision saw rapid economic progress with heavy industries at its centre, an expanded public sector and a growing cooperative sector of collectivised agricultural farms. Even though it was conceded heavy industries required significant capital, had long gestation periods and low capital-to-output ratios, socialist wisdom dictated that without them India would have to import consumer goods, hampering capital formation. Nehru's vision was followed even more since the Second Five-Year plan.

Singh asserts that conditions for capital-intensive growth in India were nonexistent in Nehru's day, and continued to be so since. Wherever this model had succeeded it had done so on the back of economic colonies of European countries, or vast natural resources relative to populations, like the U.S.A. and Australia. Not only did India not have these luxuries, it had started industrialization a century after these countries, and with vastly

different natural endowments, population, and quality of human factor.

Under these conditions where consumption for a vast majority was at subsistence levels, there was precious little surplus leftover as savings. Capital formation being essentially savings spent constructively for a given task, its rate of accumulation in India was extremely slow. The Five-Year plans grossly underestimated capital-output ratios since the Second Plan, and even if their model were correct the rate of production growth would have been slower than population growth. "It is this hard irrefutable fact of low rate of saving arising out of the ratio between our huge population (with its potential growth), on the one hand, and natural resources, on the other, coupled with the quality of our human factor, that advocates of high capital-intensive enterprises or heavy industries have overlooked"<sup>43</sup>, Singh writes.

This fact led to "the irrefutable conclusion that capital in a measure required for a capital-intensive structure in India cannot be had, at least, rapidly through domestic savings, whether under a democratic or communist set-up."<sup>44</sup>, which left only foreign capital as an option, and Nehru went for it in his pursuit of industrialisation, besides investing into it every bit of domestic savings at the cost of food, water, clothing, housing, education, and health.

"The strategy he adopted was to divert all the financial resources – a Leap Forward exercise in a way – in an effort to speed up industrialisation of the country and meanwhile to keep the food prices down by cheap imported wheat. Pt. Nehru's anxiety to build up an industrial base and achieve economic self-sufficiency made him accept without much examination a model of development which was calculated to defeat the social objectives he had in view. The roots of today's difficulties are to be found in that wrong choice. A country which is suffering from chronic food-shortage, has a fast-growing population, is deficient in capital resources, and is wedded to achieving minimum welfare of the people, needs a model of industrialisation quite different from that which served the western nations quite well, or from that adopted by Soviet Russia whose principal aim, in the early years after the Revolution, was to extract a rising agricultural surplus for feeding a growing industrial proletariat."<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 248.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p. 266.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 85-86.

### **Socialist Mixed-up economy**

Before detailing the economic conditions that grew in India as a result of Nehru's commitment to the 'socialist pattern', Singh outlines why socialism had such a massive ideological appeal in the national planners' minds. Committed as it was to equal opportunity for all and shunning the evils of capitalism, the doctrine held appeal for erstwhile colonies which had seen the excesses of capitalism closely. Lenin's rise to power in the U.S.S.R. in 1917 fueled this alternative, and in the absence of a precise definition of socialism offered even by Marx, the concept became associated with the general notion of fair distribution and equality that many a humanitarian soul cherished, and many a tyrant exploited to legitimize their tyranny.

Singh states Nehru was a well-wisher of humanity who swore by the socialist pattern since the 1930s but never really defined it, nor did his daughter Indira Gandhi. Therefore, India's planners since independence tried to combine the socialist doctrine's 'dictatorship of the proletariat' with democracy inherited from the West in a 'mixed' economy and rejected Gandhism without so much as an explanation. This mixed economy remained vague and as the slide to socialism progressed the State's might increased and it grabbed control of the critical sectors of the economy, besides the military and political realms.

This shift was envisaged in Marxist ideology as an imperative in order to end capitalist exploitation. It was hoped that ownership in their own hands would enhance morale and efficiency of the workforce, while better management would ensure that the increased surplus would be justly and efficiently distributed. As it happened, though, the hope that industries would be run better under the state was belied by the performance of government officials. The bureaucracy fell into the trap of human nature's response to power. Even workers' morale, which was supposed to be boosted with the prospect of a part in ownership, proved to be wishful thinking as they just "passed from one set of bosses to another"<sup>46</sup>

What transpired, instead, was a growth in the size and power of the State, along with the inefficiency and corruption that large bureaucratic machineries inevitably bring, so that the value added per unit of fixed

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p. 282.

capital investment in the public sector factories was the lowest and most public sector undertakings made staggering losses. Matters were made worse by favoritism by elected officials, so that the increased surplus which was the *raison d'être* of the nationalization of industries was defeated and further expenses of industrialization could only be borne with government debt. In attempting to combine both democratic and socialist doctrines, India had ended up with the worst elements of both, with a corrupt, ballooned, parasitic bureaucratic machinery to boot.

Gandhi had warned precisely against this development of the state into a leviathan, curbing individualism and regulating increasing aspects of life. He had warned that a citizenry compromising its independence would render “democracy” a semantic much like “socialism”, and India’s post-independence trajectory was a fulfilment of the Mahatma’s prophecy.

### Foreign loans and collaborations

Nevertheless, the socialist pattern’s hunger for capital was serviced by procuring foreign loans, making India a “topmost debtor country”<sup>47</sup> since Independence, forced to pay higher and higher amounts in debt-servicing and borrow both food and capital in aid, which came with its own strings attached. Debt had forced India to devalue its currency, and export essentials such as rice, coffee, sugar etc. despite dire shortages at home, besides heaping humiliation upon the nation and denting its capacity for self-improvement.

Singh describes aid as a form of “economic colonialism”<sup>48</sup>, designed to benefit the lender country and restrict sovereignty of developing countries and dictate their economic policies. Import of foreign technology disincentivized indigenous innovation, caused inflationary spirals, and vitiated the socio-economic climate. It was for these reasons that India had chosen *Swaraj* as its vision during its national struggle, and the wisdom of these policies had been made plain in the deterioration of countries like Venezuela and Argentina which remained dependent on foreign aid for long durations.

Collaborations with multinationals was undertaken to avoid the

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 306.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p. 312.

pitfalls of foreign institutional aid, expected without the strings of debt repayment or intrusion into national sovereignty, while providing capital investment, technology and employment crucial to industrialization. Thus, equity ownership as high as 75% – highest in the world – were allowed to foreign collaborators in Indian firms, often even when the product could already be manufactured indigenously, leading to similar draining of wealth from India that she had fought against British colonialism. Foreign companies chose sectors with high capital-to-profit ratios, and evaded taxes accrued on their earnings made in India, besides providing third-rate technologies at exorbitant prices to their Indian counterparts. This was achieved in no small part by collusion with corrupt government officials and politicians as well as India's big capitalists, which eventually led to foreign companies gaining a grip on the country's economic policies and government. Foreign technologies stifled Indian innovators, perpetuating the import of technology at enormous capital costs in a capital starved economy, so that the relationship between developing and developed countries resembled feudal lord-vassal dynamics. Singh argues here in favor of shunning foreign technology, not completely, but in sectors where indigenous versions existed.

### **Dire Consequences**

Consequences of the existing system, though, had birthed a climate where the 20-25 companies amongst the largest in India were foreign in 1976, with 15-20% of the assets of the top 20 companies. However, the gains of big Indian firms had been even higher, despite the Congress government's lip service to the equitable distribution of wealth. This was achieved by the big companies accruing special favours – good old crony capitalism. More effective, though, was the shutting out of rivals who did not possess the same size as the big fish using licensing red tape on private investments. Thus, a handful of big companies appropriated disproportionately large amounts of public finance, and, aided by symbiotic collaborations with foreign firms, made little effort to improve their own tech or expand research.

Singh warns against the concentration of wealth and power into a microscopic minority and reiterates how big businesses (and their owned newspapers) had enabled Indira Gandhi's imposition of the Emergency, and how large capitalists had aided German, Japanese and



American authoritarian policies. Already inequality had created a “dual economy”<sup>49</sup> with “small enclaves of prosperity in a hinterland of poverty, unemployment, and stagnation.”<sup>50</sup> where “on the one hand, tens of thousands wallow in luxury knowing not what to make of their windfalls or ill-gotten gains, on the other, tens of millions starve for want of a morsel of bread.”<sup>51</sup>

India inherited conditions of vast inequality upon Independence. Singh contends that the situation had gotten only worse thanks to the government’s policy of pursuing capital-intensive industries in a labour-surplus economy. Not only did it benefit big Indian firms, the bias for industry created a distortion in wage structures disproportionately favoring those able to run complex technologies. This microscopic minority was thus able to negotiate ever-rising salaries alongside the bureaucracy in charge of running these companies, so that a sweeper in the industrialised sectors was paid Rupees 400 per month while a university teacher made Rupees 650 per month.

The biggest disaster resulting from this strategy was rampant unemployment and underemployment despite jobs created in each Five-Year Plans, reducing more and more of India’s millions into agriculture for lack of better opportunities. Singh traces the origins of this unemployment and consequent dependence on agriculture to draconian colonial policies designed to decimate Indian handicraft and cottage industries. He adds what took the British a century to accomplish in this direction, government of India had managed to do in mere decades owing to its “almost mystic faith in the twin gods of technology and heavy industry.”<sup>52</sup> This faith relied on the surplus produced from rapid growth brought upon by industrialization to ‘trickle down’ and foster the development of small and medium industries, besides being a source of more productive employment than agriculture.

Due to this myopic strategic vision the industries set up couldn’t even provide employment to those joining the educated non-farm workforce, much less provide a substitute for those underemployed in agriculture who came to the cities in vast millions looking for a better life, only to

---

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 341.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p. 342.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p. 349.

live in slums in danger of disease, starvation and exploitation without any recourse. On the flip side, specialized labour like doctors and engineers could not be gainfully employed in a country starved of capital and infrastructure and India saw a flight of its most skilled workforce to foreign countries, representing a loss of millions of dollars of investment.

Matters were made worse by India's labour policy, imported from industrialized Western nations, which sought to imitate a "Welfare State before creating the means of welfare"<sup>53</sup>. Despite its primary focus on industrial development, India had articulated no labour policy of its own. Instead, it had enacted unsustainable laws of the kind colonial governments had enforced in India purposefully to stifle the growth of Indian industries, including wages and perks for industrial workers wildly out of sync with the nation's per capita income and wages in non-industrial sectors. Trade unions enjoyed immense political capital and dictated terms to a hamstrung labour ministry, nullifying India's largest advantage of cheap plentiful labor, so that "on the one hand, under this brand of socialism, incentives for voluntary hard work disappear; on the other, the workers cannot be coerced, as they are in the U.S.S.R. or China."<sup>54</sup>

### **The Gandhian Blueprint**

Singh believed these structural malaises in the economy had occurred due to the "original sin" of neglecting agriculture and fascination with big machinery. They could be fixed only by a reversal of the priorities hitherto followed, and a return to Gandhi. This would entail redirecting resources to the rural and agricultural sectors, a shunning of foreign capital and technology in favour of a strategy based on India's unique factor endowment with capital as its limiting factor, and a move towards self-reliance.

Industrialization, wherever it had succeeded, had done so on the back of agricultural surplus as its "root and base", on top of which small and medium industries grew, ultimately leading to the apex structures of heavy capital-intensive industry. Without this base India's top-down policy was bound to fail, as it didn't take into account the creation of an internal market which could only happen based on the trade of agricultural surplus.

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p. 379.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

The rate of accumulation of these surpluses dictated the pace and form any country's economic development would take. Therefore, labour-intensive industries focused on providing maximum employment had to form the preliminary stage for India, which would put money in the pockets of the masses which was critical to an internal market's formation. As surplus from these industries increased, it would be invested back into innovation and expansion in these industries until a point was reached where labour would cost more than an equivalent in machines to employ.

Until this point is reached – and Singh predicts it will be a very long time – workers could not be moved to capital-intensive industries no matter how critical this movement was to the economy. Augmented with better technology designed to build capacities of individual labourers, though, labor intensive industries would provide more employment, prevent concentration of wealth and foster democracy. They would produce more per unit of capital, and quicker, than India's existing model, besides requiring far less capital to set up and keeping up employment in tune with the rapidly rising population.

With the growth of an internal market and profitable employment in the villages, migration from villages to cities could be checked, leading to a reduction in the number of slums lacking basic sanitation and living standards and a rise in living standards in the village, fulfilling “aims both of social justice and increased GNP”<sup>55</sup>. Therefore, Singh argues for innovations in small-scale labor-intensive technology operated on electricity, which facilitated decentralisation of production, and by extension, its distribution. He postulates:

“The one rule of thumb during this period should be to substitute, in the existing set-up, labour for capital, and wherever possible and, virtually, in no case to allow a capital-intensive project to come up in future where a labour-intensive alternative is available.”<sup>56</sup>

Of course, Singh concedes that no such alternatives would exist for some industries such as iron and steel, and the State would still have to hold portfolios such as defense industries, railways, atomic energy, power which were capital-intensive and critical for national security. For the management of private sector enterprises, he suggests the Gandhian model

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p. 466.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p. 488.

of trusteeship. Industrialists would work as trustees on behalf of society and would be allowed to retain the stewardship of their possessions so long as they “use their talent to increase the wealth, not for their own sake but for the sake of the nation, and, therefore, without exploitation.”<sup>57</sup>

### India's Agricultural potential

As for Indian agriculture's ability to generate the surplus required to drive this economy Singh remains optimistic: India, being a tropical country, was blessed with plenty of sunshine for long parts of the year, besides being fed by perennial and monsoon rivers, possessing vast fertile plains, rich deposits of minerals, and plenty of labour to employ in the exploitation of these resources. Given the requisite capital investment and innovation in farming methods, India could significantly increase her agricultural production.

However, such a massive investment of funds in the rural sector could not be accomplished by pumping funds in the existing top-down system; it needed a complete reversal of the policy hitherto followed. Moreover, vested interests, propped on the status-quo, would oppose such a move tooth and nail, rendering the decision not merely economical but political as well. Thus, Singh cites radical changes in the power structure as the major economic obstacle, following which the actual materialization of funds for the rural sector would not be a problem.

He demonstrates the extravagance and disinterest of the public sector employee's lifestyle and perks, and cites several bureaucratic excesses which sapped the government's coffers, so that “*every unnecessary job created in the government sector has deprived at least ten people of jobs over a thirty-year period in the productive sectors of the economy.*”<sup>58</sup> (Italics in original). Shocking examples of wasteful expenditure and corrupt practices were rampant in the public sector, to the effect that the few in blue and white collar jobs, once the government ‘servant’, rose as a “privileged aristocracy”<sup>59</sup>, living at the cost of millions. Once these sources of leaking of capital were blocked, the funds for expenditure in the rural sector could be recovered.

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p. 477.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p. 414.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p. 428.

### Decentralized Industrialisation

Singh goes on to delineate some concrete measures by which the blueprint of decentralized industries could be leveraged for sustaining the Gandhian model, and cites rural works such as irrigation, afforestation and infrastructure as key areas of employment generation. He calls for investment in technology designed towards intensive farming of small, independent holdings tilled by peasant proprietors, so that machine would make men more productive instead of replacing them. Encouragement of allied industries developing from these practices should be provided by disincentivizing capital-intensive industries by means of fiscal as well as taxation hawkishness, while the favours accorded to heavy industry can be extended to their smaller counterparts.

Singh criticizes the underestimation of the unemployment problem and the lack of political will, including that of his own Janata Party government, regarding providing anything beyond lip service to the dire need for cottage industries. He calls for stricter demarcation, so that *“No medium or large-scale enterprise shall be allowed to come into existence in future which will produce goods or services that cottage or small-scale enterprises can produce”*<sup>60</sup> so that *“the internal market in such goods henceforward shall remain the exclusive preserve of small or cottage industry.”* (emphasis in original). Moreover, he calls for the products of large-scale industries to be exported, and asserts that if these twin measures are taken, there needn't be a conflict, as stated by many, between maximising production and employment.

Additionally, construction using manual labour not only provided massive employment opportunities, it also encouraged the growth of allied industries. Singh also advocates use of local materials for construction instead of their capital-intensive counterparts, which not only are cheaper but leverage centuries old indigenous construction and architecture techniques. Singh iterates that it would take a long time before this integrated model would produce non-agricultural employment on the scale India required, but it was the best model given India's factor endowments, population and time in history.

### Changes in Power

In order to affect this transformation in planning and policy, Singh states

---

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p. 492.

that a change in the existing power-structure towards one that understood the countryside and agriculture was imperative. The gaping holes in policies followed since Independence were a direct consequence of the urban, elite intelligentsia, bureaucracy and political class of the country epitomized by Nehru, who he feels was out of touch with the ethos of the vast majority of the country, especially the villages.

Singh locates this situation at the heart of the lack of imagination in governmental policies of welfare, especially those for the rural sector, and the poor implementation of policies which are right headed. He doesn't locate all the blame in wrongheaded best efforts, but notes that "the present bureaucracy is fast developing into a hereditary caste, and the doors of the higher echelons of government employment are virtually closed to the sons of those who are outside the charmed circle, particularly the villagers."<sup>61</sup> A man's values are determined largely by his surroundings, whatever his intentions and education, and Singh concludes that urban values and leadership had hitherto determined policies for a nation dwelling primarily with rural values. To support his stance, he produces some telling statistics: "over the decade of 1962-72, the 20 per cent of India that is urban, contributed slightly more than half of all Cabinet Ministers at the Centre, while the contribution of agriculturists remained at around 17%." Similarly, 80% of the civil services cadre came from the urban salaried and middle class, while agricultural labourers were grossly under-represented. Not much was different in academia.

## Epilogue

Singh discusses a change in the mental attitudes of the workforce which was also imperative to an increase in the efficiency and quantum of production. The peasantry considered the material world as something to be shunned instead of mastered owing to the religious attitudes prevalent in India for millennia. Absent this enterprising attitude, like in the case of North America before colonization, there can be plenty of resources and yet no propensity for innovation and self-improvement. In fact, the caste system so thoroughly divides the Indian society into self-serving strata that it precludes any development of a national feeling or propensity for cooperation so critical to increasing agricultural productivity.

Finally, Singh talks about the rise of population, which, if unchecked,

---

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 518.

would undo all the efforts of increasing wealth by providing a disproportionate number of mouths to feed. This rise led to increases in unemployment and inflation, and an overcrowding in the agricultural sector and villages beyond the ability of the land to sustain people. He explains “underdevelopment” and “overpopulation” as relative concepts, each dependent on resource utilization per capita, and argues against apologists who insisted that increase in population could be sustained by proportional increase in technology and yield, as well as those holding the prejudice that Indians had higher rates of population increase than Western countries.

Nevertheless, he advocates State measures to incentivize smaller families via propaganda and policy. Singh’s usual methods derive from his Gandhian training of self-discipline, but he does not shy away from discussing scientific solutions of population control. He proposes postponement of the average marriage age by five years, and for vasectomy to take the lead in voluntary methods of family control the State should incentivize. Sensitization of the country about the need for birth control is advocated until such time as the Industrialization project can be achieved, which would bring about a change in attitude that leads to urban nuclear families – an automatic, though roundabout, way of birth control.

## Conclusion

“In the concrete sense there are two main causes of our failure on the economic front: misallocation of financial outlays between industry and agriculture, and introduction, rather multiplication, of the big machine. So, there are two main remedies: revision of the allocation in favour of agriculture and discarding of the big machine to the extent possible. The former involves top emphasis on rural development, and the latter, a decision to switch over to self-reliance to the exclusion of foreign capital and foreign technology—to an economy that is dictated by our factor endowment.”<sup>62</sup>

Evaluation of an economic policy can only be made post its implementation over an appreciable period of time. The Janata government’s early and ignominious demise precluded any such evaluation of the blueprint outlined in these pages. In 1981, Singh was the leader of the single-largest opposition party in Parliament and would

---

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, p. 395.

not hold office to be able to influence government policy. Things are further complicated by the fact that the Gandhian economic experiment has never been carried out faithfully over a significant amount of time in any country so its policies can be measured only against its criticisms.

Western economic models, capitalist or communist which are but two sides of the same coin, have relegated all other models to the sidelines. Unlike Gandhian economics, these models consider morality and economics to be separate realms, and this hyper-rational treatment of economics and welfare was what Gandhi had criticised about the West's utilitarian ideas of progress since well before Independence. Western economics has junked the Mahatma's vision. Many criticised the Janata Party's policies as 'a recipe for low or non-economic development' and a failure to build an alternative economic framework to the one it sought to replace. This analysis, Singh maintained his whole life, wholly missed the revolutionary nature of a shift towards prioritizing agriculture, and the problems he diagnoses for Indian society, especially agriculture, remain as starkly visible today as when the book was written.

What is clear is the astounding collection of facts and analysis Singh brings to muster condensed into a single book, balancing various disciplines of theory and several years of administrative experience along with his own personal education, exceptional for a man of his age and class. Even more significant is the intellectual constituency of the rural, independent peasants that his works represent, a radical break with the urban and industrial interests that continue to run India since Independence. Not only does Singh's upbringing in a peasant family make him uniquely suited to make such a case, it marks a rare rural intellectual in Indian history arguing on behalf of this tragically underrepresented, and even more misunderstood, minority which forms the vast majority of the country to this day.

"There are two lessons to be drawn, viz., first, it is in rural areas that we can most effectively tackle the long-term problems of urban poverty as well as deal with the mass of misery which exists in the villages, but unseen by the urban elite and a government dominated by this elite. Second, fighting poverty is not just a question of production techniques and capital investment. It is a highly political topic. It involves matters relating to the existing wealth distribution and the present location of power within the country. What is needed is not a mere amendment but a complete reversal of the present overall policies."<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p. 408.





1952

# Land Reforms in U.P. and the Kulaks<sup>1</sup>

BY CHARAN SINGH

## Background

Singh provides his account of the Uttar Pradesh Zamindari Abolition and Land Reform Act 1950, alongside a number of other measures taken in favour of the small peasantry's interests in the face of severe resistance from his own party members, and at great personal political cost. Charan Singh was a member of the Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Committee headed by Chief Minister Govind Ballabh Pant (1945-47), and later the Revenue Minister of the state and the principal architect of the abolition of *Zamindari* (landlordism) in Uttar Pradesh. He argues against the charges being a *Kulak*, a pejorative term of Russian origin for large farmers and moneylenders.

Charan Singh's public life in the Indian National Congress began in the 1920s, when the entire nation was enthralled with Mohandas Gandhi. Singh himself was an unabashed worshipper of the great man's character, principles, morals and policies. The Congress was the single umbrella under which the struggle for Independence from colonial British power took shelter. Like millions like him, Singh gave his life and livelihood for the Congress and for the ideals of the *Swaraj* of Gandhi's dreams.

Singh separated from the Congress in 1967, some years after the party had split after vicious power struggles after the death of Nehru. The giants of the freedom struggle had left this earth, and politics writhed in the grasp of valueless leadership immersed in petty factionalism and personal gain. The Congress spawned political parties adhering to different ideologies ranging from the Swatantra Party on the right and the constantly fragmenting Socialist Parties on the left. There was the Hindu communal Jana Sangh and Communists of various shades on the extreme left beholden either to Russia or China and of course nursing hopes of a violent revolution.

---

<sup>1</sup> Published 1986 by Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi. 220 pages. Charan Singh suffered an incapacitating stroke in November 1985, at 83, and his health continued to deteriorate till his passing in May 1987. He had completed writing the contents of *Land Reforms in U.P. and the Kulaks* in the years leading to 1985 in response to long-standing accusations of being a supporter of large farmers, a criticism that always cut him to the quick.

Not many of these, other than some in the Swatantra and in the Socialists, had affinity with Singh's adherence to Gandhi's teachings. His position as the tallest agrarian leader in independent India pitted his perspective against that of his urban-oriented, high caste political rivals and formed an unbridgeable divide between him and most of the political class throughout his public life. He was separated from his supporters by his expansive world view that was above and beyond caste, and from his political opponents by his agrarian approach to politics. Singh was called a 'Kulak' by the Indian Left and is a marker of this ideological rift. Its origins lie in the October Revolution of 1918 in Russia. Paul Brass, Singh's renowned American biographer, describes it thus: "The label of Kulaks, for the Stalinist Communists, defines a category of persons including both the farmers and their supporters, who deserved to be killed, and were in fact exterminated in Russia under Stalin".<sup>2</sup> Although in Indian circles on the political left it did not carry precisely the same connotations, it still represented the Kulak as a sympathiser of rich peasants against the interests of the poor, and retained its pejorative connotations.

Further credence was lent to these allegations by Singh's origins in "the lower reaches of the rich peasant spectrum"<sup>3</sup>, and his birth in a dominant middle-caste between the upper-castes (synonymous with the rich) and the lower-castes (populated with the large mass of the destitute). Furthermore, the beneficiaries of his policies predominantly hailed from middle and small landed peasant families belonging to the middle and what are now called the 'Other Backward Castes'. These were easily conflated by the uninitiated urban journalists and academics and of course the politically ideological with 'rich' farmers. The budget Singh presented as the Finance Minister under the Janata Party government in 1979 was called the 'Kulak budget', while the Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD), the party he formed after his break from the Congress, was called 'a successful rich-farmer party'.<sup>4</sup> Book after book by academics from the 1970s discussed the rise of the peasant as

<sup>2</sup> Brass, Paul (2011), *An Indian Political Life: Charan Singh and Congress Politics, 1937 to 1961*, Sage Publishing House.

<sup>3</sup> Arnold, David & Robb, Peter (1995), *Institutions and Ideologies*, Routledge Publication, p. 267.

<sup>4</sup> Pai, Sudha (2011), The Chaudhary's theory of Land and Mobility, Outlook Magazine available @<https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/the-chaudharys-theory-of-land-and-mobility/278415>.

a class and Charan Singh as their representative, and his political track record in State elections in Uttar Pradesh in 1967 and 1971 indicated his growing clout across rural self-cultivating castes.<sup>5</sup>

Published in 1986, a year before Singh's death at 85, *Land Reforms in UP and the Kulaks* is the last of Singh's major works and was written in defense of his political legacy which had brought the uncomfortable rural question to the urban, high caste ruling elites. Over the course of the years, most of the benefits of the Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act, 1950 in Uttar Pradesh (which Singh later in life defined as the most important achievement of his public career) had accrued to middle and small tenant farmers, leaving out the Scheduled Castes at the bottom of the social pyramid. Singh considered much of this to be due to tampering with the Act's provisions or their halfhearted implementation by those in the Congress who held the helm after his term as Revenue Minister in the mid-1950s. Therefore, the book seeks to present an account of those his reforms did help, including the Scheduled Castes, and to demonstrate that the reforms in U.P. were the most far-reaching of their kind to be implemented in India, without resort to violence or class warfare of the revolutionary kind.

The title of the work, and the succinct preface, sets up the thesis of the book. It formulates an account of land reforms in U.P. involved in the abolition of *Zamindari* in the state, so that "the bar of history and the judgment of such members of the present generation as may be interested in knowing the truth" could decide for themselves if "a person who was responsible for these reforms could be characterised as an accomplice of the enemy or a protagonist of large scale farming", which is to say, a "Kulak". Singh begins with a definition of the term Kulak, originally

---

<sup>5</sup> See for example Paul R. Brass *The Politicization of the Peasantry in a North Indian state: I*, The Journal of Peasant Studies, 7:4, 395-426. 1980. Paul R. Brass *The Politicization of the Peasantry in a North Indian state: II*, The Journal of Peasant Studies, 8:1, 3-36. 1980. Brass, P. 1984, *Division in the Congress and the Rise of Agrarian Interests and Issues in Uttar Pradesh Politics, 1952 to 1978*, in Wood, J.R. (ed.), *State Politics in Contemporary India: Crisis or Continuity?* Boulder CO: Westview Press. Brass, Paul *Congress, the Lok Dal, and the Middle-Peasant Castes An Analysis of the 1977 and 1980 Parliamentary Elections in Uttar Pradesh*. Pacific Affairs. 1981. Brass, Paul R., 'An Indian Political Life: Charan Singh and Congress Politics', Volume 1 (2011), 2 (2012) and Volume 3 (2014). Sage Publications, Delhi. Byres, T. J., *Charan Singh (1902-87): an Assessment*, Journal of Peasant Studies, 15/2, 139-89. Jan 1988. Varshney, Ashutosh *Democracy, Development, and the Countryside: Urban-Rural Struggles in India*, 101-112. Cambridge University Press, 1998. Jaffrelot, Christophe., *India's Silent Revolution. The Rise of the Low Castes in North Indian Politics*, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2003.

from Russian, where it meant “a dishonest rural trader who grew rich not by his own labour but through someone else’s—through usury, by operating as a middleman.”<sup>6</sup> but by 1930 had come to mean a term of approbation used to describe rich farmers in general. In Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s words “to smash the strength of the peasantry”<sup>7</sup> by branding them as an “accomplice of the enemy.”<sup>8</sup> In India too the term had retained its derogatory connotations as a term of class abuse, and Singh was accused on this account to be a friend of the rich peasant in a struggle against small and landless peasants. Nothing, Singh says, could be farther from the truth.

He begins by pointing out his personal background and circumstances as the first argument against an allegation of coming from the class of rich peasants. He describes being born “in a peasant’s home under a thatched roof supported by kachcha mud walls”<sup>9</sup> in 1902 as the eldest son of a tenant farmer under the large, feudatory landlord of Kuchesar in Western Uttar Pradesh. On joining public life, Singh recounts the legislations he presented in the United Provinces Assembly as evidence of his stance in favour of the disenfranchised, such as the Agricultural Produce Markets Bill, 1939, the Land Utilization Bill, 1939, and the Debt Redemption Bill, 1939 which brought relief to the peasantry, besides preparing a draft Congress manifesto on Land and Agriculture in 1945 that declared “the cultivators of the soil shall be given their due share in the administration of the country and their sons shall be recruited in ever-increasing number to the Public Services.”<sup>10</sup> Measures were taken to stay the ejection of tenants and subtenants from lands in their possession going as far back as 1940 by modifying the U.P Tenancy Act, 1939, and declaring all the residents of the village, irrespective of their status, as owners of their houses empowered to turn their *kaccha* (temporary) dwellings into *pukka* (permanent) ones without fear of eviction. This proved to be a boon especially for the Scheduled Castes who often had no claims to land and was included in the Zamindari and Land Reforms (ZALR) Act of 1950. These

---

<sup>6</sup> Singh, Charan (1986), *Land Reforms in U.P. and the Kulaks*, Vikas Publishing House, preface p(v).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p(vi).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

events, Singh recounts, brought his ideas on *zamindari* abolition to the attention of the then Chief Minister Govind Ballabh Pant, who “reposed full confidence in him owing to his ability and capacity for hard work”<sup>11</sup> and appointed him in 1946 on the Zamindari Abolition Committee constituted to abolish intermediaries between the cultivator and the State (i.e. landlords) by providing equitable compensation to the former for their erstwhile earnings. When the committee submitted its report Singh dissented and wrote an impassioned letter to Pant outlining his opposition to some key provisions of the report.

### **ZALR Provisions**

His foremost target was the compensation in the form of bonds guaranteed by the State to be given to the landlords in exchange of their confiscated land. Singh reasoned that if the State bought off the landlord, it would have to secure funds for the same, which in the form of taxation, would once again would be borne out by the peasantry, which made up most of the country’s occupation and taxpayers. Therefore, he proposed the payment should be made directly by the impacted peasants, who could buy land from large landlords in exchange for the payment of a fixed sum decided by the government. Besides this, he suggested changes such as the removal of upper-bounds on the price of sale or leasing of land as the government circle rates were too low and buying off precious land on those prices would engender a class war, encourage evasion of the law and grant too much power to the village state apparatus in the distribution of land and fixation of prices. Ceiling on leasing or selling prices also handicapped widows and invalids whose earnings would take a hit if their power to rent at a suitable price was curtailed. Additionally, he called for breaking up of farms larger than fifty acres for land to be redistributed first towards augmenting uneconomic holdings, followed by distribution amongst landless peasants, and suggested fixing of the lower bound on economic holdings at 6.25 acres, defined as the area that can be tilled by one family with one pair of bullocks.

In its final form, the ZALR Act implemented from 1951 abolished the right of intermediaries, vested land rights in the government, and

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

simplified a complex system containing 46 different types of tenure into one containing just four classes: a) *Bhumidars* (holders of land), b) *Sirdar* (wielder of the plough), c) *Asami* (non-owner) and d) *Adhivasi* (occupant). The first of these, the *Bhumidars*, enjoyed full rights of user and transfer, while the *Sirdars* were granted full rights to use but none of transfer. The last 2 categories held no transferable rights, while the *Adhivasis* by 1954, were also granted the status of *Sirdars* through an amendment of the 1952 provisions. Singh defines the legal definitions of these categories to illustrate what manner of cultivators qualified for each, before he details the provisions for each's benefit in the bill.

*Sirdars* could graduate to *Bhumidars* on the lands they tilled upon payment of ten times their rent to the government towards the "Zamindari Abolition Fund", from which the government would compensate the landlord for his seized land -- a policy drafted by Singh as early as the Land Utilization Bill of 1939 and commended since by the Planning Commission. The Act also stayed ejection of anyone classified as "trespassers" (most of them *adhivasis*) and subtenants on Singh's word that most of them had been labelled trespassers as a result of collusion between the landlord and the *patwaris* (revenue record-keepers of the village), abolished subletting and ensured that rents for *Sirdars* and *Bhumidars* would remain unchanged for the coming forty years. Meanwhile, the *Zamindars* were also equitably compensated with compensation equivalent to eight times his net assets payable by the government in State-sanctioned bonds, while the smaller of them were safeguarded against moneylenders by effectively relieving them of 65-80% of their debts.

Singh details how the provisions of the Act worked to ensure the smooth functioning of each provision in different circumstances. He also shares the political backlash he faced by the large landed vested interests within the Congress, and in the supposedly 'Socialist' parties, whose grip on power the Act damaged. Singh moves on to answer criticism levelled against the Act from these very quarters.

### Criticism Answered

He starts with the allegation that the draft had taken too long to formulate, and says that proponents of this view "have always had Russia in

mind”<sup>12</sup>, where the existing system had indeed been dismantled in haste, but nothing coherent had been put together in its place over the next decade when the government flip-flopped and chopped and changed its policy on land use and distribution several times, often completely reversing previous formulations. The task of positive formulation being much harder than mere abolition, the committee had taken only three years to work out the bill.

Secondly, Singh objects to the landlord’s accusation that by not nationalizing industries owned by capitalists and instead seizing the landlord’s land the government was displaying an anti-landlord bias. The capitalist performs some function in the process of surplus production, Singh argues, while the landlord functions purely as a parasite. Besides, nationalization brings no change insofar the factory worker is concerned as he will go from one set of masters to another, whereas the psychological fillip the abolition of *Zamindari* would bring to the tiller’s relation to his land would work wonders for land productivity in a sector employing by far the most people in U. P.

As for the method of abolition concerned, says Singh, there were only 3 models (i) that of Japan, where the feudatory chiefs had voluntarily surrendered their rights, administrative powers and hereditary distinctions, (ii) armed revolt by the tenants on the model of the Russian Revolution, resulting in violence, death and destruction of valuable property, or (iii) abolition by law, instead of sword, where landlords were compensated. Singh argues against the first two measures, since the time for Indian landlords to voluntarily surrender was past and the Russian revolution violated ideas of non-violence and statecraft, and which leaves the question of compensation still open. Proponents against genuine compensation to landlords often cited Gandhi’s 1942 proclamation that compensating them would be economically infeasible, but Gandhi himself had modified his views on the topic by 1945, advocating “equitable compensation” instead.

Socialist critics harangued Singh about the actual amount of compensation, quibbling over percentages. Critics from the opposite end argued that the price of ten times the rent required for *Bhumidari* rights was too much for the poorer peasants to furnish, but Singh disagrees with

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 25.



this assessment on account of his familiarity with the peasant's mindset. Further, these critics underestimated the value of land ownership for a tiller and underappreciated the lengths he would go for acquiring it. Finally, *Bhumidari* rights furnish former tenants with the rights to sell and raise loans, increasing the value of their land many folds, while reducing expenditure in land revenue, making a one-time investment economically beneficial for them.

Singh rubbishes criticism labelling new *Bhumidars* as capitalists simply for having ownership rights on land directly under their plough. Similarly, he makes light of criticism regarding no solution for uneconomic holdings or landless labour being provided by the Act. As there isn't enough land in India to go around even after abolishing the minority of large farms, the problem would always remain in some measure no matter what method of redistribution is followed. In fact, provisions for prevention of the formation of uneconomic holdings were made in the Act, while the benefits conferred on the landless who were given a stake in land by vesting the entire non-cultivated area of the village to the community as a whole, and permanent rights to their houses and trees, were also tangible.

Singh argues against collective farming as a measure against the problem of uneconomic holdings and low production, as it itself leads to lower production, disincentivizes the peasant and works against the grain of democracy by robbing him of his individuality. Furthermore, collective farms used machinery in a vastly labour surplus economy, leading to more unemployment and underemployment instead of ameliorating it. Instead, Singh proposes decentralized 'cottage' (home-based) and small industries run on electricity and small machinery, geared towards utilizing existing manpower and increasing their productivity specially for the landless peasants. Small and cottage industry is known to increase production and provide more employment, increasing agricultural surplus and therefore purchasing power in a primarily agricultural civilisation. This is vital for innovation and capital formation in the rural sector, which are pre-conditions for the inevitable move away from agricultural to industry and service sectors.

The ZALR Act had profound political, social and economic consequences. By providing benefits of property rights non-violently to millions at the bottom of the social pyramid, had reinforced their faith in

law and order. It abolished both the oppressive landlord and the oppressed tenant, replacing them with self-cultivating peasant proprietors as the bulwark of a “middle-of-the-road, stable rural society and barrier against political extremism”<sup>13</sup>. Further, by reducing 46 types of tenure to four, the reforms had eliminated many class differences, while economically private ownership of their lands was the magic that turned sand into gold in terms of productivity.

### The Patwari Standoff

Having reasoned out the merits and consequences of the ZALR Act, Singh recounts the logistical challenges of its implementation. The lack of accurate land records was a huge roadblock regarding the same, as their upkeep had been grievously neglected since World War II, while “the various measures of land reform undertaken in quick succession demanded exclusive attention of the land records staff.”<sup>14</sup> In the absence of the same, the *patwaris* – village level land-record keepers responsible for maintaining ownership and tenancy records – had acquired enormous powers which they often misused for personal benefit in collaboration with the landlords. One consequence of this was the aforementioned inflation in the number of *Adhivasis* classified as trespassers who were then liable to ejection from their lands, where the *patwaris* colluded with the landlords in deliberately fudging the record books.

Under the new policies published as an official manual for implementation, many of the *patwaris*’ powers were revoked, as a result of which they tendered their resignations en-masse to the UP government in an effort to strongarm it by paralyzing recordkeeping works until their demands to retain their powers were met. This move was backed by the wealthy and political interests within the Congress and Socialist parties as well, whose interests often aligned with the landlord-and-*patwari* nexus on the backs of whom they were elected. Singh, the Revenue Minister, accepted the resignations of all the *patwaris* rather than be coerced as he believed it would set the incorrect precedent that government employees could paralyze the government until their demands were met.

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 40.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 46.

Singh then presided over a massive hiring over 13,000 personnel under the new designation of *lekhpal* who performed the same function as the *patwari* but with curtailed powers. 18% of these posts were reserved for Scheduled Castes, as opposed to none before, while provisions were made for reserving 36% vacancies for SCs in the future. These new recruits carried out correction drives village by village and worked admirably despite their relative inexperience after a basic training, so that the massive task was completed between the months of August and November. So much so that an inspection of records in randomly selected villages carried out after allegations of corruption surfaced against the *lekhpals* as well found the governmental records incontrovertible, cementing the drive's success. Singh finishes this section with a quote from Wolf Ladejinsky, an agrarian expert of international repute<sup>15</sup>, about the correction drive:

“Without a written record any and all provisions relating to security of tenure cannot be enforced. In Uttar Pradesh, a few million records were corrected or newly inscribed in the course of a special drive organised by the State Government in connection with the implementation of the Zamindari Abolition and Land Reform Act. The same cannot be said of a sizable part of the country, particularly of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Kerala Madras, Mysore and Orissa. Evidently, *the Uttar Pradesh method, largely based on the determined leadership of Charan Singh, then Revenue Minister, was not to be duplicated in many other States.*” (emphasis in original)<sup>16</sup>

## Rights of Resumption

Singh discusses the natural antagonism between security of tenancy for tenants and the right of resumption of land, up to a reasonable amount, for personal cultivation by landlords which became a source of much wasted effort and legal complications in implementing land reforms throughout the country. While some states like Bombay and Hyderabad set limits as high as fifty and thirty acres respectively on lands resumable for personal cultivation even before the first Five-Year Plan, the Second plan declared that (i) a land-owner could resume land upto a ceiling

<sup>15</sup> Ladejinsky, Wolf (1899-1975) an American scholar of agrarian policy and land reform who studied the unfinished business of alleviating rural poverty and the development problems of rural societies. He worked for the USDA, Ford Foundation and the World Bank.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 50.

limit for personal cultivation provided his tenant was left with a family holding, or (ii) if the land-owner had less than a family holding, he could resume land from his tenants provided they were left with an economic holding as well.

Terms such as “personal cultivation” and “family holding” are hard to define precisely, leading to different laws in different states and mired the reforms in tedious legal hassles conjured by the landlords in cases that lasted years in litigation and rendered the law too complex for the poor and uneducated tenant to understand. As a result, the proportion of agricultural labourers increased instead of decreasing in many of the states following the Second Five-Year plan, leading to “an expropriation unheard of in the previous history of India”<sup>17</sup> as a result of “Congress policies or inefficiency of its government in this regard”<sup>18</sup>. Usurpation of their lands using these nefarious means sowed the seed of Communism in states such as Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Kerala and West Bengal where the right for personal cultivation was most abused by the landlords, and Singh remained perhaps the only Revenue Minister of a state within India to reject the Second Plan’s recommendations in favour of permanent tenancy rights.

Singh demonstrates using official data that the percentage of agricultural labourers in UP declined through the implementation of the reform until Singh’s resignation from government in 1959, the primary beneficiaries of which came from the lower rung of the societal pyramid. When the numbers started to rise again, for example in the 1971 agricultural census, it was because of walking back of provisions from the ZALR Act of UP in the “sacred name of personal cultivation”<sup>19</sup> made by subsequent Revenue Ministers none of whom “had any knowledge of economic conditions of the village or any sympathy with the underdog.”<sup>20</sup>

Further, Singh’s own sympathy with the underdog attracted the ire of the higher castes which had largely built up the Congress, while it was reasoned that the beneficiaries of the land reforms, being primarily from the backward classes, would vote for the Socialists or Communists in the

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 54.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 58.

end. Therefore, the blame for a Congress loss in the 1953 by-elections fell on the alienation of their upper caste voter by the provisions of the reforms such as prevention of subletting and refusal or resumption of land for personal cultivation, and indirectly on Singh as the champion of these measures. By way of reconciliation with the Congress Party's traditional base, a demand emerged amongst party workers to grant rights of ejecting *Adhivasi* tenants of such landowners whose area for personal cultivation was less than eight acres to the extent that their total area completed eight acres, whereas Singh's idea was to give such *adhivasis* the opportunity to become *Bhumidars* following procedures outlined in the ZALR Act. Pant asked Singh to prepare a report regarding the intricacies of the same, which Singh discuss next.

### **Problem of the *Adhivasis***

Singh begins by pointing out the arguments made in favour of the proposal: that the landowner should have a right to resume land let out when letting was legal, while the sub-tenants were only agricultural labourers working the land for wages, and therefore held an inferior claim to the land. Singh points out that many, such as the landowner's *halwaha* (cook) and the like were declared as subtenants, meaning that most of the land was anyway under the landowner's possession; taking from those who held little in favour of those holding too much already would make no sense. For every landowner satisfied, there would be several who would have to be ejected.

Besides, the landowners had not tilled their own lands when they possessed all rights to do the same so their claim to do so now was weak compared to the traditional tillers who had been doing it all along. To live off mere rent for 8 acres or less not being possible, those who sought to resume land to maintain economic holdings already had another source of income, while those holdings large holdings would receive enough compensation. Giving land to them taken away from tillers who had no other occupational avenues would in no way be fair, especially since the primary benefits of the ZALR act had not reached the *adhivasi* community in the same measure as the *sirdars* and *bhumidars*, and whose only hope was the assurance that they would not be ejected from their lands given by the Congress party since 1938. Politically for every vote the Congress would lose from the landowners they would gain ten

from the *adhivasis*, whereas diluting the Act would be going contrary to the party's own professed ideals.

Singh goes on to accuse the party officials of betraying precisely these ideals in favour of class and caste interests favoring their narrow interests, forgetting that the government served all. They had been lazy and corrupt in the implementation of ZALR act's provisions, which was the root cause of the Congress' defeat in the elections as they lost the *adhivasi* votes to the Communist and Socialist parties. Further tinkering of the provisions in favour of the landowners would be a recipe for further political distress, as security of tenure was amongst the only demands of the subtenant community. Singh writes:

"Not only the fate of the millions that will be directly affected, turns on the decision; it will affect the attitude and behaviour of millions of others who may be connected with these up-rooted families by ties of some kind or other. It will, to a great extent, decide the political pattern, at any rate, of the eastern districts."<sup>21</sup>

Based on Singh's note Pant ordered a survey of villages which bore out Singh's predictions regarding the state of affairs as he had represented, following which Pant came to side with him on the issue. Much resistance had to be faced from prominent Congressmen representing landowners' interests, as a result of which finalization was delayed, affecting the Consolidation of Holdings Act which was also tied to the clarification of this issue. After pointing out evidence from unimpeachable sources how the ZALR Act had increased the proportion of owner-cultivators to agricultural labourers in U.P., and how a better part of these benefits had gone to the lowest castes least likely to have held land before, Singh, before moving on to discussing Consolidation of Holdings, declares:

"As a result of the land reforms carried out by the State Government the backward classes are no longer prepared to play a secondary role in the society. Nobody can any longer address them as "*Chhoti Zaat*" or "low caste" as members of the so-called high castes used to do, particularly in the eastern parts of Uttar Pradesh."<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 77.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p100. Here, 'backward classes' means the lowest of the low, not to be equated with the contemporary use of 'backward castes' which are in between the 'backward classes' and the high castes.

### Consolidation of Holdings<sup>23</sup>

Singh begins by explaining how, dating back to the times when irrigation and other agricultural facilities were not advanced, land belonging to one farmer was scattered into many plots in different places so that no farmer could claim a vast chunk of good quality land. With the advent of these facilities though, consolidation of holdings held by one owner became “the very first step towards improvement of agriculture”<sup>24</sup> which led to “increasing the productivity of all the three factors of production in agriculture – land, capital and labour.”<sup>25</sup>

Consolidation of holdings led to better control of irrigation and drainage waters, encouraged digging up of more wells, setting up of proper fencing by farmers whose possession would all be in one place and reduce the wastage of water. Control of animals and rodents would be easier, whereas disputes over rights to land and irrigation which took years in litigation and cost a fortune would be eliminated. Time and effort would be saved with the bullocks not having to be taken from field to field, not to mention the same for the farmer, while provisions for storage and processing of produce near the consolidated holding would also reduce labour and time, while increasing yield. Therefore, Singh regarded all efforts of Zamindari abolition as requisites setting the stage for this step. Singh describes the resistance he had to face from highly placed Congress leaders biased to the cause of large landowners and ignorant of the full significance of such a measure. Furthermore, given variances in quality of land at different plots, there was much scope for corruption which Singh and his revenue staff had to fight tooth and nail.

---

<sup>23</sup> For an independent account of the benefits of Land Consolidation in U.P., see Oldenburg, Philip. *Land Consolidation as Land Reform in India*. World Development, Vol 18, No 2, pp 183-195. 1990 “The benefits can be listed under five broad heads: getting one’s land in one place; getting road and water channel rights of way; changing the location of one’s farm; getting a farm with straight- line boundaries and a rectangular shape; and having a partition of joint holdings done. The farmer saves land through the elimination of unnecessary field boundaries and he saves time and trouble previously spent in traveling from one field to the other, but these benefits pale into insignificance compared with the potential gains from the newly-acquired opportunity to make important productive investments.” Pp 187. “If it is indeed the case that what lies at the core of the justification of land reform in India is to increase the number of economically viable and hence liberated farmers, and to reduce the degree of exploitation of small and marginal farmers, then land consolidation in UP produces, at the very least, a result that parallels “real” land reform.” p. 191.

<sup>24</sup> Singh, Charan (1986), *Land Reforms in U.P. and the Kulaks*, Vikas Publishing House, p. 101.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

### Useful comparisons

Next he graduates his defense to comparisons with the state of Kerala where land reforms had been carried out by the Communists, and in the hills under the leadership of Singh's mentor G.B. Pant. He cites a comparative study of the Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill versus the ZALR Act made by the Revenue Secretariat of U.P. which declared that the Kerala law had not led to the abolition of *Zamindari* as "the uncultivated land will still continue to be vested in *zamindars* and will not be handed over to the village community as it has been done in Uttar Pradesh."<sup>26</sup> Tenants of charitable and religious institutions had not been given rights to purchase lands they tilled, while the rates for purchase for those who could were far larger than that of U.P, and this price was to be paid even by the lowest rung of agricultural labourers. Rights of resumption were also maintained in Kerala, with the obvious consequence of insecurity of tenure for tenants and subletting too was not forbidden.

As for the hills, Singh takes issue with Pant's policies which "did not favour conferment of permanent (*sirdari*) rights on tenants-at-will of Kumaon known as *sirtans* who constituted about 11 per cent of the entire peasantry of the area." at least half of whom were Scheduled Castes. He cites disagreement over these policies as some part of the cause of a rift with his mentor Pant later in his career which, coupled with Nehru's displeasure with him over the issue of Cooperative Farming, affected him both personally (including his health) and of course politically.

### Cooperative Farming

The ZALR act made provisions for land in uneconomic holdings held by *bhumidars*, *sirdars* or *asamis* to be transferred to cooperative farms, to be operated by ten or more adult members of a *gaon samaj*. Singh explains how this provision, in practice, was a "dead letter"<sup>27</sup>, included only to appease "the whims of the Congress leadership at the national level"<sup>28</sup> headed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who had led the formalization of cooperative farming as India's agricultural policy at the Nagpur Resolution of the All India Congress Committee in January 1959.

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 106.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, pp. 114.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.



The policy advocated pooling of land for joint cultivation, with individual workers being compensated for their labors with a share of the produce in proportion to their land. A period of three years was set for the implementation of this plan, starting with service cooperatives. Charan Singh, however, made a logical and impassioned objection to the policy at the Nagpur session itself based on his extensive study of collective farms set up in the USSR and other parts of the world. His research had shown that cooperative farms “instead of leading to an increase in agricultural production, would rather lead to a decrease and that the scheme was impracticable and militated against our democratic way of life”<sup>29</sup>

He wrote pamphlets and books – *Whither Cooperative Farming* and *Joint Farming X-rayed* – detailing his opposition, though his rebuttal in Nagpur had already earned him the approbation of Nehru. Singh recounts how many newspapers reported on several Congress leaders present at the conference, privately agreeing with Singh’s arguments, chose not to voice their dissent for fear of displeasing Nehru then at the peak of personal and political power.<sup>30</sup> Singh documents how his stand on cooperative farming led to his resignation from the Congress ministry in Uttar Pradesh later in 1959. Singh responds to a statement from Gandhi supporting cooperative farming, cited as an argument in its favour, saying the rest of the country could not reach the moral heights that a Gandhian ideal demanded. Besides, Gandhi did not confess to know or pronounce on everything and advises the country to acknowledge where the facts went contrary to his ideas.

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 115.

<sup>30</sup> Giani Zail Singh (1916–1994) was the seventh President of India from 1982 to 1987. A lifelong Congressman, he had held several ministerial posts in the Union Cabinet including that of Home Minister. He wrote in *Kitni Khoobiaan Thi Is Insaan Mein*, Asli Bharat. December 1990, p. 20. CS Papers NMML. “I got an opportunity to hear Chaudhary Saheb’s inspiring speech at the Nagpur session. ... Chaudhary Saheb vigorously opposed the Collective Farming proposal brought by Panditji. I was spell bound by Chaudhary Saheb’s hour-long fluent speech. Panditji listened carefully to Chaudhary Saheb’s powerful speech, and even smiled. In the pandal, there was all round clapping when Panditji moved the resolution, but after Chaudhary Saheb’s speech it seemed as if the tables had been turned. Panditji replied to Chaudhary Saheb, and though not agreeing with Panditji, we had to support him because such was the force of his personality then. I know for sure that had I been in Panditji’s place I would not have been able to argue the case put forth by Chaudhary Saheb.”

### Land Redistribution and Ceilings<sup>31</sup>

Singh was often criticised for his opposition to land redistribution. He first explains his support of small farms his entire public life as they produce more per acre than larger ones and provides more employment. He also supported the imposition of ceilings and redistribution of surplus land thus obtained. What he opposed was treating this band-aid as a blanket solution to the land problem as there wasn't enough surplus land to be obtained from the large holdings that would be diluted without running the risk of either leaving a lot of needy landless people out or creating yet more uneconomic holdings.

Redistribution would require large landowners to be compensated from the Government's pocket and posed the question of prioritizing who gets the surplus land. Besides, the ultimate aim being weaning the population from agriculture to other sectors which provide more earning per capita, Singh considers it counterproductive to "tie to land all those who do not possess land today and, thereafter, try to divert them to other occupations."<sup>32</sup> Lastly, he points out that the policies of resumption of land for personal cultivation and imposition of ceilings pulled in different directions, betraying a confusion on the part of the government.

Singh addresses criticisms of his views on land redistribution by Communists who, either willfully or otherwise, distorted data from the reports on land reforms or misunderstood them. He cites several examples of such errors, which led to incorrect conclusions like land falling into ever fewer hands as a result of land reforms in U.P., or that people were being reduced to "wage-slaves" of the Marxist doctrine. Singh suggests that such criticism was made in service of an ideological agenda, in favour of collectivisation by followers of Marx whose theory on agriculture he felt had been debunked in theory and practice globally. These theories all consider the peasant a capitalist, member of the enemy class, and therefore have never been able to win their support for the cause of collectivisation.

Singh cites progressively higher taxation on large landholdings

<sup>31</sup> See Ladejinsky, Wolf (1899-1975). Land Ceilings and Land Reform, *Economic & Political Weekly*, Annual Number. February 1972, pp. 401-408. *The Selected papers of Wolf Ladejinsky, Agrarian Reform as Unfinished Business*, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Oxford University Press, 1977.

<sup>32</sup> Singh, Charan (1986), *Land Reforms in U.P. and the Kulaks*, Vikas Publishing House, p. 129.

which would save the State the administrative hassle of identifying and breaking down large holdings as well as the financial burden of compensation. Increasing taxation would lead large farmers to sell some of their land as to make the rest more profitable, while the smaller farmers and agricultural labourers would necessarily be out of large taxation and find no reason to complain, thus eliminating “unleashing a class conflict” like the Communist party deemed the Nagpur Resolution had done. In fact, Singh had crafted the Large Land-Holdings Tax catering to these principles, but it had been struck down by the Allahabad High Court, while the eventual ceilings legislation passed after his resignation as Revenue Minister had built in loopholes in it favoring the rich and powerful, so that the first serious attempt at land redistribution came as late as 1970, when over 90% of the beneficiaries, at least on paper, were Harijans.

### **Punching down**

Singh moves details his opposition to an increase in land taxation by 50% for *sirdars* and *bhumidars* sought by the Chief Minister C. B. Gupta in 1962 in violation of a provision of ZALR Act that no increase in land revenue would be made for 40 years from the enactment of legislation. Besides this obvious backtracking, Singh outlines his letter to the CM opposing the proposal on account that (i) the economic condition of the peasantry did not warrant such an increase, (ii) the villager was not lagging on his taxes, which were substantial, (iii) the funds could be obtained by other means, and (iv) the bill would prove to be politically disastrous. He moves on tackle each point.

There was a common misconception amongst leaders, Singh argues, that farmers “never had it better” as every farmer had a surplus to sell, and that the prices of agricultural produce were increasing. However, in reality, half of them consumed almost everything they produced, and the per capita income of the rural sector had remained stagnant since Independence, if not reduced in real terms, while urban per capita income grew substantially. The overall effect was an overwhelming disparity in urban and rural incomes, not to mention a disparity in the prices of urban, industrial goods when compared to the rise in prices of agricultural produce. Consequently, “while the non-agriculturist today has to pay 5.3 per cent less for the same goods than in 1948-49

the agriculturist has to pay 26.4 percent more.”<sup>33</sup> The villagers spent almost all his resources on food, leaving, therefore, very little for all other expenses such as housing, education, health, marriage etc. The poor conditions of the cultivating family reflected in the deteriorating conditions of the agricultural labourers as well, whose wages dropped as the earnings of the tilling families reduced.

Another misconception was to confuse a change in the consumption pattern of the farmers with a rise in the standard of living. For example, a substitution of milk by tea could not be counted as a rise in these standards, nor could a shift to bicycles from horses or ponies even though they formed an increase in expenditure. Thus the rosy picture painted as the foreground of increased taxation did not represent the truth, which was reflected in the governmental policy since Independence of granting subsidies to the agriculturalists for construction of wells, irrigation facilities, fertilizers etc., premised on the assumption that they could not finance it themselves. An increased tax, in such a situation, was simply beyond their means to pay. In defense of this second point, Singh contends that the rate of land revenue was already the highest in the country. Further, the sum provided by *sirdars* and *bhumidars* towards the Zamindari Abolition Fund to acquire rights to their property, which had been deposited in the state coffers, was effectively a payment in advance by the peasantry. Any further tax burden on the small farmer would decrease his efficiency by cutting into his farm expenditure.

Singh also rubbishes comparisons of land revenue with income tax. While both were direct taxes, income tax started after a fair income while land revenue applied to the smallest owners of land with no possibility of escape even if the land were uncultivated unlike income taxes for closed businesses, and no possibility of evading it through legal loopholes. Against the argument that agriculture could not transfer its burden of taxation on the urban clerk or factory worker, Singh points out that the agriculturist already contributed over 75% of the state taxes, while earning incomes of less than one-third that of a town dweller, and receiving disproportionately little of the state expenditure's benefits such as those on electricity, roads, schools, hospitals and the like when compared to his urban counterpart.

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p.155.

In any case, Singh contends, the requisite funds could be arranged without increasing taxation but by ensuring better utilization of existing budget funds. He identifies overblown state bureaucracies as the major culprits of funds wastage both on account of inefficiency and personal corruption. No scheme could succeed with such a machinery behind it, while with the right intent and dedication vast reforms such as the ZALR or Land Utilization Act could be implemented without much added expenditure. He also chastises the attitudes of the people themselves at the beneficiary end. Without an improvement in their health, education and fatalistic attitudes, they could utilize no scheme, however rich, to its fullest. Furthermore, efficient taxation of the existing rich taxpayers would ensure an increase sought in the increase of revenue without putting undue burden on the peasantry, while better planning would at least ensure proper implementation of existing funds which remained unused in many sectors.

Finally, Singh argues, burdening the pockets of cultivators who formed over 75% of the rural electorate and over two-thirds of the total, would politically backfire “beyond repair”<sup>34</sup>, as it would represent a “breach of faith with the masses”<sup>35</sup> who were promised no increase in revenue for 40 years from the implementation of the ZALR Act. Small farmers to big ex-Zamindars alike, many had welcomed the reform given that this clause would remain. Walking it back, especially by the same government that promised it, would erode the faith of the governed in the government.

Singh details the tenure of Sucheta Kripalani as Chief Minister of U.P. as an example of the kind of leadership he criticises throughout. He accuses her of having no idea of the issues pertaining to Uttar Pradesh’s conditions, much less that of agriculturists dwelling in villages, and of making “serious attempts to water down the land reforms legislation that had already been enacted and implemented in Uttar Pradesh several years before she arrived on the stage”<sup>36</sup>. Specifically, he cites permission of letting for all *sirdars* and *bhumidars* and lifting on restrictions on acquiring land above 12.5 acres, which was hitherto the maximum limit. Singh recounts Kripalani seeking his opinion on the matter and his

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 178.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 179.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 189.

response that such measures “will be detrimental to public interest and will undo the effects of *zamindari* abolition, to a very, very large degree.”<sup>37</sup> falling on deaf ears. He then goes on to make concluding remarks on his account of land reforms in UP, and his role in piloting the same from its conceptual stage all the way down to its implementation for which he “had to wage a relentless struggle for over two decades 1946-67 against the Kulaks who were going by the appellation of Congress and even, Socialist leadership.”<sup>38</sup>

Singh adds a proposal in the Appendix of his favoring reservation of half the posts in the state government jobs for sons of agriculturists, as they constituted over 75% of the earning population when agricultural labourers were included. However, he cites the cleft between the rural and urban mindset, the latter of which was not only massively overrepresented in government jobs but whose interests directly conflicted with the countryside, as the governing factor for such a move. A man’s opinion is largely shaped by the surroundings in which he grows up, Singh says, and the urban middle class which formed a vast majority of public administrators had neither understanding nor sympathy for the countryside. In fact, it harbored contempt for the values of the countryside and agriculture as a profession. Therefore, there was a need for public servants from agriculturist backgrounds who had an understanding to the pace, psychology, and experiences of a farmer’s life, without which officers even with the best interests at heart ended up working for the detriment of the agriculturist class as they lacked the understanding to intervene constructively and provide solutions. The same went for judicial and non-judicial officeholders, especially in the department of agriculture.

Singh recommends a change in the hiring pattern of cooperative staff, so that people lacking in agricultural experiences, regardless of their qualifications otherwise, should not be chosen over those who understand the countryside lifestyle and its intricacies. Public servants are required to exercise discretion during the course of their duties, and only when their psychology and interests are correctly aligned with those they serve can this discretion be correctly channeled. Singh goes on to say that a peasant’s upbringing, by virtue of its circumstances, gives him

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 194.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 201.

robustness of spirit, toughness, and virtue of patience and perseverance, besides making him less skilled at deceit and corruption. Whether the reader agrees with Singh's statement, one comes to fully recognise Singh's views and prejudices.

Arguments for reservation accrue from the vast disparity in urban and rural education standards and powers of patronage, and the fact that the agriculturists bore the brunt of taxation which led to the creation of these services, not to mention the salaries for the government jobs the cities appropriated. Therefore, after refuting certain arguments that could be raised against the plea, Singh writes in conclusion:

"Only those can appeal to the cultivator's or villager's heart or touch his imagination whose reaction to things is similar to that of his, none else. We have, therefore, to go a step further, and not stop at exhortations; the source of recruitment has to be changed."<sup>39</sup>

## Conclusion

To someone familiar with Charan Singh's actions on land reforms and his vision of development, it is difficult to defend the allegation that he was a "Kulak". Paul Brass, a respected and keen scholar of Indian politics and society, after a thorough examination of Singh's career while he was in the Congress, said "most such depictions of Charan Singh were a form of political slander rather than a serious analysis of his ideas."<sup>40</sup>

In the case of the ceilings on landholdings, a study of the evolution of his thinking reveals that Singh himself wrestled with the question his entire intellectual life, citing different ideas in books in 1959 (*Joint Farming X-rayed*) all the way through to 1981 (*Economic Nightmare of India*), though each centered around the ideal of an *efficient* farmer, rather than any considerations regarding one's own class or caste. On this matter too, Brass agrees, writing that to reduce his logic on the issue to his 'class interests' would be to diminish "Singh's own vision of the conversion of the downtrodden Indian peasantry into a class of self-respecting and prosperous farmers into an apologia for the 'rich' as well as middle peasantry."<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 216.

<sup>40</sup> Brass, Paul (2011), *An Indian Political Life: Charan Singh and Congress Politics, 1937 to 1961*, Sage Publishing House.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

Critics from the Left, such as Terence Byres<sup>42</sup>, agree that Singh was not a Kulak of the Russian variety insofar as he abhorred moneylenders and did not indulge in trading. Many of the arguments cited in this book bring out little-known facts about the positive impact of the reforms he initiated in Uttar Pradesh on the middle and small peasantry. These landed groups, however small, indeed held more resources than the landless, but they too were destitute in a state where agriculture was the primary occupation and the overwhelming majority lived at subsistence levels. Singh's reforms broke the hegemony of the upper castes in favour of the backward castes, who emerged subsequently as a political force thanks to their acquisition of land. This is not to say that the poorest of the poor, such as the Scheduled Caste, did not benefit from the program, as the book amply demonstrates. The historiography of the Congress leadership during the land reforms bear out the truth of the charges Singh levels against them, as well as the conclusion that he is to be given the credit for *Zamindari* abolition in U.P. and which became a blueprint for other states to follow.

This book is a defense of his intent and proof of his consistent batting for the rural underdog in the face of stiff political opposition from the high castes and urban interests. At the same time, it lays bare Singh's disregard for most of his colleagues in the Uttar Pradesh Congress and political rivals on the grounds of incompetence, intellectual ability, corruption or sheer disinterest. Singh considers the gap between urban and rural India as the critical issue than the upward mobility of the middle and small farmer.

---

<sup>42</sup> See Byres, T. J., *Charan Singh (1902–87): an Assessment*, Journal of Peasant Studies, 15/2, 139–89. Jan 1988. Terence J. Byres is a peasant studies scholar and a professor emeritus of Political Economy at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.





## Section II

---

### **Bibliography**

Abolition of Zamindari. 1947  
Joint Farming X-Rayed. 1959  
India's Poverty & Its Solution. 1964  
India's Economic Policy. 1978  
India's Economic Nightmare. 1981  
Land Reforms in U.P. & The Kulaks. 1986



# Introduction

## Education

Charan Singh studied at Agra College<sup>1</sup> between 1919-1925 CE for Matriculation, Bachelor of Science and Master of Arts in History (British, French and Indian). At that time, Agra College was affiliated to Allahabad University<sup>2</sup> and was 'regulated and monitored, thus inspected by the concerned heads of the Departments of University of Allahabad, for teaching of their subjects, etc.'<sup>3</sup>

The History department at Allahabad, whose course of study was followed at Agra College, was founded by Professor Rushbrook Williams<sup>4</sup> in 1915 CE who recruited Indian historians and pillars of the British-Indian establishment Sir Shafat Ahmad Khan, D. P. Tripathi, Ishwari Prasad, Beni Prasad and Tara Chand. This was a time when the nationalist feeling was rising, and the tide was turning in the hearts of men and women who yearned for freedom from bondage to an exploitative foreign power. Some of this ferment was visible in the University, though of necessity the courses reflected the hegemonic British and colonial view of world and Indian history.

Charan Singh's approach to writing was most certainly influenced by the time he spent at Agra College where he learnt the methods of European historiography. One imagines the impressionable village youth of 21 years listening intently to Williams (himself only 33) in a lecture on the 'Handling of Historical Material'.<sup>5</sup> The phrases 'scientific lines' and 'systematic manner' 'scientific temper' and 'an objective approach' defined this new European approach to history, though of course the

---

<sup>1</sup> Agra College is the oldest established College in North India, set-up in 1823 CE in Agra, Uttar Pradesh. This yet has lovely buildings from a more aesthetic time, though academically it now a sorry and pale shadow of the original. T. Cuthbertson Jones was the Principal from 1901-1925 during the period Charan Singh was a student at Agra College.

<sup>2</sup> Till 1927. Chaturvedi, Heramb. *Allahabad School of History*, Prabhat Books, 2008. p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Williams (1890-1978 CE) was founding head of the History Department 1916-1923. He wrote 'Four Lectures on the Handling of Historical Material' in 1915 CE which provided 'an insight into the methods of modern historical investigation.' He also compiled the political, economic and social development of India during British rule for the Home Department, Government of India which was presented to British Parliament.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

underling colonial and racist world-view of European powers remained unchanged. 'The main essence of the new approach to historical research, to put it briefly, was an orientation to work with the scientific temper and ensure that as far as possible, no preconceived notions were permitted to interfere with the interpretation of facts.'<sup>6</sup> This method enabled a new generation of college-educated Indians study, in English, the root causes of colonial power and their own subjugation.

## Reading

Charan Singh was a prolific reader from his early years, blessed also with a memory that amongst other things enabled him recite long poems, when he was 80, from his primary school years.<sup>7</sup> He was the happiest when sitting alone amongst his papers preparing arguments and pouring over the mass of data for hundreds of government notes ('white papers' today), letters, media articles, speeches, books he wrote, political calls-to-action and party manifestoes. His reading spanned economics, history (British, Russian, European, Chinese, Japanese and Indian), agriculture, sociology and religion. His academic approach was grounded in Indian realities, his arguments based on global knowledge. Singh, like other leaders of the Indian National Congress who dedicated their lives to rid the country of the British, believed India would be born again to undo the wrongs of Colonial rule that imposed landlords on peasants and destroyed artisans by supporting industrial manufacturing in Britain. Singh believed free India would move the centre of gravity from the interests of the urban elites to the villages where India lived; by the early-1950s he realised this was not to be. He went on to deploy his practical knowledge of the Indian revenue and agrarian system to fight a lonely political battle for the peasant, for improving village life and building nationalists with moral fiber. His writings are suffused with this struggle against urban and industrial thinking, one that played out in elections and displayed the might of his pen.

The books Singh read form an astonishingly rich reading list for understanding the movement of history and societies: Gandhi, Kumarappa, Mao, Marx, Howard, Schumacher, Lipton and scores of

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Preface, BN Tandon.

<sup>7</sup> Editor's personal recollection.

seminal though forgotten names including Mitrany, Buck, Cole, Myrdal and Pendell. His scholarship was an achievement for a first generation literate from a peasant home without any family history of learning in a society where caste defined your career. His reading was also a reflection of the time when every nationalist's mind was in ferment and English education and books became a means to oppose the British Empire and find solidarity with other oppressed peoples.

We have an early record of Charan Singh's love for reading from his two handwritten jail dairies, copy books in which he took long-hand notes while incarcerated by the British in Bareilly Jail in 1940-41 CE.<sup>8</sup> His interest in all issues agricultural, Communism, British history, and Economics is clear. This is backed by the number of newspaper articles he wrote, legislation he pioneered and notes to his Congress colleagues while a member of the Provincial Legislative Assembly in United Provinces between 1937-39 CE.<sup>9</sup>

The publication dates of the books he read in Bareilly Jail in 1940-41 CE is striking, almost all within 6 years. *Red Star Over China* by Edgar Snow was published in 1938, Singh read it in Bareilly Jail in 1942. This availability of contemporary reading material for even everyday political prisoners is a sign of the special treatment of political prisoners by the British, as well an indication of the intellectual ferment of the times when every political worker was engrossed in literature that would help him or her imagine the future of a Free India. What an intellectually exciting time it was! The books from which he copied in his jail diaries are: The Final Report of the Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation, Great Britain. 7<sup>th</sup> May 1924. Report of Land Reform Commission of Bengal, 19??, Napier, Major-General Sir Charles. *Lights and Shades of Military Life*, Henry Colburn, London. 1840. Shaw, George Bernard *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism*. 1937. Coates, W. P. and Zelda K *Scenes From Soviet Life*. 1936. Strachey, John. *The Theory and Practice of Socialism*, Random House, 1936. Snow, Edgar. *Red Star Over China*, 1937. Webb, Sydney and Beatrice. *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation?* 1935. Burns, Emile. *A Handbook of Marxism*. 1935.

<sup>8</sup> Charan Singh was imprisoned here for 11 months (November 1940 to October 1941), during the Individual Satyagraha movement.

<sup>9</sup> These are part of the 250,000 pages 'Charan Singh Papers' at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

Cole, G. D. H. *Practical Economics*. 1937. Mohan, Brij, *Marxism is Dead*, Lahore. 1939

The majority of his political colleagues, in the Indian National Congress and in the other political parties he founded, had little to do with reading busy as they were with jockeying for position in factional politics and with making money. While only a minuscule part of his vast village following fully comprehended his wide grasp of global lessons and Indian realities, they understood his arguments. He was often heard hectoring his political audiences, like a school teacher, and illiterate villagers would listen in rapt and silent attention as if fully comprehending his often academic logic. These public meetings were a sight to watch.

He connected with academics, like Paul R. Brass from University of Washington and J.D. Sethi from Delhi School of Economics, as he found in them a foil for the sharp economic and social thrusts of his arguments. How he made time for this intense level of intellectual engagement amidst the ‘rough and tumble of representative parliamentary politics’ is a credit to him.

We hope this compilation of the bibliographies of books written by Charan Singh provides the reader an insight into the mind of an unusual rural intellectual, the son and descendant of illiterate peasant farmers of a *Shudra* caste who were not intended to be scholars. Singh broke the mould in ways too many to recount, these bibliographies is a start.

*Gurgaon*  
July 2020

Harsh Singh Lohit  
Editor

# Abolition of Zamindari

## Two Alternatives<sup>1</sup>

### Books and Indirect Sources

- (1943), Article “*Village Industries and the Plan*” in *The Eastern Economist*, 23 July, 1943.  
Quoted in Manilal B. Nanavati & J.J. Anjaria (1944), *The Indian Rural Problem*, Bombay: Indian Society of Agricultural Economics.
- Addison, Lord (1939), *A Policy of British Agriculture*, London: Victor Gollancz Ltd.
- Aeroboe, Friedrich (1921), *Die Beurteilung von Landgütern und Grundstücken*, Berlin: P. Parey.
- Āpastamba, *Āpastamba Dharmasutra*.
- Buck, John Lossing (1930), *Land Utilisation in China*, Taipei: The Orient Cultural Service.
- Campbell, George (1881), *Systems of Land Tenure in Various Countries* (Cobden Club Papers), London: Cassel, Petter, Galpin.
- Chen, Hansheng (1936), *Agrarian Problems in Southernmost China*, Hongkong: Kelly & Walsh. Quoted in Fei, Hsiao Tung (1939), *Peasant Life in China: A Field Study of Country Life in Yangtze Valley*, London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Cole, G.D.H. (1940), *Practical Economics or Studies in Economic Planning*, New Orleans: Pelican.
- Coudenhove-Kalergi, Count Richard N. (1938), *The Totalitarian State Against Man*, London: F. Muller Ltd. Quoted in Shriman Narayan (1944), *The Gandhian Plan of Economic Development of India*, Bombay: Padma Publications.
- Dantwala, Mohanlal Lallubhai (1944), *Gandhism Reconsidered*, Bombay: Padma Publications.
- Darling, M.L. (1928), *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, England: Oxford University Press. Quoted in Manilal B. Nanavati & J.J. Anjaria (1944), *The Indian Rural Problem*, Bombay: Indian Society of Agricultural Economics.
- Dodwell, H.H. (1929), *Cambridge History of India Vol. 4*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Engels, Friedrich (1877), *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Fei, Hsiao-tung (1939), *Peasant Life in China: A Field Study of Country Life in the Yangtze Valley*, London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Fisher, Louis (1944), *A Week with Gandhi*, New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce.
- Gangulee, Nagendranath (1935), *The Indian Peasant and His Environment* (The Linlithgow Commission and After), London: Oxford University Press.
- Hindus, Maurice (1933), *The Great Offensive*, New York: Harrison Smith & Robert Hass.
- Hitler, Adolf (1925), *Mein Kampf*, Germany: Franz Eher Nachfolger.
- Howe, F.C. (1922), *Denmark; The Coöperative Way*, New York: Coward-McCann Inc.
- Hubbard, Leonard E. (1939), *The Economics of Soviet Agriculture*, London: Macmillan.
- Jaimini, *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā*.
- Katju, Kailash Nath (1957), *My Life at The Indian Bar*.
- Kautilya, *Arthashastra*.
- Kaye, John William (1874-76), *A History of the Sepoy War in India, 1857-58*, London: Longmans, Green.
- Laski, Harold (1943), *The Revolution of Our Time*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Lenin, V.I. (1899), *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Moscow: Progress Publishers.

---

<sup>1</sup> Published 1947 by Kitabistan, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh. 263 pages.



- Lenin, V.I. (1919), *Collected Works Vol. 25*, Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Lenin, V.I. (1936), *V.I. Lenin Selected Works Volume 8: The Period of War Communism 1918 – 1920*, London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Low, Sir Francis (1944), *The Indian Yearbook 1943-44*, Bombay: Bennett, Coleman & Co.
- Manoilescu, Mihail (1931), *Theories of Protection and International Trade*, London: P.S. King & Son.
- Manu, *Manusmriti: The Laws of Manu VIII*.
- Marx, Karl & Engels, Friedrich (1848), *The Communist Manifesto*, London: Workers' Educational Association.
- Marx, Karl (1894), *Capital Vol. 3*, New York: International Publishers.
- Masani, Minocheher Rustom (1944), *Socialism Reconsidered*, Bombay: Padma Publications.
- Mitrany, David (1930), *The Land & the Peasant in Rumania: The War and Agrarian Reform (1917-21)*, London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press.
- Mukerjee, R.K. (1938), *Food Planning for Four Hundred Million*.
- Mumford, Lewis (1934), *Technics and Civilization*, San Diego: Harcourt, Brace and Company.
- Mumford, Lewis (1938), *The Culture of Cities*, San Diego: Harcourt, Brace and company
- Nanavati, Manilal B. & J.J. Anjaria (1944), *The Indian Rural Problem*, Bombay: Indian Society of Agricultural Economics.
- Narayan, Jay Prakash (1936), *Why Socialism?*, All India Congress Socialist Party.
- Schuman, Frederick (1936), *Hitler and the Nazi Dictatorship*, Bellevue: Robert Hale & Co.
- Shridharani, Krishnalal Jethlal (1946), *The Mahatma and the World*, New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce.
- Stalin, Joseph (1939), *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, New York: International Publishers.
- Stalin, Joseph (1926), *On Problems of Leninism*, Peking: Foreign Languages Press.
- Strachey, John (1936), *The Theory and Practice of Socialism*, United States: Random House.
- Tawney, R.H. (1932), *Land and Labour in China*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. Quoted in Manilal B. Nanavati & J.J. Anjaria (1944), *The Indian Rural Problem*, Bombay: Indian Society of Agricultural Economics.
- Van Der Post, A.P. (1937), *Economics of Agriculture*, South Africa: Central News Agency Ltd.
- Venn, J.A. (1923), *Foundations of Agricultural Economics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wales, Nym (1941), *China Builds for Democracy: A Story of Cooperative Industry*, China: Scholarly Press.
- Warriner, Doreen (1939), *Economics of Peasant Farming*, London: Oxford University Press.

### **Government, International Organisations and NGO Publications**

- British Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation (1924), Government of United Kingdom, British Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation, "Final Report", H.M. Stationery Office (printed by Eyre and Spottiswoode, Limited): Great Britain.
- British Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation (1924), Government of United Kingdom, British Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation, "Memorandum of Address Delivered by Professor Sering before the German Agricultural Council", H.M. Stationery Office (printed by Eyre and Spottiswoode, Limited): London.
- Business Commission on Agriculture (1926), National Industrial Conference Board Inc & The Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America, "Report": New York.
- Communist Party of China (1934), Seventeenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: Resolutions and Decisions, including Party Rules, 26 January, Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the U. S. S. R.: Moscow-Leningrad.

- Communist Party of China (1941), Eighteenth All Union Conference of the C.P.S.P, "Report" by N. Voznesensky, February 18: Moscow-Leningrad.
- Council of People's Commissars (1933), Government of USSR, "Decree of the Council of People's Commissars": Russia.
- Council of People's Commissars (1939), Government of USSR, Booklet issued by the People's Commissar of State Farms of the U.S.S.R.: New York World Fair.
- Council of People's Commissars (1939), Government of USSR, "Decree of the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Party", 8 March: Russia.
- Famine Commission. (1880), "Report of the Indian Famine Commission 1880": London.
- Government of Bengal (1940), "Report of The Land Revenue Commission Bengal Vol. 2", Bengal Government Press: Kolkata.
- Government of British India (1945), Famine Inquiry Commission (Woodhead Commission), "Final Report": New Delhi.
- Government of India (1943), Report "Technological Possibilities of Agricultural Development in India", Dr. W. Burns: New Delhi.
- Government of India (1943), "Report of the Food grains Policy Committee": New Delhi.
- Governor General of Bombay (1819), "Writing of the Peasant Proprietors- Report" by Mountstuart Elphinstone.
- League of Nations (1938), European Conference on the Rural Life, "Report of the Preparatory Committee on the Work of Its First Session": Geneva.
- League of Nations (1939), European Conference on Rural Life, Contributions by The International Institute of Agriculture, "Land Reclamation and Improvement in Europe" Document no. 4: Geneva.
- League of Nations, "Population and Agriculture etc" Document no. 1, Series no. 3: Geneva.
- Metcalf, Sir Charles (1830), British Parliament, Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, "Minutes on Agrarian Village Communities" in "Minutes of Sir Charles Metcalf", 7 November 1830: London.
- Ministry of Home Affairs (1929, 1930), Government of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, "Census of Agriculture": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Home Affairs (1931), Government of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, Census of India 1931: New Delhi.
- Republic of Rumania (1920), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, "Agrarian Bill" by Ion Mihalache: Romania.
- Reserve Bank of India (1931), Government of India, Central Banking Enquiry Committee, Reserve Bank of India, "Report": Bombay.
- Royal Commission on Agriculture (1928), Government of United Kingdom, "Report", H.M. Stationery Office: London.
- Royal Commission on Agriculture (1944), Government of British India, Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, "Memorandum on the Development of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry": New Delhi.
- The Simon Commission (1930), Government of British India, The Indian Statutory Commission, "Report".

### **Newspapers, Articles, Journals, Speeches and Conferences**

- (1937), "The Production Cost of Grain in Slate Arms", *Planned Economy* No. 2.
- Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 15 June 1944.
- (1945), Leader, 2 December 1945.
- Amery, L.S. (1943), Speech delivered on 15 October 1943 on "The Food Situation in Bengal": Birmingham.

- Gandhi, M.K. (1935), *Harijan*, 22 June 1935.
- Hastings, Warren (1772), Letter to the Court of Directors of the East India Company on 3 November 1772.
- Indian National Congress (1945), The Congress Manifesto.
- Khareghat, Pheroz (1943), Press Conference delivered on 24 July 1943 at Indian Delegation to the Allied Food Conference held from May 18 to June 3: Virginia, USA.
- Kripalani, Acharya J.B. (1946), Presidential Address delivered in November 1946 at the 54th Session of the Indian National Congress: Meerut.
- Nanavati, Manilal B. (1945), Presidential Address to the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics: Bombay.
- Ram, Shri (1943), *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 11 September 1943.
- Russel, John E. (1943), Paper read in April 1943 at Conference of the Rothamsted Experimental Station: Devon.
- Sanatanam, K. (1943), *Hindustan Times*, 4 November 1943.
- Stalin, Joseph (1929), "Concerning Questions of Agrarian Policy in the U.S.S.R.", Speech Delivered on 27 December 1929 at a Conference of Marxist Students of Agrarian Questions.
- Stalin, Joseph (1930), "Dizziness from Success", *Pionerskaia Pravda*, 2 March 1930.
- Stalin, Joseph (1930), *Pionerskaia Pravda*, 3 April 1930.
- Stalin, Joseph (1933), Speech delivered on 11 January 1933 at the Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the C. P. S. U. (B).
- Stalin, Joseph (1936), Speech delivered on 7 January 1936 addressing the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Soviet Union.
- Vishveshwarya, M. (1941), Address delivered in March 1941 at the All India Manufacturers' Conference: Bombay.

# Joint Farming X-Rayed

## The Problem and Its Solution<sup>1</sup>

### Books and Indirect Sources

- Adams, Brooks (1895), *The Law of Civilisation and Decay*.
- App, Frank & Waller, Allen G. (1938), *Farm Economics: Management and Distribution*, Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company.
- Bateman, Alan M. (1942), *Economic Mineral Deposits*, London: John Wiley and Sons.
- Beard, Miriam (1938), *History of the Business Man*, New York: Macmillan Co.
- Belshaw, Horace (1956), *Population Growth and Levels of Consumption*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.
- Black, J.D. (1959), *Economics for Agriculture: Selected Writings of John D. Black*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Buck, John Lossing (1930), *Land Utilisation in China*, Taipei: The Orient Cultural Service.
- Castro, Josue De (1952), *Geography of Hunger*, Georgia: Little, Brown Company.
- Chand, Gyan (1956), *Some Aspects of Population Problem of India*, Bihar: Patna University.
- Clark, Colin (1957) ed., *The Conditions of Economic Progress*, London: Macmillan.
- Cohen, R.L. (1949), *The Economics of Agriculture*, London: Nisbet & Company Ltd.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cole, G.D.H. (1940), *Practical Economics, Or Studies in Economic Planning*, New Orleans: Pelican.
- Coudenhove-Kalergi, Richard N. (1938), *The Totalitarian State Against Man*, Sir Andrew McFadyean (ed), London: Frederick Muller Ltd.
- Dandekar, V.M. (1956), *Use of Food Surpluses for Economic Development*, Poona: Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics.
- Davis, Kingsley (1951), *Population of India and Pakistan*, New York: Princeton University Press.
- Djilas, Milovan (1957), *The New Class*, London: Thames & Hudson.
- Doubleday, Thomas (1853), *The True Law of Population: Shewn to be Connected with the Food of the People*, London: Smith, Elder & Company.
- Dutt, Rajani Palme (1949), *India Today*, New Delhi: People's Publishing House.
- Dutt, Romesh Chunder (1916), *The Economic History of India under Early British Rule, from the Rise of the British Power in 1757 to the Accession of Queen Victoria in 1837*, London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd.
- Evidence before the Commons' Committee*, 1832, 2 (1), p. 195. Quoted in Romesh Dutt (1906), *The Economic History of India (Early British Rule)*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd.
- Faulkner, Edward H. (1945), *Ploughman's Folly*, London: Michael Joseph Ltd.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1934), *Man vs. Machine*, Harijan, 16 November 1934. Quoted in R.K. Prabhu & U.R. Rao (1945), *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Ghosh, D (1946), *Pressure of Population and Economic Efficiency in India*, Mumbai: Oxford University Press.
- Ghosh, O.K. (1957), *Problems of Economic Planning in India*, Allahabad: Kitabistan.
- Gregg, Richard B. (1952), *A Philosophy of Indian Economic Development*, Ahmadabad: Navjivan Press.
- Gregg, Richard B. (1952), *Which Way Lies Hope?*, Ahmadabad: Navjivan Press.

---

<sup>1</sup> Published 1959 by Kitabistan, Allahabad. Uttar Pradesh. 322 pages.

- Howard, Albert (1943), *An Agricultural Testament*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Howard, Albert (1945), *Farming and Gardening for Health or Disease*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd.
- Howe, F.C. (1922), Denmark; *The Coöperative Way*, New York: Coward-McCann Inc.
- Hubbard, Leonard B. (1939), *Economics of Soviet Agriculture*, London: Macmillan and Co.
- Jacks, J.V. & White, R.O. (1941), *The Rape of the Earth: A World Survey of Soil Erosion*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd.
- Jasny, Naum (1949), *The Socialized Agriculture of the USSR: Plans and Performance*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Korn, Itzhak (1952), *Co-operative Farming in Israel*, Tel Aviv: Histadrut.
- Krause, Walter (1955), *The International Economy*, New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Krishnan, M.S. (1955), *Iron Ores of India*, Calcutta: Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science.
- Lal, Chaman (1949), *Cottage Industries and Agriculture in Japan*, Mumbai: New Book Co. Ltd.
- Lal, Sunder (1938), *Bharat Mein Angrezi Rajya*, Allahabad: Onkar Press.
- Lewis, Arthur W. (1957), *The Theory of Economic Growth*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Manoilescu, Mihail (1931), *Theories of Protection and International Trade*, London: P.S. King & Son.
- Marx, Karl & Engels, Friedrich (1848), *The Communist Manifesto*, London: Workers' Educational Association.
- Mitrany, David (1930), *The Land & The Peasant in Rumania: The War and Agrarian Reform (1917-21)*, London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press.
- Mitrany, David (1951), *Marx Against the Peasant: A Study in Social Dogmatism*, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press.
- Mukerji, Radhakamal (1926), *Rural Economy of India*, London.
- Pendell, Elmer (1951), *Population on the Loose*, New York: Wilfred Funk.
- Pfeiffer, E (1947), *Soil Fertility: Renewal and Preservation*, London: Faber and Faber.
- Renne, R.R. (1947), *Land Economics*, New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Rowen, Bowels & Prehson (1952), *Mineral Resources of the World*.
- Schiller, Otto (1956), *Co-operative Farming and Individual Farming on Co-operative Lines*, New Delhi: All India Cooperative Union.
- Schumpeter, Joseph A. (1951), *The Theory of Economic Development*, London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Sondhi, V.P. & Mehta, R.S. (1957), *India's Resources*.
- Spillman, William Jasper (1914), *The Law of Diminishing Increments*, Yonkers-on-Hudson and Chicago: World Book Company.
- Stamp, Dudeley L. (1952), *Land for Tomorrow. The Underdeveloped World*, Indiana: Indiana University Press. Quoted in N.G.Ranga & P.R. Parachuri (1958), *The Peasant And Co-operative Farming*, Nidubrolu: Indian Peasant's Institute.
- Talpade, R.M. (1951), *Co-operative Farming, With Special Reference to Bombay State*, Bombay: Provincial Cooperative Institute, 1951.
- The Mining, Geological and Metallurgical Institute of India (1951), *The Progress of the Mineral Industry of India*, Kolkata.
- Thomas, Edgar (1927), *The Economics of Small Holdings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Union, Socialist (1956), *Twentieth Century Socialism*, London: Penguin Books.
- Van Der Post, A.P. (1937), *Economics of Agriculture*, South Africa: Central News Agency Ltd.

- Wales, Nym (1941), *China Builds for Democracy: A Story of Cooperative Industry*, China: Scholarly Press.
- Webb, Sydney & Beatrice (1937), *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation*, London: Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd.
- Wood, Thomas Barlow (1920), *The Chemistry of Crop Production*, London: University Tutorial Press Ltd.
- Woytinsky, Wladimir S. (1957), *India: The Awakening Giant*, New York: Harper and Brothers.
- Yajñavalkya (9th-6th century B.C.), *Bṛahadāraṇyaka Upanishad* (vr. ed.).

## Government, International Organisations & NGO Publications

- British Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation (1924), Government of United Kingdom, British Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation, "Final Report", H.M. Stationery Office (printed by Eyre and Spottiswoode, Limited): Great Britain.
- Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (1951), Government of India, Indian Council of Medical Research, Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, "Diet Surveys of India 1935-48": New Delhi.
- Embassy of the People's Republic of China in India (1955), Article in Circulation by Chau Hansing: New Delhi.
- Food and Agriculture Organization (1950), United Nations, "Report on World Census of Agriculture 1950": Rome.
- Food and Agriculture Organization (1953), United Nations, The State of Food and Agriculture Part 1 August Issue: Rome.
- Food and Agriculture Organization (1953, 1954), United Nations, FAO Yearbooks: Rome.
- Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations, "Survey Cooperatives and Land Use": Rome.
- Government of India (1918), Indian Industrial Commission, Government Printing Press, "Report of Indian Industrial Commission 1916-18" by Sir Thomas Holland: New Delhi.
- Government of India (1943), "Report Technological Possibilities of Agricultural Development in India" by Dr. W. Burns: New Delhi.
- Government of United Provinces, India. (1948), "Report of the United Provinces Zamindari Abolition Committee", Allahabad: Printed by M. G. Shome, Superintendent, Printing and Stationary: Uttar Pradesh.
- Her Majesty's Stationery Office (1957), Government of United Kingdom, Commonwealth Economic Committee, "Grain Crops- A Review": London.
- Indian Famine Commission (1880), Crown Rule in India, "First Indian Famine Commission Report": Kolkata.
- International Labour Organization (1953), ILO News September Issue, "Report International Labour Organisation's Asian Regional Conference" by Dr. D.A. Morse: Tokyo.
- International Labour Organization (1953), International Labour Review August Issue, "Population Growth and Living Standards" by Colin Clark: Geneva.
- International Labour Organization (1954), International Labour Review November Issue, Article "Population Growth and Living Standards" by Albert Nevett: Geneva.
- International Labour Organization (1954), International Labour Review January Issue, Article "Child-Bearing and the Standard of Life" by Sten S. Wilson: Geneva.
- International Labour Organization (1954), International Labour Review January Issue, "Report to the First All-India Conference on Family Planning (Bombay, 1951)" by Shakuntala Paranjpye: Geneva.
- International Labour Organization (1955), International Labour Review March Issue, Article "Some Effects of Farm Mechanization" by Desmond L.W. Anker: Geneva.

- International Labour Organization (1955), International Labour Review October Issue, Article "Handicrafts in Europe" by Marcel Laloire: Geneva.
- International Labour Organization (1956), International Labour Review May & June Issues: Geneva.
- International Labour Organization (1956), International Labour Review May Issue, "World's Working Population": Geneva.
- International Labour Organization (1957), International Labour Review November Issue, Article "Changes in European Peasant Farming" by Doreen Wariner: Geneva.
- League of Nations (1938), European Conference on the Rural Life, "Report of the Preparatory Committee on the Work of Its First Session": Geneva.
- Ministry of Agriculture (1952), Government of India, Agricultural Situation of India November Issue, Ministry of Agriculture, "Population and Food Supply in India", Vol. VII No. 8: New Delhi.
- Ministry of Agriculture (1955-56), Government of India, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, "Studies on the Economics of Farm Management": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Food and Agriculture (1957), Government of India, The Food-grains Inquiry Committee, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, "Report of The Food-grains Inquiry Committee 1957": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Home Affairs (1931, 1941, 1951), Government of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, "India's Census Report 1931, 1941, 1951": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Home Affairs (1951), Government of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, "Census Report of Uttar Pradesh (Part 1-A) 1951": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Home Affairs (1951), Government of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, Census of India Part 1, "Sample Census of Births and Deaths 1953-54": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (1957), Government of India, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Pamphlet "Geology of India", May: New Delhi.
- Ministry of Mines (1955), Government of India, Geological Survey of India, Mineral Information Bureau, Ministry of Mines, "Indian Minerals", Vol. XI, No. 2 (Reserves for 1955)
- Ministry of Mines (1957), Government of India, Geological Survey of India, Mineral Information Bureau, Ministry of Mines, Indian Minerals, Vol. II, No. 2, "Bharat Me Koyle Ke Sansadhan" by Chintamani Tripathi: Kolkata.
- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (1953), Government of India, Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, "Blue Book on National Income and Expenditure 1946-52": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1951), Broad Heads of Development, Planning Commission, "First Five-Year Plan (1951-1955)": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1954), Government of India, Planning Commission, "Report of the Textile Enquiry Committee": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1955), Government of India, Karve Committee, Planning Commission, "Report of the Karve Committee": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1956), Government of India, Panel on Land Reforms, Planning Commission, "Report of Committee on Problems of Land Reforms": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1956), Government of India, Panel on Land Reforms, Planning Commission, "Report of Committee on Size of Holding": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1956), Government of India, Panel on Land Reforms, Planning Commission, "Report on Size of the Farm": New Delhi.

- Planning Commission (1956), Government of India, Planning Commission, "Report of Agrarian Delegation to China on Agricultural Co-operatives (Patil Delegation)": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1956), Government of India, Planning Commission, "Report of Agrarian Delegation to China on Agricultural Planning and Techniques (Krishnappa Delegation)": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1957), Government of India, Research Programmes Committee, Planning Commission, "Report on Studies in Economics of Farm Management in Uttar Pradesh 1954-55" by Dr. G.D. Agarwal, Government Agricultural College: Kanpur.
- Planning Commission (1958), Government of India, Panel on Land Reforms, Planning Commission, "Committee on Tenancy Reforms Report": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1963), Government of India, Broad Heads of Development, Planning Commission, "Second Five-Year Plan (1956-1961)": New Delhi.
- Plunkett Foundation (1943), "Yearbook of Agricultural Cooperation" by Dr. C.R. Fay: United Kingdom.
- Plunkett Foundation (1951), "Yearbook of Agricultural Cooperation" by Henry F. Infield: United Kingdom.
- Reserve Bank of India (1955), Government of India, Reserve Bank of India, "All-India Rural Credit Survey; Report of the Committee of Direction Vol II": Mumbai.
- Supreme Court of India (1955), Gosamvardhan Enquiry Committee, Supreme Court of India, "Gosamvardhan Enquiry Committee Report", Government of India Press: Allahabad.
- Survey of India (1954), Government of India, Geological Survey of India, Survey of India, "Records" Vol.85 (2): Kolkata.
- United Nations (1950), UN Publishing, "World Iron Ore Resources and Their Utilization": New York.
- United Nations (1952-1954), United Nations Statistics Division, "Per Capita National Products of Fifty-five Countries", Series B No. 4: New York.
- United Nations (1954, 1956), United Nations Statistics Division, "United Nations Statistical Yearbook": New York.
- United Nations (1956, 1957), United Nations Statistics Division, "UN Monthly Bulletin of Statistics" October 1956, March & October 1957: New York.
- United Nations Department of Economic Affairs (1951), United Nations, "Proceedings of the United Nations Scientific Conference on the Conservation and Utilization of Resources": New York.
- United Nations Department of Economic Affairs (1953), United Nations, Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, "Development of Mineral Resources in Asia and the Far East": New York.
- United Nations Statistics Division (1948, 1951, 1954), United Nations, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Welfare, "Demographic Yearbook": New York.
- United States Department of Agriculture (1950), Federal Government of the United States, "Census of Agriculture 1950": Washington D.C.
- World Bank (1957), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, "International Finance Statistics" March Issue: Washington D.C.
- "World Petroleum Report" (1958)

### **Articles in Journals, Newspapers, Magazines and Seminars**

- "2,00,000 Houses Destroyed by Flood in China Hongkong, July 1", National Herald, Lucknow, 2 July 1959.
- "Cattle Shortage in China", Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 15 May 1956.
- "Krishnappa Delegation Report", Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 15 May 1956.



- "The Economist's Article", The Pioneer, Lucknow, 27 October 1956.
- "What is the Key of Economic Growth?", Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 15 January 1958.
- Apte, Shrikant (1957), "Rishi Kheti", Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 29 January 1957.
- Balarka (1958), Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 28 December 1958.
- Bansil, P.C., "Indian Food Resources and Population", *The Eastern Economist*.
- Blair, John M. (1948), "Does Large-Scale Enterprise Result in Lower Costs?", *American Economic Review*, 38 (2): 121-152.
- Chandrasekhar S. (1959), The Statesman, New Delhi, 10 January 1959.
- Ching-Tai, Chang (1955), *Hsueh Hsi ('Study')*.
- Dhar, N.R. (1956), The Pioneer, Lucknow, 19 December 1956.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1925), *Young India*, March 12.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1955), *Harijan*, June 25.
- Gee, E.R., *Bulletin of Economic Minerals*, Vol 16.
- Gregg, Richard B. (1958), "One Way to Increase Food Production", National Herald, Lucknow, 23 March 1958.
- Gupta, Amalendu Das (1958), "Inexhaustible Power from Water- Prospects of Controlled Nuclear Fusion", The Statesman, New Delhi, 15 January 1958.
- Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 16 December 1958.
- Khrushchev (1959), "Interview with Senator Hubert H. Humphrey of the USA", The Pioneer, Lucknow, 21 January 1959.
- Lehman, Herbert H. (1957), National Herald, Lucknow, 28 September 1957.
- Lokanathan, P.S. (1943), "A Matter of Bottlenecks", *The Eastern Economist*, New Delhi, 30 July 1943.
- Lokanathan, P.S. (1943), "Cottage Industries and The Place", *The Eastern Economist*, New Delhi, July 23 1943.
- Lokanathan, P.S. (1943), "Occupational Planning", *The Eastern Economist*, New Delhi, July 1943.
- Namboodiripad, E.M.S. (1957), National Herald, Lucknow, 17 September 1957.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1957), Speech delivered in a meeting of the Association of Manufacturers in April 1957, Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 14 April 1957.
- Pant, K.C. (1959), "Fertilizers for More Food", Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 1959.
- Parsons, Kenneth H., Penn, Raymond J. & Raup, Philip M. (1951), "Transfer Areas" in *Land Tenure: Proceedings of the International Conference on Land Tenure and Related Problems in World Agriculture*, held at Madison, Wisconsin, 1951, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin.
- Patil R.K. (1951), "Economic Condition of the Peasant", National Herald, Lucknow, 23 April 1951.
- Rao, M.R. Raghavendra (1958), The Pioneer, Lucknow, 1 June 1958.
- Schiller, Otto (1956), "The Resources and Performance of Soviet Agriculture", *The Journal of Farm Economics*, 38 (2): 306.
- Sheehan, Robert (1958), A Pill to Cure Over-Population?, *American Life Magazine*, July 7.
- Simens, A.T. (1941), "Marketing Report on Groundnut".
- Sivaraman, M.S. (1958), "If Each Field Grows Its Manure", The Pioneer, Lucknow, 28 May, 1958.
- Tandon, R.K. (1935-36), Sugarcane Manurial Trials in Uttar Pradesh, *Indian Journal of Sugarcane Research and Development*, Shahjahanpur.
- Taylor J.B. (1944), *The Bombay Co-operative Quarterly*, 27: 259-260.
- The Economist, London, 6 May, 1944.
- The Pioneer, Lucknow, 19 November 1957.
- The Statesman, New Delhi, 6 May 1958.

### **Publications in Conferences and Reports, Speeches**

“Cooperative Farming”, A monograph published in 1957 by Indian Cooperative Union: New Delhi.

Biswas, N.K. (1956), Note in Tour Diary after visiting M/s Daihatsu Ltd. in Japan as a member of a delegation on November 26: West Bengal.

Bunker, Ellsworth (1957), Speech delivered at a luncheon meeting on 21 April 1957 of the Indian Junior Chamber of Commerce: New Delhi.

Voelcker, John Augustus (1889), Report on the Improvement of Indian Agriculture, Eyre and Spottiswoode: London.

Businessmen’s Commission on Agriculture (1927), “Report- The Condition of Agriculture in the United States and Measures for Its Improvement”, National Industrial Corporate Board, Inc & Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America: New York City & Washington D.C.

Food and Agriculture Minister of the Government of India (1956), Speech delivered on 18 April 1956 at an inauguration of a two-day conference of representatives of state co-operative institutes: New Delhi.

Khrushchev, Nikita (1956), “Criticism of a Number of Ministers, Ministries and State and Collective Farms”, Speech delivered in July 1956 at the Closing Ceremony of Siberian Farmer’s Conference.

Kripalani, Acharya J.B. (1946), Presidential Address delivered in November 1946 at the 54th Session of the Indian National Congress: Meerut.

Report of 12th International Geological Congress (1913): Toronto.

Robson, “Sizes of Factories and Firms in the Cotton Industry”, Read on 9 November 1949 before The Manchester Statistical Society: Manchester.

Russel, John E. (1943), Paper read in April 1943 at Conference of the Rothamsted Experimental Station: Devon.

Nehru, Jawaharlal (1956), Speech delivered on 29 October 1956 at Uttar Pradesh Political Conference: Jaunpur.

Tung, Mao Tse (1957), Speech Delivered on 12 March 1957 at the Chinese Communist Party’s National Conference on Propaganda Work.

Bevan, Aneurin (1957), Speech delivered on 2 April 1957 at a Public Meeting of British Socialist Party: New Delhi.

Masani, M.R. (1959), Speech Delivered on 14 April 1959 in the Lok Sabha: New Delhi.

# India's Poverty and Its Solution<sup>1</sup>

## Books and Indirect Sources

- Adams, Brooks (1895), *The Law of Civilisation and Decay*.
- Antsy, Vera (1929), *The Economic Development of India*, London: Longmans. Quoted in Kingsley Davis (1951), *Population of India and Pakistan*, New York: Princeton University Press.
- App, Frank & Waller, Allen G. (1938), *Farm Economics- Management and Distribution*, Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company.
- Ayres, Quincy Claude (1936), *Soil Erosion and Its Control*, New York & London: McGraw Hill Book Company.
- Bansal, P.C. (1958), *India's Food Resources and Population*, Bombay: Vora & Co.
- Bateman, Alan M. (1942), *Economic Mineral Deposits*, London: John Wiley and Sons.
- Beard, Miriam (1938), *History of the Business Man*, New York: Macmillan Co.
- Belshaw, Horace (1956), *Population Growth and Levels of Consumption*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.
- Black, J.D. (1959), *Economics for Agriculture: Selected Writings of John D. Black*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Buck, John Lossing (1930), *Land Utilisation in China*, Taipei: The Orient Cultural Service.
- Buck, John Lossing (1955), *Chinese Farm Economy*, China: University of Nanking.
- Burger, John F. (1957), *African Adventures*, London: Robert Hale Ltd.
- Castro, Josue De (1952), *Geography of Hunger*, Georgia: Little, Brown Company.
- Chand, Gyan (1956), *Some Aspects of Population Problem of India*, Bihar: Patna University.
- Clark, Colin (1957) ed., *The Conditions of Economic Progress*, London: Macmillan.
- Coale and Hoover (1939), *Population Growth and Economic Development in Low-Income Countries*, England: Oxford University Press.
- Cohen, R.L. (1949), *The Economics of Agriculture*, London: Nisbet & Company Ltd.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cole, G.D.H. (1940), *Practical Economics, Or Studies in Economic Planning*, New Orleans: Pelican.
- Coudenhove-Kalergi, Richard N. (1938), *The Totalitarian State Against Man*, Sir Andrew McFadyean (ed), London: Frederick Muller Ltd.
- Dandekar, V.M. (1956), *Use of Food Surpluses for Economic Development*, Poona: Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics.
- Darling, M.L. (1928), *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, England: Oxford University Press.
- Davis, Kingsley (1951), *Population of India and Pakistan*, New York: Princeton University Press.
- Dhar, P.N. (1958), *Small Scale Industries in Delhi*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Djilas, Milovan (1957), *The New Class*, London: Thames & Hudson.
- Doubleday, Thomas (1853), *The True Law of Population: Shewn to be Connected with the Food of the People*, London: Smith, Elder & Company.
- Drysdale, C.V. (1933), *Judgment on Birth-Control*, Eugenics Review, January 1933. Quoted in D Ghosh (1946), *Pressure of Population and Economic Efficiency in India*, Mumbai: Oxford University Press.
- Dutt, Rajani Palme (1949), *India Today*, New Delhi: People's Publishing House.

---

<sup>1</sup> Published 1964 by Asia Publishing House, Bombay. 527 pages.

- Dutt, Romesh Chunder (1916), *The Economic History of India under Early British Rule, from the Rise of the British Power in 1757 to the Accession of Queen Victoria in 1837*, London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd.
- Evidence before the Commons' Committee*, 1832, 2 (1), p. 195. Quoted in Romesh Dutt (1906), *The Economic History of India (Early British Rule)*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd.
- Faulkner, Edward H. (1945), *Ploughman's Folly*, London: Michael Joseph Ltd.
- Fazl, Abu'l, *Ain-I-Akbari*.
- Fisher, Allan G.B. (1945), *Economic Progress and Social Security*, London: Macmillan. Quoted in E.M. Ojala (1952), *Agriculture and Economic Progress*, England: Oxford University Press.
- Gandhi, Kanu (1945), *Swaraj Through Charkha*, Wardha: AISA Sevagram.
- Gandhi, Mohandas K. (1934), *Man vs. Machine*, Harijan, 16 November 1934. Quoted in R.K. Prabhu & U.R. Rao (1945), *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Gangulee, Nagendranath (1935), *The Indian Peasant and His Environment (The Linlithgow Commission and After)*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Ghosh, D (1946), *Pressure of Population and Economic Efficiency in India*, Mumbai: Oxford University Press.
- Ghosh, O.K. (1957), *Problems of Economic Planning in India*, Allahabad: Kitabistan.
- Gregg, Richard B. (1952), *A Philosophy of Indian Economic Development*, Ahmadabad: Navjivan Press.
- Gregg, Richard B. (1952), *Which Way Lies Hope?*, Ahmedabad: Navjivan Press.
- Howard, Albert (1943), *An Agricultural Testament*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Howard, Albert (1945), *Farming and Gardening for Health or Disease*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd.
- Howe, F.C. (1922), Denmark; *The Cooperative Way*, New York: Coward-McCann Inc.
- Hubbard, Leonard B. (1939), *Economics of Soviet Agriculture*, London: Macmillan and Co.
- Jacks, J.V. & White, R.O. (1941), *The Rape of the Earth: A World Survey of Soil Erosion*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd.
- Jasny, Naum (1949), *The Socialized Agriculture of the USSR: Plans and Performance*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Korn, Itzhak (1952), *Co-operative Farming in Israel*, Tel Aviv: Histadrut.
- Krause, Walter (1955), *The International Economy*, New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Krishnamachari, T.T. (1956), Speech in the Lok Sabha. Quoted in Richard B. Gregg (1958), *Introduction to A Philosophy of Indian Economic Development*, Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House.
- Krishnan, M.S. (1955), *Iron Ores of India*, Calcutta: Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science.
- Lal, Chaman (1949), *Cottage Industries and Agriculture in Japan*, Mumbai: New Book Co. Ltd.
- Lal, Sunder (1938), *Bharat Mein Angrezi Rajya*, Allahabad: Onkar Press.
- Lewis, Arthur W. (1957), *The Theory of Economic Growth*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Manoilescu, Mihail (1931), *Theories of Protection and International Trade*, London: P.S. King & Son.
- Marx, Karl & Engels, Friedrich (1848), *The Communist Manifesto*, London: Workers' Educational Association.
- Mitrany, David (1930), *The Land & The Peasant in Rumania: The War and Agrarian Reform (1917-21)*, London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press.

- Mitrany, David (1951), *Marx Against the Peasant: A Study in Social Dogmatism*, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press.
- Mukerji, Radhakamal (1926), *Rural Economy of India*, London.
- Mumford, Lewis (1934), *Technics and Civilization*, San Diego: Harcourt, Brace and Company.
- Nair, Kusum (1961), *Blossoms in the Dust*, London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd.
- Nayyar, Pyarelal (1956), *The Last Phase of Mahatma Gandhi*, Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing.
- Ojala, E.M. (1952), *Agriculture and Economic Progress*, England: Oxford University Press.
- Pendell, Elmer (1951), *Population on the Loose*, New York: Wilfred Funk.
- Pfeiffer, E. (1947), *Soil Fertility: Renewal and Preservation*, London: Faber and Faber.
- Radhakrishnan, S. (1926), *The Hindu Way of Life*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Ranga, N.G. & P.R. Parachuri (1958), *The Peasant and Co-operative Farming*, Nidubrolu: Indian Peasant's Institute.
- Renne, R.R. (1947), *Land Economics*, New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Rowen, Bowels & Prehson (1952), *Mineral Resources of the World*.
- Sarkar, Jadunath (1952), *Shivaji and His Times*, Calcutta: M. C. Sarkar and Sons Ltd.
- Schiller, Otto (1956), *Co-operative Farming and Individual Farming on Co-operative Lines*, New Delhi: All India Cooperative Union.
- Schumpeter, Joseph A. (1951), *The Theory of Economic Development*, London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Sen, A.K. (1960), *Choice of Techniques: An Aspect of the Theory of Planned Economic Development*, England: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, Adam (1776), *The Wealth of Nations*, London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell.
- Socialist Union (1956), *Twentieth Century Socialism*, London: Penguin Books.
- Sondhi, V.P. & R.S. Mehta (1957), *India's Resources*.
- Spillman, William Jasper (1914), *The Law of Diminishing Increments*, Yonkers-on-Hudson and Chicago: World Book Company.
- Stalin, Joseph (1952), *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, New York: International Publishers.
- Stamp, Dudeley L. (1952), *Land for Tomorrow. The Underdeveloped World*, Indiana: Indiana University Press. Quoted in N.G.Ranga & P.R. Parachuri (1958), *The Peasant and Co-operative Farming*, Nidubrolu: Indian Peasant's Institute.
- Talpade, R.M. (1951), *Co-operative Farming, With Special Reference to Bombay State*, Bombay: Provincial Cooperative Institute.
- The Mining, Geological and Metallurgical Institute of India (1951), *The Progress of the Mineral Industry of India*, Kolkata.
- Thomas, Edgar (1927), *The Economics of Small Holdings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Van Der Post, A.P. (1937), *Economics of Agriculture*, South Africa: Central News Agency Ltd.
- Wales, Nym (1941), *China Builds for Democracy: A Story of Cooperative Industry*, China: Scholarly Press.
- Webb, Sydney & Beatrice (1937), *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation*, London: Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd.
- Wood, Thomas Barlow (1920), *The Chemistry of Crop Production*, London: University Tutorial Press Ltd.
- Woytinsky, W.S. & E.S. Woytinsky (1953), *World Population and Production Trends and Outlook*, New York: Twentieth Century Ford.
- Woytinsky, Wladimir S. (1957), *India: The Awakening Giant*, New York: Harper and Brothers.
- Yajñavalkya (9th-6th century B.C.), *Brahadaranyaka Upanishad* (vr. ed.).

### Government, International Organisations & NGO Publications

- British Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation (1924), Government of United Kingdom, British Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation, "Final Report", H.M. Stationery Office (printed by Eyre and Spottiswoode, Limited): Great Britain.
- Business Commission on Agriculture (1926), National Industrial Conference Board Inc & The Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America, "The Condition of Agriculture in the United States and Measures for its Improvement: A Report": New York.
- Central Statistical Organization (1962), Department of Statistics, Government of India, "Estimates of National Income 1948-49 to 1960-61": New Delhi.
- Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (1951), Government of India, Indian Council of Medical Research, Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, "Diet Surveys of India 1935-48": New Delhi.
- Economic Analysis and Policy Division (1962), United Nations, World Economic and Social Survey, "Economic Survey of Asia and the Far East 1961": New York.
- Embassy of the People's Republic of China in India (1955), Article in Circulation by Chau Hansing: New Delhi.
- Food and Agriculture Organization (1950), United Nations, "Report on World Census of Agriculture 1950": Rome.
- Food and Agriculture Organization (1953), United Nations, "The State of Food and Agriculture Part I August Issue": Rome.
- Food and Agriculture Organization (1953, 1954, 1955, 1961), United Nations, "FAO Yearbooks": Rome.
- Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations, "Survey Cooperatives and Land Use: Rome.
- Government of India (1918), Indian Industrial Commission, Government Printing Press, "Report of Indian Industrial Commission 1916-18" by Sir Thomas Holland: New Delhi.
- Government of India (1943), "Report Technological Possibilities of Agricultural Development in India" by Dr. W. Burns": New Delhi.
- Government of United Provinces, India. (1948), "Report of the United Provinces Zamindari Abolition Committee", Allahabad: Printed by M. G. Shome, Superintendent, Printing and Stationary, Uttar Pradesh.
- Her Majesty's Stationery Office (1957), Government of United Kingdom, Commonwealth Economic Committee, "Grain Crops- A Review": London.
- Indian Famine Commission (1880), Crown Rule in India, "First Indian Famine Commission Report": Kolkata.
- International Labour Organization (1953), ILO News September Issue, "Report International Labour Organisation's Asian Regional Conference" by Dr. D.A. Morse: Tokyo.
- International Labour Organization (1953), International Labour Review August Issue, "Population Growth and Living Standards" by Colin Clark: Geneva.
- International Labour Organization (1954), International Labour Review November Issue, Article "Population Growth and Living Standards" by Albert Nevett: Geneva.
- International Labour Organization (1954), International Labour Review January Issue, Article "Child-Bearing and the Standard of Life" by Sten S. Wilson: Geneva.
- International Labour Organization (1954), International Labour Review January Issue, "Report to the First All-India Conference on Family Planning (Bombay, 1951)" by Shakuntala Paranjpye: Geneva.
- International Labour Organization (1955), International Labour Review March Issue, Article "Some Effects of Farm Mechanization" by Desmond L.W. Anker, Geneva.
- International Labour Organization (1955), International Labour Review October Issue, Article "Handicrafts in Europe" by Marcel Laloire, Geneva.

- International Labour Organization (1956, 1959), International Labour Review May & June 1956, March 1959 Issues: Geneva.
- International Labour Organization (1956), International Labour Review May Issue, "World's Working Population": Geneva.
- International Labour Organization (1957), International Labour Review November Issue, Article "Changes in European Peasant Farming" by Doreen Wariner, Geneva.
- League of Nations (1938), European Conference on the Rural Life, "Report of the Preparatory Committee on the Work of Its First Session": Geneva.
- Ministry of Agriculture (1952), Government of India, Economic and Statistical Adviser to the Government of India, Agricultural Situation of India November Issue, Ministry of Agriculture, "Population and Food Supply in India", Vol. VII No. 8: New Delhi.
- Ministry of Agriculture (1956, 1961), Government of India, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, "Agricultural Situation in India 1956 & 1961": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Agriculture (1955-56), Government of India, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, "Studies on the Economics of Farm Management": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Food and Agriculture (1957), Government of India, The Food-grains Inquiry Committee, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, "Report of The Food-grains Inquiry Committee 1957": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Food and Agriculture (1961), Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, "Bulletin on Food Statistics 1961": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Food and Agriculture (1962), Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of India, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Brochure "Area and Production of Principal Crops in India": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Food and Agriculture (1962), Government of India, "Economic Survey of Indian Agriculture 1960-61": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Home Affairs (1901, 1931, 1941, 1951, 1962), Government of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, "India's Census Report 1901, 1931, 1941, 1951, 1962": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Home Affairs (1951), Government of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, "Census Report of Uttar Pradesh (Part 1-A) 1951": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Home Affairs (1951), Government of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, Census of India Part 1, "Sample Census of Births and Deaths 1953-54": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (1957), Government of India, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Pamphlet Geology of India, May: New Delhi.
- Ministry of Mines (1955), Government of India, Geological Survey of India, Mineral Information Bureau, Ministry of Mines, "Indian Minerals", Vol. XI, No. 2 (Reserves for 1955).
- Ministry of Mines (1957), Government of India, Geological Survey of India, Mineral Information Bureau, Ministry of Mines, "Indian Minerals, Vol.II, No. 2, Bharat Me Koyle Ke Sansadhan" by Chintamani Tripathi, Kolkata.
- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (1953), Government of India, Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, "Blue Book on National Income and Expenditure 1946-52": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1961), Central Statistics Office, Government of India, Central Statistics Office, "Basic Statistics Relating to Indian Economy (1950-51—1960-61)": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1951), Broad Heads of Development, Planning Commission, "*First Five-Year Plan (1951-1955)*": New Delhi.



- Planning Commission (1954), Government of India, Planning Commission, "Report of the Textile Enquiry Committee": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1955), Government of India, Panel on Land Reforms, Planning Commission, "Report of the Committee on Problems of Reorganization": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1955), Government of India, Karve Committee, Planning Commission, "Report of the Karve Committee": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1956), Government of India, Panel on Land Reforms, Planning Commission, "Report of Committee on Problems of Land Reforms": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1956), Government of India, Panel on Land Reforms, Planning Commission, "Report of Committee on Size of Holding": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1956), Government of India, Panel on Land Reforms, Planning Commission, "Report on Size of the Farms": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1956), Government of India, Planning Commission, "Report of Agrarian Delegation to China on Agricultural Co-operatives (Patil Delegation)": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1956), Government of India, Planning Commission, "Report of Agrarian Delegation to China on Agricultural Planning and Techniques (Krishnappa Delegation)": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1957), Government of India, Research Programmes Committee, Planning Commission, "Report on Studies in Economics of Farm Management in Uttar Pradesh 1954-55" by Dr. G.D. Agarwal, Government Agricultural College: Kanpur.
- Planning Commission (1958), Government of India, Panel on Land Reforms, Planning Commission, "Committee on Tenancy Reforms Report": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1963), Government of India, Broad Heads of Development, Planning Commission, "Second Five-Year Plan (1956-1961)": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1961), Government of India, Programme Evaluation Organization, Planning Commission, "Second Agricultural Labour Enquiry": New Delhi.
- Plunkett Foundation (1943), "Yearbook of Agricultural Cooperation" by Dr. C.R. Fay: United Kingdom.
- Plunkett Foundation (1951), "Yearbook of Agricultural Cooperation" by Henry F. Infield: United Kingdom.
- President of India (1961), Government of India, Government of India Publications Division, "Report of the Third Finance Commission 1961": New Delhi.
- Reserve Bank of India (1955), Government of India, Reserve Bank of India, "All-India Rural Credit Survey; Report of the Committee of Direction Vol II": Mumbai.
- Survey of India (1954), Government of India, Geological Survey of India, Survey of India, "Records" Vol.85 (2): Kolkata.
- Tapioca Enquiry Committee (1952), State Government of Kerala, "Report of the Tapioca Enquiry Committee": Kerala.
- United Nations (1950), UN Publishing, "World Iron Ore Resources and Their Utilization": New York.
- United Nations (1952-1954), United Nations Statistics Division, "Per Capita National Products of Fifty-five Countries" Series B No. 4: New York.
- United Nations (1954, 1956), United Nations Statistics Division, "United Nations Statistical Yearbook": New York.
- United Nations (1956, 1957, 1962, 1963), United Nations Statistics Division, "UN Monthly Bulletin of Statistics" October 1956, March & October 1957, April, August, September 1962, January & October 1963: New York.
- United Nations Department of Economic Affairs (1951), United Nations, "Proceedings of the United Nations Scientific Conference on the Conservation and Utilization of Resources": New York.



- United Nations Department of Economic Affairs (1953), United Nations, Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, "Development of Mineral Resources in Asia and the Far East": New York.
- United Nations Statistics Division (1948, 1951, 1954, 1961), United Nations, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Welfare, "Demographic Yearbook": New York.
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (1961), United Nations, *World Economic Survey Report 1961*, New York.
- United States Department of Agriculture (1950), Federal Government of the United States, "Census of Agriculture 1950": Washington D.C.
- World Bank (1957), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, "International Finance Statistics March Issue": Washington D.C.
- "World Petroleum Report" (1958)

### Articles in Journals, Newspapers, Magazines and Seminars

- "2,00,000 Houses Destroyed by Flood in China Hongkong, July 1", National Herald, Lucknow, 2 July 1959.
- "Advantages of Cooperative Farming", *AICC Economic Review*, New Delhi, 1 September 1959.
- "Cattle Shortage in China", Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 15 May 1956.
- "Krishnappa Delegation Report", Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 15 May 1956.
- "The Economist's Article", The Pioneer, Lucknow, 27 October 1956.
- "What is the Key of Economic Growth?", Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 15 January 1958.
- "A Reuter's Report", The Pioneer, Lucknow, 25 September 1962.
- "Annual Number", *The Eastern Economist*, New Delhi, 1960.
- "Bureaucratic Plans Stifle Economic Enterprise", *Capital*, Calcutta, 17 December 1959.
- "Dr. Otto Schiller's Report: A Study of Co-operative Farms in the Country", The Pioneer, Lucknow, 7 October 1959.
- "Food for Soil", *AICC Economic Review*, New Delhi, 1 July 1959.
- "Problems, Paradoxes, Prospects of Indian Planning", *Capital*, Calcutta, 7 December 1959.
- "Report from Moscow", Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 1 October 1959.
- "Rostow on Economic Growth", The Economist, London, 15 & 23 August 1959.
- "Signs of the Time", The Pioneer, Lucknow, 10 June 1960.
- "Wastage in Industrial Capacity", *Economic Weekly*, Bombay, 20 May 1961.
- "Why Organic Manures?", *AICC Economic Review*, New Delhi, 15 November 1958.
- Alexandrov, G.F. (1954), Interview to Pressmen at Russian Delegation to the 41st session of the Indian Science Congress, Hyderabad, 6 January 1954.
- Apte, Shrikant (1957), "Rishi Kheti", Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 29 January 1957.
- Arnold Toynbee (1955), *Harijan*, June 25.
- Balarka (1958), Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 28 December, 1958.
- Bansil, P.C., "Indian Food Resources and Population", *The Eastern Economist*, 21 August 1953.
- Bauer, P.T. (1959), *Capital*, Calcutta, 17 December 1959.
- Blair, John M. (1948), "Does Large-Scale Enterprise Result in Lower Costs?", *American Economic Review*, 38 (2): 121-152.
- Brayne (1929), *Young India*, 14 November 1929.
- Bromfield, Louis (1954), "Agriculture in the United States", The Economist, New York.
- Chandrasekhar S. (1959), The Statesman, New Delhi, 10 January, 1959.
- Ching-Tai, Chang (1955), *Hsueh Hsi* ('Study').
- Das, Ram (1962), "Utilization of Gobar Gas", The Pioneer, Lucknow, 11 March 1962.
- Desai, Mahadeo (1924), *Young India*, 13 November 1924.
- Dhar, N.R. (1956), The Pioneer, Lucknow, 19 December 1956.

- Dhebar, U.N. (1959), *AICC Economic Review*, 1 July 1959.
- Editorial, National Herald, Lucknow, 13 September 1961.
- The Economist, London, 6 May 1944.
- Gadgil, D.R. (1961), "An Approach to Indian Planning", *Economic Weekly*, Bombay, 8 July 1961.
- Galbraith, John Kenneth (1961), Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 22 July 1961.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1921), *Young India*, 3 November 1921.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1924), *Young India*, 26 December 1924.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1925), *Young India*, 12 March 1925.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1925), *Young India*, 27 August 1925.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1925), *Young India*, 5 November 1925.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1925), *Young India*, 6 August 1925.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1926), *Young India*, 18 March 1961.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1931), *Young India*, 2 July 1931.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1933), *Harijan*, 22 June 1933.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1934), *Harijan*, 16 November 1934.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1935), *Harijan*, 22 January 1935.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1935), *Young India*, 28 May 1935.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1936), *Harijan*, 16 May 1936.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1937), *Harijan*, 2 January 1937.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1940), *Harijan*, 13 April 1940.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1940), *Harijan*, 29 September 1940.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1942), *Harijan*, 15 February, 1942.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1946), *Harijan*, 1 September 1946.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1948), "Why the Constructive Programme?", Indian National Congress, New Delhi.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1925), *Young India*, 18 June 1925.
- Gee, E.R., *Bulletin of Economic Minerals*, Vol 16.
- Gregg, Richard B. (1958), "One Way to Increase Food Production", National Herald, Lucknow, 23 March 1958.
- Gupta, Amalendu Das (1958), "Inexhaustible Power from Water- Prospects of Controlled Nuclear Fusion", The Statesman, New Delhi, 15 January 1958.
- Harijan*, 1 March 1935.
- Harijan*, 2 November 1934.
- Harijan*, 23 June 1935.
- Harijan*, 29 August 1936.
- Hindustan Times (1960), New Delhi, 5 September 1960.
- Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 13 July 1959.
- Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 13 October 1959.
- Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 28 March 1960.
- Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 31 March 1961.
- Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 6 April 1960.
- Hindustan Times, New Delhi, December 16 1958.
- The Indian Express, New Delhi, 22 June 1959.
- Khrushchev (1959), "Interview with Senator Hubert H. Humphrey of the USA", The Pioneer, Lucknow, 21 January, 1959
- Lehman, Herbert H. (1957), National Herald, Lucknow, 28 September 1957.
- Lokanathan, P.S. (1943), "A Matter of Bottlenecks", *The Eastern Economist*, 30 July 1943, New Delhi.
- Lokanathan, P.S. (1943), "Cottage Industries and The Place", *The Eastern Economist*, July 23, 1943, New Delhi.

- Lokanathan, P.S. (1943), "Occupational Planning", *The Eastern Economist*, July 1943, p 265, New Delhi.
- Mane, P.V. (1961), "Humus from Peat", *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 7 September 1961.
- Mukherjee, A.K. (1962), *The Pioneer*, Lucknow, 7 August 1962.
- Nagar, V.D. (1959), "Agricultural Prosperity through Co-operative Farming", *AICC Economic Review*, New Delhi, 15 September 1959.
- Nambiar, A.C.N. (1960), *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 13 June 1960.
- Namboodiripad, E.M.S. (1957), *National Herald*, Lucknow, 17 September 1957.
- National Herald*, Lucknow, 14 August 1960.
- National Herald*, Lucknow, 18 July 1960.
- National Herald*, Lucknow, 24 August 1962.
- National Herald*, Lucknow, 24 May 1960.
- National Herald*, Lucknow, 3 September 1962.
- National Herald*, Lucknow, 30 January 1960.
- National Herald*, Lucknow, 4 July 1959.
- National Herald*, Lucknow, 7 October 1959.
- National Herald*, Lucknow, 9 January 1963.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1957), Speech delivered in a meeting of the Association of Manufacturers in April 1957, *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 14 April 1957.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1959), *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 29 September 1959.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1959), Speech delivered at the inauguration of the annual session of the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, New Delhi, 7 March 1959.
- Nutter, Warren (1957), "Soviet Economic Developments: Some Observations on Soviet Industrial Growth", *The American Economic Review*, American Economic Association, United States, May 1957.
- Pant, K.C. (1959), "Fertilizers for More Food", *Hindustan Times*, 1959.
- Parsons, Kenneth H., Penn, Raymond J. & Raup, Philip M. (1951), "Transfer Areas" in *Land Tenure: Proceedings of the International Conference on Land Tenure and Related Problems in World Agriculture*, held at Madison, Wisconsin, 1951, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin.
- Patil R.K. (1951), "Economic Condition of the Peasant", *National Herald*, Lucknow, 23 April 1951.
- Patil, S.K. (1961), *The Times of India*, New Delhi, 26 March 1961.
- The Pioneer*, Lucknow, 11 November 1957.
- The Pioneer*, Lucknow, 17 July 1960.
- The Pioneer*, Lucknow, 18 March 1962.
- The Pioneer*, Lucknow, 19 November 1957.
- The Pioneer*, Lucknow, 24 April 1960.
- The Pioneer*, Lucknow, 24 January 1961.
- The Pioneer*, Lucknow, 24 May 1960.
- The Pioneer*, Lucknow, 31 August 1959.
- Rajagopalachari. C. (1958), *The Swarajya*, Madras, 23 August 1958.
- Rao, M.R. Raghavendra (1958), *The Pioneer*, Lucknow, 1 June 1958.
- Saksena, Jyotishwaroop (1959), "Ten Years of Nehru", *The Quest*, Calcutta, July-September.
- Santhanam, K. (1939), *Kalki*, Madras, 17 August 1939.
- Sarkar Jadunath (1911), "Rise and Fall of the Sikh Power", *The Modern Review*, Calcutta, April 1911.
- Schiller, Otto (1956), "The Resources and Performance of Soviet Agriculture", *The Journal of Farm Economics*, 38 (2): 306.
- Sen, B.R. (1959), *The Pioneer*, Lucknow, 3 June 1959.

- Sheehan, Robert (1958), "A Pill to Cure Over-Population?", *American Life Magazine*, July 1958.
- Shroff, Pheroze J. (1958), *The Pioneer*, Lucknow, 7 October 1959.
- Shroff, Pheroze J. (1959), "Co-operative Farming: A Psychological Searchlight", *Kalki*, Madras, 13 September 1959.
- Simens, A.T. (1941), "Marketing Report on Groundnut".
- Sivaraman, M.S. (1958), "If Each Field Grows Its Manure", *The Pioneer*, Lucknow, 28 May, 1938.
- The Statesman*, New Delhi, 6 May 1958.
- Tandon, R.K. (1935-36), Sugarcane Manurial Trials in Uttar Pradesh, *Indian Journal of Sugarcane Research and Development*, Shahjahanpur.
- Taylor J.B. (1944), *The Bombay Co-operative Quarterly*, 27: 259-260, Bombay, March 1944.
- Vinoba, Acharya (1957), *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 29 January 1957.
- Young India*, 5 November 1925.

### **Publications in Conferences and Reports, Speeches**

- "Cooperative Farming", A monograph published in 1957 by Indian Cooperative Union: New Delhi.
- Bevan, Aneurin (1957), Speech delivered on April 2 1957 at a Public Meeting of British Socialist Party: New Delhi.
- Biswas, N.K. (1956), Note in Tour Diary after visiting M/s Daihatsu Ltd. in Japan as a member of a delegation on November 26: West Bengal.
- Bunker, Ellsworth (1957), Speech delivered at a luncheon meeting on 21 April 1957 of the Indian Junior Chamber of Commerce: New Delhi.
- Businessmen's Commission on Agriculture (1927), *Report- The Condition of Agriculture in the United States and Measures for Its Improvement*, National Industrial Corporate Board, Inc & Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America: New York City & Washington D.C.
- Conference of Representatives of state Co-operative Institutes: New Delhi.
- Congress Planning Sub-committee (1959), *Report* submitted to the All India Congress Committee, September 1959, New Delhi.
- Food and Agriculture Minister of the Government of India (1956), Speech delivered on 18 April 1956 at an inauguration of a two-day conference of representatives of State Co-operative Institutes: New Delhi.
- Ford Foundation Team (1959), *Report on India's Food Crisis and Steps to Meet It*: New Delhi.
- Jain, Ajit Prasad (1956), Speech Delivered on 18 April 1956 inaugurating a two-day conference of representatives of state co-operative institutes: New Delhi.
- Khrushchev, Nikita (1956), "Criticism of a Number of Ministers, Ministries and State and Collective Farms", Speech delivered in July 1956 at the Closing Ceremony of Siberian Farmer's Conference.
- Khrushchev, Nikita (1961), Speech Delivered on 11 January 1961 at a meeting of the Soviet Communist Party's Central Committee.
- Khrushchev, Nikita (1961), Speech Delivered on 22 December 1961 at Kiev: Russia.
- Kripalani, Acharya J.B. (1946), Presidential Address delivered in November 1946 at the 54th Session of the Indian National Congress: Meerut.
- Lai, Chou-en (1962), Speech Delivered on 16 April 1962 in the secret session of the National People's Congress (Parliament): China.
- Maddox, James (1951), "Transferring Agricultural Technology from Developed to Under-developed Areas" read at the International Conference on land Tenures and Related Problems in World Agriculture: Wisconsin.

- Masani, M.R. (1959), Speech Delivered on 14 April 1959 in the Lok Sabha: New Delhi.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1956), Speech delivered on 29 October 1956 at Uttar Pradesh Political Conference: Jaunpur.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1959), Speech Delivered on 28 March 1959 in the Lok Sabha: New Delhi.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1960), Speech Delivered on 27 March 1960 the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry: Calcutta.
- Report of 12th International Geological Congress* (1913): Toronto.
- Robson, "Sizes of Factories and Firms in the Cotton Industry", Read on 9 November 1949 before The Manchester Statistical Society: Manchester.
- Russel, John E. (1943), Paper read in April 1943 at Conference of the Rothamsted Experimental Station: Devon.
- Shashti, Lal Bahadur (1959), Speech Delivered on June 20 1959 at the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the All-India Handloom Board: Bombay.
- Tung, Mao Tse (1957), Speech Delivered on March 12 1957 at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on Propaganda Work.
- Voelcker, John Augustus (1889), *Report on the Improvement of Indian Agriculture*, Eyre and Spottiswoode: London.

# India's Economic Policy

## The Gandhian Blueprint<sup>1</sup>

### Books and Indirect Sources

- Buck, John Lossing (1937), *Land Utilisation in China*, Chicago: The Chicago University Press.
- Clark, Colin (1957) ed., *The Conditions of Economic Progress*, London: Macmillan.
- Hilmer, Hermann (1914), *The Law of Diminishing Returns*, Yonkers-on-Hudson and Chicago: World Book Company.
- Kuznets, Simon (1971), *Economic Growth of Nations: Total Output and Production Structure*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Maddison, Angus (1969), *Economic Progress in Japan and USSR*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Mukherjee, Moni (1969), *National Income of India: Trends and Structure*, Calcutta: Statistical Publishing House.
- Myrdal, Gunnar (1972), *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, New York: Pantheon Books.
- Owens, Edgar & Shaw, Robert (1972), *Development Reconsidered: Bridging the Gap Between Government and People*, Massachusetts: Lexington Books.
- Pendell, Elmer (1951), *Population on the Loose*, New York: Wilfred Funk.
- Spillman, William Jasper (1914), *The Law of Diminishing Increments*, Yonkers-on-Hudson and Chicago: World Book Company.

### Government and International Organisations Publications

- Committee on Public Undertakings (1971-1977), Fifth Lok Sabha, Government of India, "89th Report": New Delhi.
- Economic Commission of Europe, United Nations (1957), "Economic Survey of Europe 1956": Geneva.
- Food and Agricultural Organization & Central Statistics Office (1950, 60, 70), Government of India with United Nations, "Annual Figures of Agricultural Production": New Delhi.
- Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations (1966, 1968, 1970), *FAO Production Yearbooks*: Rome.
- Indian National Committee (1976), International Chamber of Commerce, Annual Session, 25 November 1976: New Delhi.
- Indian Statistical Institute (1965), *Journal of Indian Statistical Institute* December Issue ed. Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis: Kolkata.
- Industrial Licensing Policy Inquiry Commission (Dutt Committee Report) (1969), Government of India, Report on "Size and Growth of Big Business Groups: Total Assets (1966)": New Delhi.
- International Labour Organization (1961, 1966, 1968), "ILO Yearbook of Labor Statistics": Geneva.
- Ministry of Agriculture (1976), Government of India, National Commission on Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Report on "Expenditure on Soil Conservation", Vol. V: New Delhi.
- Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture, *Farm Management Studies*: New Delhi.
- Ministry of Corporate Affairs (1971), Department of Commerce Affairs, Government of India, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, "Annual Report on Working of Companies Act 1971": New Delhi.

---

<sup>1</sup> Published 1978 by Vikas Publishing House, Delhi. 131 pages.

- Ministry of Finance (1976-1977), Government of India, Union Budget and Economic Survey, Ministry of Finance, Economic Survey, New Delhi.
- Ministry of Home Affairs (1971), Government of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, India's Census Report, New Delhi.
- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (1971), Government of India, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, "Social Background of India's Administrators" by V. Subramaniam: New Delhi.
- Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (1970, 1974, 1975), Government of India, Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation "Annual Survey of Industries": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (1970-71), Government of India, National Sample Survey Organisation, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, "Report on Agricultural Census": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (1976), Government of India, National Accounts Statistics, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, October Issue: New Delhi.
- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, "Basic Statistics relating to Indian Economy 1950-51 to 1972-73": New Delhi.
- Monopolies Inquiry Commission (1965), Government of India, Commission of Inquiry Act 1952, "MIC Report": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1951), Government of India, Broad Heads of Development, Planning Commission, "First Five-Year Plan 1951-1956": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1956), Government of India, Broad Heads of Development, Planning Commission, "Second Five-Year Plan 1956-1961": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1961), Government of India, Broad Heads of Development, Planning Commission, "Third Five Year Plan 1961-1966": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1963), Government of India, Planning Commission, Report "Effect on Land Tenure on Agricultural Production" by W.A. Ladejinsky: New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1967), Government of India, Hazari Committee, Planning Commission, "Review of Industrial Licensing System under Industries Development and Regulation Act, 1951": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1971), Government of India, Committee on Land Reforms, Planning Commission, Report on "Ceiling on Large Holdings" by P.S. Appu: New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1973), Government of India, Committee on Land Reforms, Planning Commission, "Report on Critical Assessment of the experience in land reform during the previous plan periods" by P.S. Appu: New Delhi.
- Reserve Bank of India (1976), Government of India, Reserve Bank of India Bulletin March Issue, Reserve Bank of India, Mumbai.
- Section of the Industries Department (1974), Government of India, "Report on Working of the Khadi & Village Industries".
- United Nations (1951), Statistical Papers "National Income and its Distribution in Underdeveloped Countries", Series E No. 3: New York.
- United Nations (1962), "UN Statistical Yearbook": New York.
- United States Department of Commerce, United States Government (1953), "Income Distribution in the United States": Washington.
- World Bank (1971), World Bank Report, Aid India Consortium 17-18 June 1971, Paris.
- World Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1971) and US Agency for International Development (1970), "Capital Cost of Development".

# Economic Nightmare of India

## Its Cause and Cure<sup>1</sup>

### Books and Indirect Sources

- Adams, Arthur E. & Jan S. Adams (1971), *Men Versus Systems*, New York: The Free Press.
- Adams, Brooks (1895), *The Law of Civilisation and Decay*. Quoted in Rajani Palme Dutt (1949), *India Today*, New Delhi: People's Publishing House.
- Berridge, P.S.A. (1969), *Couplings to the Khyber: the story of the North Western Railway*, Newton Abbot: David & Charles.
- Bhuleshkar, Ashok V. (ed.) (1972), *Towards Socialist Transformation of India's Economy*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
- Buck, John Lossing (1930), *Land Utilisation in China*, Taipei: The Orient Cultural Service.
- Clark, Colin (1957) ed., *The Conditions of Economic Progress*, London: Macmillan.
- Darling, M.L. (1928), *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, England: Oxford University Press.
- Davis, Kingsley (1951), *Population of India and Pakistan*, New York: Princeton University Press.
- Dhar, P.N. (1958), *Small Scale Industries in Delhi*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Dhar, P.N. & H.F. Lydall (1961), *The Role of Small Enterprises in Indian Economic Development*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Durant, Will & Ariel Durant (1968), *The Lessons of History*, New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Dutt, Romesh Chunder (1916), *The Economic History of India under Early British Rule, from the Rise of the British Power in 1757 to the Accession of Queen Victoria in 1837*, London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1927), *My Experiments with Truth*, Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1934), *Man vs. Machine*, Harijan, 16 November 1934. Quoted in R.K. Prabhu & U.R. Rao (1945), *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Gandhi, M.K., *Trusteeship*, Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House.
- Gregg, Richard D. (1958), *A Philosophy of Indian Economic Development*, Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House.
- Hayter, Teresa (1971), *Aid as Imperialism*, England: Penguin Book Ltd.
- Hirschman, Albert O. (1968), *Foreign aid: A Critique and A Proposal*, New Jersey: International Finance Section, Princeton University.
- Jesus, Carolina Maria (1962), *Child of the Dark*, New York: Dutton.
- Khusro, A.H. (1958), *Economic and Social Effects of Jagirdari Abolition and Land Reforms in Hyderabad*, Hyderabad: Osmania University Press.
- Kidron, Michael (1965), *Foreign Investment in India- A Study*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Kumarappa, Bharatan (1965), *Capitalism, Socialism or Villagism?*, Varanasi: Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan.
- Kuznets, Simon (1971), *Economic Growth of Nations: Total Output and Production Structure*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Lapierre, Dominique & Larry Collins (1975), *Freedom at Midnight*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.
- Lewis, Arthur W. (1957), *The Theory of Economic Growth*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Lipton, Michael (1968), *Strategies for Agriculture: Urban Bias and Rural Planning*. In Streeten, Paul and Lipton, Michael (eds), *The Crisis of Indian Planning: Economic Planning in the 1960s*, London: Oxford University Press.

---

<sup>1</sup> Published 1981 by National Publishing House, Delhi. 576 pages.



- Lipton, Michael (1968), *The Crisis of Indian Planning*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Lipton, Michael (1974), *Why Poor People Stay Poor?*, London: Maurice Temple Smith.
- Lyons, Eugene (1967), *Worker's Paradise Lost*, New York: Paperback Library.
- Maddison, Angus (1969), *Economic Progress in Japan and USSR*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Martin, Robert Montgomery (1838), *Historical Documents Of Eastern India Vol. III*, London.
- Marx, Karl (1867), *Das Kapital*, Germany: Verlag von Otto Meisner.
- Mayhew, Christopher (1969), *Party Games*, London: Hutchinson.
- Minhas, B.S. (1974), *Planning and The Poor*, New Delhi: S. Chand & Co. Ltd
- Mitra, Ashok (1980), *Population, Food, and Land Inequality in India, 1971: A Geography of Hunger and Insecurity*, Bombay: Allied Publishers.
- Mitrany, David (1951), *Marx Against the Peasant: A Study in Social Dogmatism*, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press.
- Mukherjee, Moni (1969), *National Income of India: Trends and Structure*, Calcutta: Statistical Publishing Society.
- Mukherji, K.M. (1965), *Levels of Economic Activity and Public Expenditure in India*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Myrdal, Gunnar (1972), *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, New York: Pantheon Books.
- Ojala, E.M. (1952), *Agriculture and Economic Progress*, England: Oxford University Press.
- Owens, Edgar & Shaw, Robert (1972), *Development Reconsidered: Bridging the Gap Between Government and People*, Massachusetts: Lexington Books.
- Pendell, Elmer (1951), *Population on the Loose*, New York: Wilfred Funk.
- Power, Jonathan (1976), *World of Hunger*, London: Maurice Temple Smith.
- Prasad, Kedarnath (1963), *Technological Choice under Developmental Planning- A Case Study of Small Industries of India*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
- Rao, Amiya & B.G. Rao (1974), *Six Thousand Days: Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
- Renne, R.R. (1947), *Land Economics*, New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Sarkar, Jadunath (1952), *Shivaji and His Times*, Calcutta: M. C. Sarkar and Sons Ltd.
- Schram, Stuart R. (1974), *Mao Tse-Tung Unrehearsed. Talks and Letters: 1956-71*, New York: Pantheon Books.
- Schumacher, E.F. (1977), *Small is Beautiful*, London: Sphere Books Ltd.
- Segal, Ronald (1971), *The Struggle Against History*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson.
- Selbourne, David (1977), *An Eye to India: The Unmasking of a Tyranny*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Sen, A.K. (1960), *Choice of Techniques: An Aspect of the Theory of Planned Economic Development*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Shah, C.H. (1975), *A Long-Range Perspective for India's Agricultural Production 2000 A.D.*, Baroda: Operations Research Group.
- Shenoy, B.R. (1908), *Aid and India's Food Problem*, New Delhi: Affiliated East West Press.
- Singh, Charan (1964), *India's Poverty and It's Solutions*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Spillman, William Jasper (1914), *The Law of Diminishing Returns*, Yonkers-on-Hudson and Chicago: World Book Company.
- Van Der Post, A.P. (1937), *Economics of Agriculture*, South Africa: Central News Agency Ltd.
- Wales, Nym (1941), *China Builds for Democracy: A Story of Cooperative Industry*, China: Scholarly Press.
- Williams, Eric (1944), *Capitalism and Slavery*, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press.
- Woytinsky, Wladimir S. (1957), *India: The Awakening Giant*, New York: Harper and Brothers.

## Government, International Organisations & NGO Publications

- Businessmen's Commission on Agriculture (1927), "Report- The Condition of Agriculture in the United States and Measures for Its Improvement", National Industrial Corporate Board, Inc & Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America: New York City & Washington D.C.
- Committee on Public Undertakings (1973), Fifth Lok Sabha, Government of India, 89th Report presented on 5 September 1973: New Delhi.
- Comptroller and Auditor General of India (1978), Government of India, "Report for the year 1976-77": New Delhi.
- Department of Public Enterprises (1979), Government of India, "Public Enterprises Survey 1978-1979": New Delhi.
- Food and Agriculture Organization (1969, 1970, 1971, 1975, 1977, 1978, 1979), United Nations, "FAO Production Yearbooks 1969, 1970, 1971, 1975, 1977, 1978, 1979": Rome.
- Food and Agriculture Organization (1977), United Nations, International Rice Research Institute, "World Rice Statistics 1977": Rome.
- Food and Agriculture Organization (1979), United Nations, "The State of Food and Agriculture 1979": Rome.
- Government of India (1958), "Report of the Chief Engineer on Road Development Plan for India (1961-81)" by D.M. Nanjudappa: New Delhi.
- Government of India (1973, 1974), Government of India Publications Division, "India Pocket Book of Economic Information, 1973 and 1974": New Delhi.
- International Labour Organization (1952, 1961, 1966, 1968, 1977), "ILO Yearbook of Labour Statistics 1952, 1961, 1966, 1968, 1977": Geneva.
- Ministry of Finance (1980), Government of India, Ministry of Finance, "Economic Survey 1979-80": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Finance (1980), Government of India, National Council of Applied Economic Research, Ministry of Finance, Report "Household Income and its Disposition": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Food and Agriculture (1978), Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, "Bulletin on Food Statistics 1978": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (1972), Government of India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, "Report 1971-72": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Home Affairs (1951), Government of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, "India's Census Report 1951": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (1971), Government of India, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, "Social Background of India's Administrators" by V. Subramaniam: New Delhi.
- Ministry of Labour (1980), Government of India, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Labour's Bulletin, "Quarterly Employment Review, April-June 1980": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Railways (1977), Government of India, Indian Railways Statistical Publications, Ministry of Railways, "Indian Railways Year Book, 1976-77": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (1976), Government of India, Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, "Annual Survey of Industries 1975-76": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (1961), Government of India, Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, "National Accounts Statistics 1950-51—1959-60": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (1969, 1979), Government of India, Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, "Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics 1969, 1979": New Delhi.

- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (1970-71), Government of India, National Sample Survey Organisation, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, "Report on Agricultural Census": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (1978), Government of India, Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, "National Accounts Statistics 1950-61—1969-70": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (1978), Government of India, Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, "National Accounts Statistics 1970-71—1975-76": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (1979), Government of India, Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, "National Accounts Statistics 1970-71—1976-77": New Delhi.
- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (1980), Government of India, Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, "National Accounts Statistics 1970-71—1978-79": New Delhi.
- Monopolies Inquiry Commission (1965), Government of India, Commission of Inquiry Act 1952, "MIC Report": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1951), Broad Heads of Development, Planning Commission, First Five-Year Plan (1951-1955): New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1954), Government of India, Planning Commission, "Report of the Textile Enquiry Committee": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1955), Government of India, National Development Council, Planning Commission, "Report": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1956), Government of India, Planning Commission, "Report of Agrarian Delegation to China on Agricultural Co-operatives (Patil Delegation)": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1956-1960), Broad Heads of Development, Planning Commission, Second Five-Year Plan (1956-1960): New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1959), Government of India, Planning Commission, "Occupational Pattern in Manufacturing Industries, 1956": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1961), Broad Heads of Development, Planning Commission, Third Five-Year Plan (1961-1965): New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1961), Central Statistics Office, Government of India, Central Statistics Office, Basic Statistics Relating to Indian Economy (1950-51—1960-61): New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1963), Government of India, Planning Commission, "Tenurial Conditions in the Package Districts": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1966), Broad Heads of Development, Planning Commission, Fourth Five-Year Plan (1966-1970): New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1971), Broad Heads of Development, Planning Commission, Fifth Five Year Plan (1971-1975): New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1971), Government of India, Committee on Land Reforms, Planning Commission, Report on "Ceiling on Large Holdings": P.S Appu, New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1973), Government of India, Committee on Land Reforms, Planning Commission, "Report on Critical Assessment of the experience in land reform during the previous plan periods", P.S. Appu: New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1975), Broad Heads of Development, Planning Commission, Sixth Five Year Plan (1975-1980): New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1977), Government of India, Planning Commission, "Annual Report on the Working of Industrial and Commercial Undertakings of the Central Government, 1976-77": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1979), Government of India, Planning Commission, "Economic Review 1978-79": New Delhi.

- Planning Commission (1981), Broad Heads of Development, Planning Commission, Seventh Five-Year Plan (1981-1985): New Delhi.
- Plunkett Foundation (1943), Yearbook of Agricultural Cooperation, Dr. C.R. Fay, United Kingdom.
- Press Information Bureau (1975), Government of India, Indian Press Release, "Report", 31 April 1975: New Delhi.
- Press Information Bureau (1980), Government of India, Indian Press Release, "Estimates of National Product, Saving and Capital Formation 1978-79": New Delhi.
- Reserve Bank of India (1963, 1978), Government of India, Reserve Bank of India, Reserve Bank of India Bulletin 1963 & 1978: New Delhi.
- Reserve Bank of India (1972), Government of India, Reserve Bank, "Annual Report": Bombay.
- Reserve Bank of India (1979), Government of India, Reserve Bank of India, Report "Trend and Progress of Banking in India 1978-79": New Delhi.
- Reserve Bank of India (1980), Government of India, Reserve Bank of India Bulletin, "The Trends of Industrial Production in the Country", January Issue: New Delhi.
- Reserve of India (1962, 1972), Government of India, Reserve Bank of India, "All India Rural Debt and Investment Survey 1961-62 & 1971-72": Bombay.
- Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (1971), Government of India, National Council of Educational Research and Training, Union Ministry of Human Resource Development, "Third All-India Educational Survey": New Delhi.
- United Nations (1951), Statistical Papers "National Income and its Distribution in Underdeveloped Countries", Series E No. 3: New York.
- United Nations (1957), Economic Commission for Europe, "Economic Survey of Europe 1956": Geneva.
- United Nations (1962, 1969, 1974), United Nations Statistics Division, "United Nations Statistical Yearbook 1962, 1969, 1974": New York.
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (1961), United Nations, "World Economic Survey Report 1961": New York.
- United Nations Statistics Division (1971, 1974, 1977), United Nations, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Welfare, "Demographic Yearbook 1971, 1974, 1977": New York.
- United States Department of Agriculture (1970), Federal Government of the United States, Yearbook of Agriculture 1970, "Contours of Change": Washington D.C.
- United States Department of Commerce (1953), United States Government, "Income Distribution in the United States", Washington D.C.
- World Bank (1971), World Bank "Report, Aid India Consortium" 17-18 June, 1971: Paris.
- World Bank (1979), World Bank Atlas, "World Bank Atlas 1979: Population, Per Capita Product and Growth Rates": Washington, D.C.

### Journals, Magazines, Speech & Conferences

- "Agriculture: The Tasks Ahead", *The Eastern Economist* (Annual Number), 1981.
- "Amar Bazaar Patrika", *Capital*, Calcutta, 2 August 1934.
- "Structural Transformation and Economic Development", Birla Institute of Scientific Research, Arnold Heinemann Publishers: New Delhi.
- "The Approach of Operational Research to Planning India", *Sankhya- The Journal of Indian Statistical Institute*, December 1955.
- Arora, Satish K. (1972), "Social Background of the Indian Cabinet", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Bombay, 5 August 1972.
- Assar Lindbeck (1979), *International Herald Tribune*, Zurich, 17 October 1979.

- Bagchi, Amiya Kumar (1976), "De-industrialisation in India in the Nineteenth Century: Some Theoretical Implications", *The Journal of Development Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2: London.
- Basu, Jyotirmoy (1974), Speech Delivered in Lok Sabha: New Delhi.
- Bauer, P.T. (1959), "Problems, Paradoxes, Prospects of Indian Planning", *Capital*, Calcutta, 17 December 1959.
- Borlaug, Norman E. (1973), Special Address on 11 September 1973 to the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi.
- Borlaug, Norman F. (1973), "Conquest of Hunger", Speaking on 15 March 1973 at Vigyan Bhawan: New Delhi.
- Bromfield, Louis (1954), "Agriculture in the United States", *The Economist*, New York.
- Dandekar, V.M. & Rath, Nilkanth (1971), "Poverty in India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Bombay, 2 January & 9 January 1971.
- Dandekar, V.M. & Rath, Nilkanth, "Poverty in India", *Journal of Indian School of Political Economy*, Pune.
- Dandekar, V.M. (1976), *Illustrated Weekly of India*, Bombay, 17-23 October 1976.
- Eisendrath, Charles N. (1979), "Return to Small Towns", *Span*, New Delhi, November 1979.
- Farmer's Choice* (Special Issue), New Delhi, July 1980.
- Gandhi, Indira (1976), Addressing the first Indian Agriculture Congress on 10 April 1976 organised by the Indian Farm Education Foundation on April 10, 1976.
- Gandhi, Indira (1976), Speech Delivered on 15 November 1976 at the Conference of Chairmen of Public Service Commissions: New Delhi.
- Hamilton, Walton (1945), "Cartels, Patents and Politics." *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 23, No. 4, pp. 582-593. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/20029923](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20029923).
- Hughes, Edward (1973), *Reader's Digest*, New Delhi.
- Kuznets, Simon (1959), "Quantitative Aspects of the Economic Growth of Nations: IV. Distribution of National Income by Factor Shares." *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 1-100. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/1151715](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1151715).
- Ladejinsky, W.A. (1964), *Foreign Affairs*, New York, April 1964.
- Lent, George E (1971), "Tax Incentives for the Promotion of Industrial Employment in Developing Countries." *Staff Papers (International Monetary Fund)*, Vol. 18, No. 2, pp. 399-419. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/3866275](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3866275).
- Mahalanobis, Prasanta (1955), *Sankhya*, Indian Statistical Institute: New Delhi, December 1955.
- Myrdal, Gunnar (1973), "The Human Dimensions of Economic Growth: Challenge of Stagnation in Underdeveloped Countries", Paper presented in February 1973 at the One Asia Assembly: New Delhi.
- Nehru Jawaharlal (1963), Inaugural Speech Delivered on 8 November 1963 at the meeting of the National Development Council: New Delhi.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1956), Speech Delivered in January 1956 before the National Development Council: New Delhi.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1959), Speech Delivered on 28 September 1959 at the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee: Chandigarh.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1960), Addressing the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry on 27 March 1960: Calcutta.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1963), Speaking on 11 December 1963 in the Lok Sabha: New Delhi.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1963), Speech Delivered on 28 March 1959 in the Lok Sabha: New Delhi.
- Oshima, Harry T. (1970), "Income Inequality and Economic Growth the Post-war Experience of Asian Countries", *The Malayan Economic Review*, 15 (2).
- Owens, Edgar (1972), Addressing the International Seminar of Economic Journalists organised by the Forum of Financial Writers in December 1972: New Delhi.

- Paterson, Peter G. (1973), *Span*, New Delhi, July 1973.
- Raj, K.N. (1956), "Small-Scale Industries Problem of Technological Change", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Bombay, 14 April 1956.
- Rao, D.N. & Trivedi, R.K. (1961), "Higher Civil Service in India: A sample survey", *Journal of National Academy of Administration*, Mussoorie, July 1961.
- Rao, V.K.R.V. (1979), "Has Mixed Economy become Obsolete?", *Commerce*, New Jersey, 3 November 1979.
- Rao, V.K.R.V. (1979), "Rural Poverty Increases Despite Economic Growth", *Capital*, Calcutta, 12 April 1979.
- Rao, V.K.R.V. (1981), "Controversy on Indian Agrarian Scene by C.B. Hanumant Rao", *Link*, New Delhi, 26 January 1981.
- Sharma, Baldev R. (1976), "Professionals in the Making Their Social Origin", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Bombay, 28 February 1976.
- Shukla, V.C. (1980), Speech Delivered in November 1980 in Rajya Sabha: New Delhi.
- Singh, Bhanu Pratap (1981), *Farmer's Voice*, New Delhi, January 1981.
- Subramaniam, C. (1975), Speech Delivered on 25 April 1975 in Rajya Sabha: New Delhi.
- Swaminathan, M.S. (1976), Addressing the first convocation of the Bidhan Chandra Krishi Vishwavidyalaya on 9 March 1976: Haringhatla (West Bengal).
- Toynbee, Arnold J. (1958), *Harvard Business Review*, Harvard Business Publishing: Massachusetts, October 1958.

### Newspapers, Letters & Interviews

- "An Interview with Gandhi Ji", *Modern Review*, October 1935.
- "China Closes Sick Plants", *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 23 April 1979.
- All India Radio Commentary, New Delhi, 20 August 1970.
- Bardhan, Pranab K. (1973), "On the Incidence of Poverty in Rural India of the Sixties", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Bombay, 3 February 1973.
- Bauer, P.T. (1974), *The Statesman*, New Delhi, 1974.
- Bhat, Shri (1977), *The Financial Express*, New Delhi, 26 August 1977.
- Blitz, Bombay, 15 August 1974.
- Desai, Mahadeo (1924), *Young India*, 13 November 1924.
- Gandhi, Indira (1972), In an interview with Time Magazine, New York, 8 December 1972.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1925), *Young India*, 18 June 1925.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1925), *Young India*, 28 May 1925.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1926), *Young India*, 17 June 1926.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1926), *Young India*, 24 June 1926.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1929), *Young India*, 25 July 1929.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1935), *Harijan*, June 22 1935.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1936), *Harijan*, 29 August 1936.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1937), *Harijan*, 2 January 1937.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1937), *Harijan*, 9 October 1937.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1945), Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, 5 October 1945.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1948), "Why the Constructive Programme?", Indian National Congress, New Delhi.
- Gandhi, M.K. (1934), *Harijan*, 16 September 1934.
- Gupta, J.S. (1975), *The Times of India*, New Delhi, 9 March 1975.
- Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 10 November 1980.
- Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 16 March 1981.
- Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 27 August 1980.

- Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 28 March 1960.  
 Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 29 March 1955.  
 Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 29 March 1976.  
*Illustrated Weekly of India*, Bombay, 25 January 1981.  
 Jain, Giri Lal (1973), *The Times of India*, New Delhi, 3 January 1973.  
 Jain, Giri Lal (1974), *The Times of India*, New Delhi, 13 March 1974.  
 Jain, Giri Lal (1976), *The Times of India*, New Delhi, 28 July 1976.  
 Jha, Prem Shankar, "A Mushrooming Bureaucracy: Cause of Resource Crisis", *The Economic Times*, New Delhi.  
 Khan, Khan Abdul Ghaffar (1980), "Interview", *Kadambini*, August 1980, New Delhi.  
 Kothari, Rajni (1972), *The Times of India*, New Delhi, 24 April 1972.  
 Lal, M.B., "Power Game", *The Statesman*, New Delhi.  
 Leontief, Wassily (1974), *Economic Times*, London, 25 August 1974.  
 Lokanathan, P.S. (1943), "Cottage Industries and The Place", *The Eastern Economist*, July 23 1943, New Delhi.  
 M.K. Gandhi (1942), *Harijan*, 1 February 1942.  
 MacNamara, Robert S. (1980), *Dallas Times Herald*, Dallas, 1 October 1980.  
 Minhas, B.S. (1974), *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 13 March 1974.  
 Myrdal, Gunnar (1973), In an Interview with Anil Agarwal in January 1973.  
*National Herald*, Lucknow, 15 January 1975.  
 Nehru, Jawaharlal (1945), Letter to Mahatma Gandhi, 9 October 1945.  
 Oza, A.N. (1977), "How Big is India's Big Business?", *Illustrated Weekly of India*, Bombay, 18 September 1977.  
 Pai, M.P. (1972), *The Pioneer*, Lucknow, 10 September 1972.  
 Panadikar, D.H. Pai (1980), *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 20 November 1980.  
 Paul, Samuel (1974), "Growth and Utilisation of Industrial Capacity", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Bombay, 7 December 1974.  
 Saxena, N.S. (1981), *The Times of India*, New Delhi, 12 January 1981.  
 Seldon, Arthur (1979), "Phase out the Civil Servants", *Daily Telegraph*, London, 5 October 1979.  
 Silvano, Sushil J. (1972), *The Pioneer*, Lucknow, 10 February 1972.  
 Singh, Baljit (1974), Brochure "Inter-district Incomes and Economic Profiles of Uttar Pradesh", Lucknow.  
 Smith, Richard (1976), "Tilting Towards the City", *Newsweek*, New York, 17 May 1976.  
 Thapar, Ashok (1972), *The Times of India*, New Delhi, 22 May 1972.  
 Thapar, Romesh (1981), "Rise of Peasant Power", *The Statesman*, New Delhi, 29 January 1981.  
*The Financial Express*, "Editorial", New Delhi, 14 May 1980.  
*The Financial Express*, New Delhi, 3 April 1978.  
*The Indian Express*, "Indira Gandhi's Speech on 30 May 1976 at AICC", New Delhi, 31 May 1976.  
*The Indian Express*, New Delhi, 11 November 1980.  
*The Indian Express*, New Delhi, 13 April 1981.  
*The Indian Express*, New Delhi, 2 December 1980.  
*The Indian Express*, New Delhi, 21 August 1980.  
*The Indian Express*, New Delhi, 30 January 1981.  
*The Indian Express*, New Delhi, 8 May 1980.  
*The Nagpur Times*, Nagpur, 16 February 1973.  
*The Pioneer*, Lucknow, 24 January 1961.  
*The Statesman*, "Editorial", New Delhi, 20 August 1980.  
*The Statesman*, "Editorial", New Delhi, 24 November 1980.

- The Statesman, "Editorial", New Delhi, 4 April 1979.  
The Statesman, New Delhi, 10 February 1981.  
The Statesman, New Delhi, 16 November 1980.  
The Statesman, New Delhi, 18 April 1976.  
The Statesman, New Delhi, 25 November 1980.  
The Statesman, New Delhi, 25 September 1979.  
The Statesman, New Delhi, 28 July 1980.  
The Times of India, "Editorial", 24 June 1972.  
The Times of India, "Editorial", New Delhi, 19 March 1976.  
The Times of India, "Editorial", New Delhi, 21 October 1975.  
The Times of India, New Delhi, 10 February 1974.  
The Times of India, New Delhi, 11 December 1975.  
The Times of India, New Delhi, 16 November 1975.  
The Times of India, New Delhi, 23 July 1980.  
The Times of India, New Delhi, 25 November 1973.  
The Times of India, New Delhi, 28 November 1975.  
The Times of India, New Delhi, 3 December 1975.  
The Times of India, New Delhi, 5 November 1975.  
The Times of India, New Delhi, 8 August 1973.  
Times of India, "Editorial", New Delhi, 13 March 1974.  
Vyas, D.N. (1976), The Indian Express, New Delhi, 26 February 1976.  
*Yojana*, New Delhi, 6 January 1976.



# Land Reforms in U.P. and the Kulaks<sup>1</sup>

## Books and Indirect Sources

- Coudenrove-Kalergi, Richard N. (1938), *The Totalitarian State Against Man*, Sir Andrew McFadyean (ed), London: Frederick Muller Ltd.
- Darling, M.L. (1928), *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, England: Oxford University Press.
- Fisher, Louis (1944), *A Week With Gandhi*, New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce.
- Gangulee, Nagendranath (1935), *The Indian Peasant and His Environment (The Linlithgow Commission and After)*, London: Oxford University Press.
- National Council of Applied Economic Research (1959), *Rehabilitation and Development of Basti District: A Case Study in the Economics of Depressed Areas*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Sampurnanand (1944), *The Individual and The State*, Allahabad: Kitab-Mahal.
- Singh, Baljit (1961), *Next Step in Village India-A Study of Land Reforms and Group Dynamics*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Singh, Charan (1947), *Abolition of Zamindari*, Allahabad: Kitabistan.
- Singh, Charan (1959), *Whither Co-operative Farming*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Singh, Charan (1964), *India's Poverty and It's Solutions*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Solzhenitsyn, Alexander (1973), *Gulag Archipelago*, France: Éditions du Seuil.
- Walinsky, Louis J. (1977), *Agrarian Reform – An Unfinished Business*, New York: Oxford University Press.

## Government and International Organisations Publications

- British Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation (1924), Government of United Kingdom, British Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation, Memorandum on “Consideration of National Health” by William Ashley, H.M. Stationery Office (printed by Eyre and Spottiswoode, Limited): Great Britain.
- Central Statistical Organization (1962), Department of Statistics, Government of India, “The National Accounts Statistics 1970-71 & 1975-76”: New Delhi.
- Government of India (1950), Legislative Assembly, Government of India, “Report of the Select Committee” presented on 9 January 1950: New Delhi.
- Government of India (1950), Uttar Pradesh Zamindari Abolition Committee, Government of India, “Report”: Allahabad.
- Government of United Provinces (1948), Report of the United Provinces Zamindari Abolition Committee, Allahabad: Printed by M. G. Shome, Superintendent, Printing and Stationary: Uttar Pradesh.
- Ministry of Agriculture (1959), Government of India, Agricultural Situation of India September Issue, Ministry of Agriculture: New Delhi.
- Ministry of Home Affairs (1931, 1951, 1961, 1971), Government of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, India's Census Report 1931, 1951, 1961, 1971: New Delhi.
- Ministry of Home Affairs (1951), Government of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, Census Report of Uttar Pradesh (Part 1-A) 1951: New Delhi.

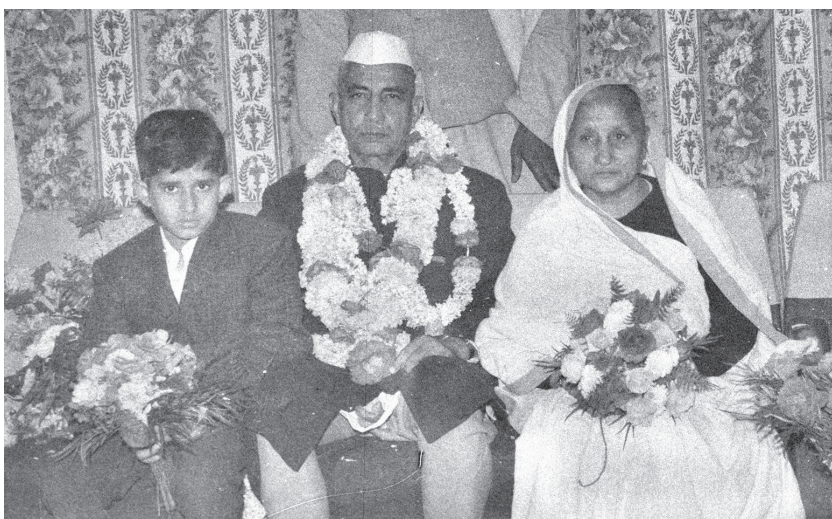
---

<sup>1</sup> Published 1986 by Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi. 220 pages.

- Ministry of Labour and Employment (1956-57), Government of India, "Agricultural Labour in India, Report on the Second Agricultural Labour Inquiry, Vol. I": New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1951), Broad Heads of Development, Planning Commission, First Five-Year Plan (1951-1955): New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1956), Broad Heads of Development, Planning Commission, Second Five-Year Plan (1956-1961): New Delhi.
- Planning Commission (1957), Government of India, Research Programmes Committee, Planning Commission, "Report on Studies in Economics of Farm Management in Uttar Pradesh 1954-55", Dr. G.D. Agarwal, Government Agricultural College: Kanpur.
- Planning Commission (1958), Government of India, Panel on Land Reforms, Planning Commission, "Committee on Tenancy Reforms Report": New Delhi.
- State Planning Institute (1959), Planning and Research Action Division, "Case Study of the Ghosi Community Development Block": Lucknow.
- United Nations (1960), United Nations Development Programme, "Community Development and Economic Development": New York.

### **Speeches, Conferences, Newspapers and Magazines**

- "Abolition of Zamindari in U.P.: Criticism answered", National Herald, Lucknow, 16 August 1949.
- Current, Bombay, 14 January 1959.
- Gupta, S.S. (1960), AICC Economic Review, New Delhi, 16 January 1960.
- Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 29 January 1957.
- Kala, S.C. (1973), "U.P. Harijans Deprived of Benefits of Land Reforms", The Times of India, New Delhi, 13 September 1973.
- Ladejinsky, Wolf (1964), The Times of India, New Delhi, 9 September 1964.
- Misra, Shridhar (1946), The Leader, Allahabad, 29 December 1946.
- Munshi, K.M. (1959), Speech delivered on 19 August 1959 as Chairman of Conference of the Swatantra Party: Lucknow.
- National Herald, Lucknow, 16 September 1962.
- National Herald, Lucknow, 17 March 1955.
- National Herald, Lucknow, 18 March 1955.
- National Herald, Lucknow, 8 April 1955.
- Pant, Govind Ballabh (1947), Speech delivered on 29 January 1947 in the inaugural address to the Development Conference of the Departmental Officers: Lucknow.
- Rao, Chalapathi (1959), National Herald, Lucknow, 23 April 1959.
- Roy, Neeraj (1981), "In U.P. Dacoits' Den: Government Persecuting the Yadavas", The Indian Express, New Delhi, November 1981.
- Singh, Charan (1938), "Agricultural Marketing", Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 1 April 1938.
- Singh, Charan (1939), "Peasant Proprietorship or Land to the Worker", National Herald, Lucknow, 13 June 1939.
- Singh, Charan (1959), National Herald, Lucknow, 18 January 1959.
- Singh, Charan (1965), National Herald, Lucknow, 31 December 1965.
- The Editor (1955), National Herald, Lucknow, 9 April 1955.
- The Indian Express, New Delhi, 3 June 1971.
- The Pioneer, Lucknow, 16 September 1962.
- Usman, Salahuddin (1981), The Patriot, New Delhi, 27 November 1981.



Charan Singh with wife Gayatri Devi and grandson Harsh.  
New Delhi. 5 January 1969.

Charan Singh was born on 23 December 1902 in Meerut District of the United Provinces (Uttar Pradesh) in an illiterate tenant farmer's village hut. His mental fortitude and capability were recognised early in life and he went on to acquire a B.Sc., M.A. in History and LL. B from Agra College. He joined the Indian National Congress, at 27, in the struggle to free India from British rule and was imprisoned in 1930, 1940, and 1942 for his participation in the national movement. He remained a member of the Legislative Assembly of Uttar Pradesh from 1936 to 1974 and was a minister in all Congress governments from 1946 to 1967, which provided him a reputation as an efficient, incorruptible and clear-headed administrator. Singh was the state's first non-Congress Chief Minister in 1967 and again in 1970, before his tenure in 1977-78 as the Union Minister for Home and, later, Finance. This journey culminated in 1979 when he became Prime Minister of India. Over much of the 70s and early 80s he remained a figure of major political significance in Indian politics till he passed away on 29 May 1987.

Charan Singh wrote scores of books, political pamphlets, manifestoes and hundreds of articles on the centrality of the village and agriculture in India's political economy. Many of these thoughts are relevant to India today as we struggle with an agrarian crisis with 67% of our impoverished population living in the villages and 47% engaged in unremunerative agricultural livelihoods. He helped write the 611-page report of the Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Committee in Uttar Pradesh in 1948 and also wrote the books *Abolition of Zamindari* (1947), *Joint Farming X-Rayed* (1959), *India's Poverty and Its Solution* (1964), *India's Economic Policy* (1978) *Economic Nightmare of India* (1981) and *Land Reforms in U.P. and the Kulaks* (1986).



Charan Singh Archives  
[www.charansingh.org](http://www.charansingh.org)

ISBN 978-93-87280-76-2



9 789387 280762 >

Price ₹ 595