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Current Agrarian Situation in Bihar

(Submitted to the Bihar Land Reforms Commission)

Asian Development Research Institute

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Preface

Land and Labour have been at the core of a 'civilised' human existence since the very beginning. While they have provided body to various other kinds of labour (other than working on land), they have been both an instrument as well as foundation of power systems outside the body of labour itself, be it in the form of a primitive tribal community or a feudal society or a modern state. In fact, an economic formation/system and its laws of motion are explained not only by the conditions of labour, but also by an interaction of these with the other elements of the property system, amongst which the essentials of the property system in land are found to be of paramount importance.

Since the inception of political economy/economic thought, there has been a near consensus on the centrality of land in facilitating the well-being through economic transformation. In particular, at the current juncture, the importance of access to land for the rural masses in ensuring a decent livelihood in most developing countries/societies is generally acknowledged throughout the academia. The first chapter of this report titled 'Current Agrarian Situation in Bihar' tries to bring forth this relationship between the 'access to land' and 'well-being of masses' in Bihar. It also makes an effort to roughly sketch the relationship amongst the economic plight of the state, its distorted production structure and land ownership pattern in the state, indicating relations of production in agriculture.

Second chapter titled 'Land Reforms – Addressing Structural Bottlenecks?' reviews the literature on land reforms, trying to highlight its instrumentality in economic transformation and well-being of the masses. While noting the importance of land, it tries to read the importance of land, made explicit in poverty alleviation programmes at the current juncture. It goes on to discuss the history and typology of land reforms, and paradigm of land reforms in India. The chapter ends with a brief note on the evolution and character of land-tenure arrangements in colonial Bihar which, in turn, generated forces for land reforms within the state.

Third chapter titled 'Peasant Mobilisation in Bihar' gives a brief sketch of peasant mobilization as a driving force behind land reforms in Bihar, which was responsible in Bihar, being the first state in India to have introduced the Zamindari Abolition Bill. However, it goes on to underline

the issues of peasant mobilization and character of farmers' organizations, which were, in turn, instrumental in shaping the agenda of land reforms in Bihar.

Fourth chapter titled 'History of Land Reforms in Bihar' sketches the history of land reforms in Bihar. It tries to highlight the essentials of Zamindari Abolitions, Ceiling and Tenancy Reforms, and also their problems. The problem and extent of implementation of land reforms in Bihar is also briefly discussed in the chapter.

Emergence and outburst of agrarian unrest as a result of an almost failed land reforms effort in Bihar is dealt with in the fifth chapter titled 'Building-up of Agrarian Unrest in Bihar'. Failed expectations of the rural masses and the continuing distorted agrarian production relations are seen to be correlated with the rise of Naxalism in the state, as issues of naxalite movement in Bihar have largely been the issues of production relations in agriculture which the state failed to correct through land reforms.

Sixth chapter titled 'The Problem of Tenancy' takes a look particularly at the tenurial arrangements in Bihar. It takes a look at how these relations have evolved over the period as mechanisms of surplus expropriation and exploitation in rural Bihar, and also its present state reflected in the survey conducted by ADRI in 2007. A report of this survey of twelve villages done by ADRI is given in Appendix 1.

Seventh, and the last, chapter titled 'The Comeback of Land Reforms' takes a look at the re-emergence of land reforms on both national and international agenda in the era of globalization and liberalization. It brings forth the distinct change in the character and content of land reforms over the period, and limitations of an unquestioned acceptance of the theory of Market-led Agrarian Reforms (MLAR).

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CURRENT AGRARIAN SITUATION IN BIHAR

With the lowest per capita income in the country and the second highest incidence of rural poverty in India (only less than Orissa) among the highest incidences of poverty in the country, under-development of Bihar and the miseries of its masses need no detailed introduction. What is worse is that the production structure and distributional outcomes of the economy show a worsening trend of distortion and inequity over time. And, the pace of distortion of the production structure and widening gulf of inequity is found to have increased significantly in the decade of nineties.

On the eve of independence, while the per capita income of Bihar was around 81 per cent of the all-India average, it declined to 70 per cent of the Indian average in 1960-61, further to 63 per cent of the Indian average in 1970-71, thereafter stabilizing at 60 per cent of the national average for the next 15 years up to mid-1980s. However, by 1993-94 it had declined to 40 per cent of the national average and further to 30 per cent of the per capita national income by 2003-04. Thus, while the widening of the gulf between the national income and state's income growth is seen to have stabilized all through the seventies, right up to the mid-eighties, it is seen to be increasing by serious proportions since the nineties, which has been an era of globalization and also of landmark changes in the political power balance in the state.

Table 1 : Per capita Income at Current prices in Rupees

	Year				
	1949-50	1960-61	1970-71	1980-81	1984-85
Andhra Pradesh	229	275	585	1358	1996
Bihar	200	215	402	929	1418
Gujarat	*	362	829	1944	2901
Haryana	**	327	877	2331	3259
Karnataka	186	296	641	1453	2189
Kerala	234	259	594	1421	2076
MP	255	252	484	1149	1693
Maharashtra	273*	409	783	2232	3203
Orissa	188	217	478	1101	1534
Punjab	334**	366	1070	2760	4103
Rajasthan	173	284	651	1222	1990
Tamil Nadu	229	334	581	1336	2128
UP	262	252	486	1272	1782
WB	353	390	722	1573	2594
All-India	246***	306	633	1557	2355

* Gujarat and Maharashtra ** Haryana and Punjab *** Refers to 1950-51

Sources : Column(2), Raj K.N., Regional and Cost Factors in India's Development; and other columns, Central Statistical Organisation, GOI, Estimates of State Domestic Product, November 1985 and June 1987

Sectoral Composition of Income and Employment

With hardly 10 per cent urbanization rate, Bihar, in stark reflection of Mahatma's quote, lives in her villages. In this predominantly rural setting, importance of agriculture which provides livelihood to an overwhelming majority of its population can hardly be over-emphasized. And here too, a distorted structure of production as well as distribution is obvious. While agriculture contributes about 33 per cent of the state's domestic product, it provides employment to almost 74 per cent of its workforce. On the other hand, while tertiary sector produces more than 50 per cent of the state's domestic product, it employs a mere 17 per cent of the workforce (Table 1, Table 2). The service sector contributes 49% and industry a mere 9%. Secondary sector on the other hand has a proportionate share in the State's domestic product as well as its employment.

Changes in the sectoral composition of state's income are also worth noting over the last decade. While the share of agriculture in the GSDP has fallen by 12 per cent, its share in total employment has fallen only by 4 per cent, thereby indicating a worsening of income distribution across the sectors. On the other hand, the services sector which sees its share increase in state's income by around 11 per cent, its share of total employment is seen to be increasing only by 3 per cent. This indicates **an income distribution pattern which is overtime going against the agricultural sector**. And, the loss of agrarian sector is found to be the gain of the services sector, as manufacturing is seen to maintain a proportional growth of in terms of its share in state's domestic product and employment.

Table 2 : Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at 1993-94 Prices (%)

Sectors	Bihar		India	
	1993-94	2003-04	1993-94	2003-04
Primary, of which Agri.	**48.78** 45.27	**37.40** 33.15	**33.54** 28.39	**24.04** 19.73
Secondary	9.93	11.20	23.69	24.54
Tertiary	41.29	51.40	42.77	51.43
Gross State Domestic Product 100.00		100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Sharma & Joddar, 2007, Table 2(a), p.3

Table 3: Employment Structure (% of UPSS Workforce)

Sectors	Bihar		India	
	1993-94	2004-05	1993-94	2004-05
Primary,	**78.33**	**73.50**	**65.50**	**59.07**
of which Agri.	77.57	73.40	64.75	58.50
Secondary,	6.47	9.12	14.83	17.57
of which Manuf.	4.58	6.15	11.35	11.73
Tertiary	14	17.39	20.50	23.36
All	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Sharma & Joddar, 2007

Growth performance

While the State experienced 0 per cent growth rate in the first half of the 1990s, and in the second half of the nineties annual growth rates averaged around 3.8% or about 1% per annum in per capita terms. As a result, income growth and consumption levels lagged seriously, thereby widening the gap between Bihar and the rest of India during the nineties. Underlying the result has been **exceptionally weak performance in agriculture.** Agriculture declined in early 1990s by 2% per annum and grew by less than 1% per annum in the second half of the nineties (hence **falling in per capita terms**). There has been a recovery since to give agricultural growth rate of 3.2 per cent for the period 1993-94 to 2003-04, but which is still much less than the sectoral growth achieved during the decade of eighties. However, the noteworthy feature of the recovery of the State's economy is that it is being led by services sector growth, which but for the early nineties has shown a sustained, a reasonably good growth rate in the state since the eighties.

Table 4 : Growth Performance: 1981 - 82 to 2003-04

	Former Bihar (1981- 82 to 1990 - 91)	**Former Bihar** (1991 - 92 to 1995 - 96)	**New Bihar** (1994 - 95 to 2001 - 02)	**Bihar** (1993-94 to 2003-04)
GDP	4.9	0	3.8	5.03
Agriculture	4.6	-2.0	0.8	3.20
Industry	5.2	0.5	10.5	5.24
Services	5.6	2.2	6.4	6.88
India				
GDP	5.6	5.4	6.1	6.03
Agriculture	3.6	2.3	3.0	2.48
Industry	7.1	6.3	6.4	6.14
Services	6.5	7.0	8.0	8.19

Source: World Bank Report; Bihar - Towards a Development Strategy

The question that poses itself then is despite being amongst the most richly endowed states in India, in terms of natural resources, having the most fertile plains to be found not only in India but across the globe, what fetters development of Bihar. In particular, development of the agricultural sector holds the key for Bihar, as the well-being of nearly 90% of Bihar's population which lives in rural areas is crucially dependent on it. And over time, we not only see a declining share of agriculture in state's production, but also a significant fall in productivity. Scholars have largely seen Bihar's underdevelopment in structural terms, as arguments of there being a resource crunch is also seen to follow from the structural constraints operative in the economy. And the structural bottleneck in Bihar, in particular agriculture is seen to be largely in terms of ownership and control over land, which emerges to be not only the most crucial means of production, but also a determinant of social and political status.

Structural Constraints on Agricultural Development

Land Ownership Pattern in Bihar

The NSSO estimates shows a trend of increasing marginalization of land holdings over the last three decades, incidence of landlessness has increased over the decade of nineties from 9 to 10 per cent of the rural population However, the 2007 survey of twelve villages done by ADRI reveals a much higher figure of nearly 52 per cent of households surveyed being landless. While this certainly cannot be claimed to be the representative survey for entire Bihar, it certainly is indicative of the depth of landlessness in rural Bihar. Of the landed segments, while 60 per cent were marginal landholders, with marginal and small landholders constituting 78 per cent of the total, only 1.3 per cent of the households owned large landholdings.

Going by the NSS estimates, marginal holdings have increased from 71 per cent of total holdings in 1970s to almost 90 per cent in 2003. Similarly, the area accounted for by the marginal holdings has increased from around 18 per cent to 42 per cent over the same period. Marginal and Small holdings together were 96.50 per cent of the total number of holdings, accounting for 67.36 per cent of the total owned area.

One noteworthy feature is that while percentage of small land holdings has seen a fall from 11 per cent in 1992 to 7 per cent in 2003, its share in total area has increased from 23.84 per cent to

25.29 per cent over the same period. This trend needs a careful reading as it shows simultaneity of two opposite processes – one, of segments losing out land, and the other, of acquisition of land. For percentage of households in this category to fall, there must be a segment of population which would be losing land, but for increase in the percentage of area owned by a decreased percentage of households in the category, the remaining households/new entrants to this class must have acquired/had significant amount of land to increase the percent share of the small category in total owned area. Thus, while average size of landholdings in the small category has increased over the period, nearly forty per cent of the households in the small landholding category have lost land over the nineties. This is indicative of a strong tendency of de-peasantisation of a huge chunk of poor peasants (40 per cent of them), is also a marker of differentiation even among the poorest lot of peasantry who are being affected by the processes in the post-ninety era in very crucial and yet in starkly opposite direction.

A similar trend is to be observed for the large-land holding class. While the percentage of such holdings has seen a fall in the nineties from 0.20 per cent in 1992 to 0.10 per cent in 2003, the area under such holdings has increased from 4.44 per cent to 4.63 per cent over the period. Thus, accumulation and alienation of land is, ironically, found to be a character of both, the top and the lowest of landholding classes in Bihar. It is the middle peasantry, found in the semi-medium and medium category, which is seen to be clearly losing out land in this period.

Table 5 : Percent Distribution of Households and Area Owned over five major classes in Bihar

Year	% of land Holdings						% of area owned					
	Marginal (0<*<1ha)	Small (1<*<=2)	Semi-medium (2<*<=4)	Medium (4<*<=10)	Large (*>10)	All	Marginal (0<*<1ha)	Small (1<*<=2)	Semi-medium (2<*<=4)	Medium (4<*<=10)	Large (*>10)	All
Bihar												
2003	89.40	**7.10**	2.70	0.70	0.10	100	42.07	**25.29**	18.53	9.56	4.63	100
1992	80.56	**11.10**	6.00	2.14	0.20	100	28.58	**23.84**	24.45	18.68	4.44	100
1982	76.55	12.42	7.79	2.82	0.31	100	23.96	22.91	27.02	20.22	5.90	100
1971-72	71.71	15.11	9.15	3.66	0.37	100	18.20	23.43	28.07	23.63	6.67	100
All India												
2003	79.60	10.80	6.00	3.00	0.60	100	23.05	20.38	21.98	23.08	11.55	100
1992	71.88	13.42	9.28	4.54	0.88	100	16.93	18.59	24.58	26.07	13.83	100
1982	66.64	14.70	10.78	6.45	1.42	100	12.03	16.49	23.58	29.83	18.07	100
1971-72	62.62	15.49	11.94	7.83	2.12	100	9.76	14.68	21.92	30.73	22.91	100

Source : NSS Report 491: Household Ownership Holdings in India, 2003

The data for the operated area demonstrate a further worsening of concentration pattern in the agrarian structure. For example, while 80% of operational holdings in Bihar are marginal (below one hectare), these holdings account for only 36% of total operational land area. At the other end, medium and large operational holdings of more than four hectares comprise less than 2.5% of all holdings, but constitute over 20% of operational land area.

Land ownership and poverty

Land ownership is also closely associated with poverty. The poor typically own less land than the non-poor in Bihar. In fact, ***75% of the rural poor were 'landless' or 'near-landless' in 1999-2000. This has expanded by 8% since 1993-94.*** Here one also must observe that while the incidence of poverty has declined for all land-owning classes, but the ***incidence of poverty has increased for the landless from 51% to 56% during the nineties***, also the share of poor of this group has increased from 12% to 14%. The marginal land holding group's share of the total poor has also witnessed an increase from 55% in the early nineties to 61% by the 1999-2000. Thus, *the condition of landless and near landless has unambiguously worsened in the nineties to say the least.*

Table 6 : Rural poverty Incidence and Shares by land Ownership

	50th Round			55th Round		
Land owned(ha)	%of rural population	Poverty incidence%	% share of the poor	% of rural population	Poverty incidence	%share of the poor
No land	9	51	12	10	56	14
0<*<=o.4ha	43	51	55	53	46	61
0.4<*<=1ha	24	34	20	20	29	15
1<*<=2ha	15	28	10	10	30	7
2<*<=4ha	7	18	3	4	16	2
>4ha	3	6	0	2	18	1
Overall	100	40	100	100	40	100

Source : NSS 50th, 55th Rounds

Land ownership by social groups

If one takes a look at the rural landownership by social groups, then going by the NSSO data, ***landlessness has increased amongst the SC/STs in the decade of nineties*** **(NSSO 50th and 55th round)**. While the overall landlessness has increased too from 8.9 % to 10.1% in the same period, but the SC/ST groups stand out as clear losers in this period, with the incidence of landlessness increasing among them from 14% to 18.6% in the period 1993-94 to 1999-2000. Also, while 17% of SC/ST households had land ownership of greater than marginal size (greater than 1 hectare) by 1999-2000 it had fallen to around 9%. There is also a clear concentration of all the social groups in the marginal land-holding class, and fall is also witnessed in the percentage of households holding lands of higher than the marginal sizes.

While 72 per cent of the 'other' category households would be classified in the marginal landholding category, which would essentially mean poor peasants, the corresponding number for the OBC households and SC households is found to be 77 per cent and 73 per cent, respectively. A very significant pattern that emerges here, even in this broad categorization of social groups, is that a **substantive majority and a similar percentage of households across these groups is found to be in a similar class positioning of the poor peasantry** (even here, the lot of SC households can be seen to be much worse). The **difference amongst these groups begins to show significantly as one move up the landholding category, specially for the SC households**. While only 3 per cent of the 'other' category households are found to be in the large landholding category of more than 4 hectares, the corresponding percentage for OBC households is only 0.7 per cent, with no SC household to be found in this class of rich peasantry.

Table 7 : Land possessed (hectares) by social groups in Bihar

Social group	0.0	0.01- 0.40	0.41 - 1.00	1.01 - 2.00	2.01 - 4.00	4.01+
0thers	6.0%	49.2%	23.0%	12.6%	6.1%	3.1%
OBC	8.8%	58.0%	19.5%	9.5%	3.5%	0.7%
SC	23.8%	67.1%	6.4%	2.1%	0.6%	0.0%

Source : 55th round NSS (1999-2000), report no. 469

Table 8 : Rural land ownership by classes

50th round(1993-94)				55th round(1999-2000)		
Land owned (ha)	Majority	SC/ST	Overall	Majority	SC/ST	Overall
No land	6.8	14.0	8.9	6.8	18.6	10.1
0<*<=0.4	38.1	53.3	42.8	51.6	57.6	53.3
0.4<*<=1	27.4	15.7	23.9	23.2	13.5	20.5
1<*<=2	16.9	9.6	14.7	11.3	6.7	10
2<*<=4	7.6	5.3	6.9	5.1	2.5	4.4
>4	3.2	2.1	2.8	2.2	1	1.9

Source : NSSO surveys

This story of fragmentation and pauperization of the peasantry is further confirmed, and the class division among various caste groups highlighted, by a survey done by IHD (Sharma, 2005). The survey reports a fall in the average size of the owned land for all caste groups and also across the classes between 1981-82 and 1999-2000. The fall is most significant for the upper caste groups, which stand out as the major losers in this period. However, the trend in the changing ownership profile of land across different caste groups reveals a very important aspect of the agrarian dynamics in the state.

While this report suggests a fall in the average size of the land owned by the upper castes by almost 50%, the fall is significantly lower around 20% for the dominant castes among the OBCs. While this indicates weakening of the upper caste groups control over the local agrarian economy, the fact that except for the Yadav, the Kurmi and the Koeri, the percentage fall in the average area for the OBC-II is 61.03%, clearly pointing out that the castes falling in the grouping of the other backward classes are not a homogenous group at least in terms of economic standing and opportunities. The average size of landholding for the Backward-I too is seen to become further precarious in this period, having fallen from 1.31 acres to 0.75 acres, and worse is the fate of SCs whose landholdings' average size fell by 50.38% , from already precarious 0.63 acres to 0.31 acres. Thus, the ***SCs and Backward-I are***

seen to be pushed to the brink of landlessness in this period, while the upper caste groups are also seen to be losing land significantly.

Table 9 : Average size of owned land in 1999-2000 and 1981-82 and % fall in average landholding across Caste and Class

	Average size of owned Land (Acres)		% fall in average Area
	1999-2000	1981-1982	
Caste			
Brahmin+Kayastha	3.45	6.25	44.86
Bhumihar+Rajput	2.78	5.43	48.85
Kurmi	3.45	4.26	19.48
Koeri	1.11	1.41	21.69
Yadav	1.17	1.60	26.71
Other backward II	1.25	3.20	61.03
Backward I	0.75	1.31	42.73
Scheduled Castes	0.31	0.63	50.38
Muslims	1.14	2.19	44.86
Class			
Agricultural labour	0.45	1.08	58.02
Poor middle peasants	0.83	0.73	-13.66
Middle peasants	1.02	1.48	31.56
Big peasants	2.99	4.78	37.42
Landlords	2.93	6.13	52.31
Non-agriculturalists	0.31	1.40	77.86
Total	1.80	3.42	47.52

Source : A.N. Sharma – Agrarian relations and socio-economic change in Bihar, EPW March 5, 2005

Similarly, if one takes a landholding pattern by classes (Table 9), while agricultural labour is seen to be losing nearly 60% of its landholding, similar is the fate of all other classes, except for the class defined as the "poor middle peasant" whose average land size grew in this period by almost 14%. As for the other classes, the fall is comparatively milder for the middle and big peasants, their land sizes falling by 32% and 37%, respectively. But the fall is huge for the non-agriculturalists whose average land size fell by almost 78%, from 1.40 acres to 0.31 acres. Similarly, landlords too lose their share of fat by around 52% with their average size of landholding falling from 6.13 acres to 2.93 acres. Thus, while on the one hand, we see **a trend**

towards proletarianisation in rural Bihar, we also find a weakening of the grip of traditional elites, non-agriculturalist on the agrarian economy.

Table 10 : Percentage of households and average size of selling and buying of land, 1999-2000

	%of households selling land	Average land Sold(acres)	% of households purchasing land	Average land purchased(acres)
Caste				
Brahmin+Kayastha	26.51	1.22	7.83	1.34
Bhumihar+Rajput	30.68	0.93	9.09	0.85
Kurmi	17.86	0.24	17.86	0.76
Koeri	10.00	0.40	3.33	0.62
Yadav	9.62	0.33	13.46	0.95
Other backward II	9.72	0.73	11.11	0.62
Backward I	5.16	0.53	10.97	0.64
Scheduled Castes	1.99	0.20	4.48	0.52
Muslims	13.33	0.92	9.09	1.09
Class				
Agricultural labour	3.50	0.69	4.04	0.23
Poor middle peasants	15.38	0.38	15.38	0.41
Middle peasants	17.54	0.27	17.54	0.98
Big peasants	24.52	1.00	13.55	1.13
Landlords	29.73	1.03	12.84	1.17
Non-agriculturalists	5.22	0.72	5.97	0.29
Total	13.02	0.90	8.64	0.85

Source : A.N. Sharma – Agrarian relations and socio-economic change in Bihar, EPW March 5, 2005

A look at the pattern of land changing hands can also give us an insight into the dynamics of the agrarian set-up we are set upon examining**.** *A substantial percentage of upper caste households is found to be selling land and with few buying*, with the average size of land sold being less than the size of land bought. This is only a pointer towards the internal differentiation among the upper caste segments, with the weaker sections among them losing out. In fact, in this period, upper castes have been the biggest losers of land and the gainer have been the backward castes, specially Kurmi and

Yadav. *The Yadav households seem to be most bullish in the land market, with only 9.62% household selling land of average size 0.33 acres, but 13.46% of households buying land of average size 0.95 acres.*

For **scheduled castes too, the percentage of households buying land (4.48%) is more than households selling land (1.99%).** For all caste groups, size of land bought is more than the size of land sold, except for the OBC II group, where though the percentage of households purchasing land(11.11%) is more than the percentage of households(9.72%) selling land, but the average size of land sold is 0.73 acres while the average size of land bought is 0.62 acres. This could well be a case of **erstwhile cultivators moving out of cultivation in distress, and the ascendant groups/classes across all the caste groups investing in land**. This could well be marker of a new dynamics taking shape in the agrarian Bihar with the weaker segments across different caste groups moving out, leaving the contest for agrarian control between the ascending/powerful segments of different castes.

Land ownership and Employment scenario

Employment profile in the rural areas is also closely related to the pattern of land ownership. **While an overwhelming majority of landless is agricultural labour, their resort to this profession has increased in the decade of nineties.** In 1993-94, while 70.3% of landless were agricultural labour, in 1999-2000 this proportion went up to around 77 % (Table 11). Seen in the light of a decreasing participation overall in agricultural labour, this segment's increased participation in the same seems to be more of an outcome of an act of compulsion rather than an act of volition. The point to be taken note of is that the landless are also the most wretched and deprived, right at the bottom of the social ladder and facing worst kinds of deprivations. The un-freedom of choice under these circumstances for this segment comes as no surprise and their condition seems to have worsened in the period. This period has also seen increased involvement of landless in casual non-farm labour and cultivation. While marginal landholders are also seen to be moving out of agricultural labour into cultivation and casual non-farm labour, their regular non-farm employment scenario too has registered a marginal increase in the nineties.

Table 11 : Land Ownership and Occupations

Land owned(ha)	Agricultural labour	cultivation	Regular non-farm labour	Casual nonnon-farm	Self employed	other	total
50th round							
No land	**70.3**	1.6	6.9	5.7	15.2	0.3	100
0<*<=0.4ha	67.2	11.4	3.1	2.8	15.4	0.2	100
0.4<*<=1ha	17.7	66.8	3.8	3.1	8.4	0.2	100
1<*<=2ha	7	81.7	4.4	1.4	5.5	0.1	100
2<*<=4ha	1.9	88.1	5.9	0.0	4.0	0.0	100
4ha	2.3	87.7	7.1	0.0	3.0	0.1	100
Overall	41.9	39.9	4.1	2.7	11.4	0.2	100
55th round(1999-00)							
No land	**76.6**	2.6	2.1	6.2	12.3	0.2	100
0<*<=0.4ha	57.1	16.3	3.5	6.2	16.6	0.3	100
0.4<*<=1ha	9.5	75.1	4.0	2.8	8.4	0.3	100
1<*<=2ha	2.1	87.6	3.2	0.7	6.1	0.4	100
2<*<=4ha	0.6	87.6	5.0	1.1	5.7	0.0	100
>4ha	1.7	86.4	5.7	0.5	5.4	0.3	100
Overall	40.4	38.5	3.5	4.6	12.7	0.3	100

Source : NSSO surveys

Employment profile of the social groups

If one takes a look at the employment profile of various social groups, one finds that a majority of SC/ST working age population lands up working as agricultural labour, although in the nineties their proportion in agricultural labour has fallen from 65% in 1993-94 to 58.2% in 1999-2000. However, a larger proportion of this group's working age population has landed up in cultivation in the nineties, up from 22.2% to 24.6%. This is likely to increase assertion of these segments in the rural economy as they are seen to be moving out of relations of dependency in a significant way. Nevertheless, this period has also seen a greater casualisation of this workforce.

As for the remaining social groups, there has been an increased participation in the labour process as agricultural labour, which has also seen a fall in regular non-farm employment, as also in cultivation. Here, one also must observe that 61.1% of farmer households, according to the NSS report of 2003,

belong to the OBC group, while STs account for only 2.5%, SCs for 14.4% and others for 21.6% of total farmer households.

Table 12 : Distribution of Rural Working Age Population in Bihar by Social Group and Principle Economic activity

	Agricultural labour	Cultivation	Regular non-farm	Casual non-farm	Self non-farm	Other	Total
50th round (1993-94)							
SC/ST	65.1	22.2	3.3	3.3	5.8	0.3	100
Majority	29.1	49.5	4.5	2.4	14.4	0.1	100
Overall	41.9	39.9	4.1	2.7	11.4	0.2	100
55th round(1999-200)2.4							
SC/ST	58.2	24.6	2.4	6.1	8.6	0.1	100
Majority	31.3	45.6	4.1	3.9	14.8	0.3	100
Overall	40.4	38.5	3.5	4.6	12.7	0.3	100

Source : NSSO surveys

The consumption quintiles and employment profile

The NSSO data shows that wage employment in agricultural labour accounted for nearly 40 % of the rural workforce in Bihar in 1999-00 compared to 42% in 1993-94, but still constituted the dominant occupation in rural areas of the state. There is sharp contrast in occupational distribution between the poor and non-poor in rural areas. The poor are far more likely to be agricultural workers or casual non-farm labourers rather than cultivators or employed in a regular non-farm job (Table 13).

Over time, the share of agricultural labour in the poorest quintile has declined, while casual non-farm labour and self-employed non-farm occupations have increased (and this has had significant manifestations for the political economy of the state, as the control of the better-off sections/landed segments over this class of population has accordingly weakened). Such an occupational shift does not necessarily mean an improvement in occupational status of the rural poor. Casual non-farm labour is the last resort that households choose when other options have exhausted. Casual labour offers one of the lowest wages among all occupations and the terms of employment are usually short and unstable. The recent occupational shift from agricultural labour to non-agricultural labour

represents a move to higher daily nominal wages, irrespective of location and gender. However, this occupational shift while improving poor households' wages and income levels worsens their vulnerability to adverse economic shocks.

What is interesting is that the share of agricultural labour in the fourth quintile and top quintile has increased in the nineties. This is to be seen in conjunction with the increased loss of land among the upper caste segments in this period. The share of casual non-farm labour too in the top two quintiles has increased, while that of regular non-farm labour has fallen. The share of cultivators in the top quintile too has increased which, in turn, could be related to the phenomena of reverse tenancy.

Table 13 : Distribution of rural working age population of Bihar by per capita consumption quintile and principal economic activity

	Agri. Labour	Cultivation	Regular non-farm	Casual non-farm	Self employed	Other	Total
50th round							
Bottom	65.6	21.8	1.1	3.9	7.4	0.2	100
Quintile2	53.0	30.9	2.6	3.3	10.0	0.2	100
Quintile3	43.0	40.3	2.6	2.5	11.3	0.2	100
Quintile4	32.3	48.4	4.2	1.9	13.0	0.1	100
Top	17.5	56.3	9.5	1.9	14.7	0.1	100
Overall	41.9	39.9	4.1	2.7	11.4	0.2	100
55th round							
Bottom	54.5	25.2	1.1	6.9	12.1	0.2	100
Quintile2	51.6	29.5	1.6	5.3	11.7	0.3	100
Quintile3	41.9	38.1	2.4	4.0	13.5	0.1	100
Quintile4	33.5	46.1	3.2	4.5	12.8	0.1	100
Top	23.5	51.9	8.7	2.8	13.3	0.5	100
Overall	40.4	38.5	3.5	4.6	12.7	0.3	100

Source: NSSO, 50th and 55th round

Migration

Bihar has the highest out-migration rate in India, with the numbers increasing over time. In 2001, there was over 200% more migration from Bihar than in 1991, while the average increase for Indian states was just 21.5%. Data from 2001 census of India indicate a substantial increase in the percentage of migrants citing work or employment as the primary reason for their departure (versus other reasons such as marriage, education, and business).

Table 14 : Changes in magnitude and nature of migration of workers by caste, class, and land size (in percentage)

	1981 - 1982			1999 - 2000		
	Migrant Workers to Total Rural Workers	Distribution of Migrant Workers		Migrant Workers to Total Workers	Distribution of Migrant Workers	
		Seasonal	long-term		Seasonal	long-term
Caste						
Upper castes	**12.40**	68.75	31.25	**28.97**	47.95	52.05
Backward Caste II	**10.18**	75.86	24.14	**16.93**	60.81	39.19
Backward Caste I	**8.02**	84.21	15.79	**14.74**	58.11	41.89
Scheduled Castes	**6.07**	90.00	10.00	**14.01**	58.02	41.98
Muslims	**13.68**	100.00	0.00	**24.78**	46.43	53.57
Class						
Agricultural labour	**7.07**	90.24	9.76	**11.14**	71.77	28.23
Poor Middle Peasants	**9.47**	100.00	0.00	**20.59**	64.29	35.71
Middle Peasants	**4.17**	33.33	66.67	**12.29**	36.36	63.64
Big Peasants	**12.25**	67.74	32.26	**19.19**	57.75	42.25
Landlords	**16.81**	75.00	25.00	**39.64**	38.53	61.47
Non-Agriculturists	**16.07**	88.89	11.11	**37.60**	46.15	53.85
Size of Owned land(acres)						
Landless	**7.63**	91.89	8.11	**16.70**	64.42	35.56
Up to 1	**9.15**	85.19	14.81	**22.15**	45.21	54.79
1 to 2.5	**16.33**	70.83	29.17	**23.59**	43.28	56.72
2.5 to 5	**14.56**	80.00	20.00	**18.46**	55.56	44.44
5 to 10	**7.58**	80.00	20.00	**14.42**	46.67	53.33
10+	**7.35**	20.00	80.00	**13.79**	100.00	0.00

Source : A. N. Sharma, EPW March 5, 2005 (based on the ILO and A. N. Sinha Institute of Social Sciences, Patna survey of 1981-82 and IHD survey of 1999-00)

A look at the social profile of the migrant population in the state corroborates the patterns in employment and landholding that have emerged in the nineties. The **weakest of the caste groups, which are also *en masse* landless, are found to be shifting their base out of agriculture**. The percent of migrant workers in total rural workers among the scheduled castes has more than doubled, from 6.07% in 1981-82 to 14.01% in 1999-2000. The shift becomes even more significant when one takes a look at the nature of migration. While in the early 80s, 90% of this segment was migrating seasonally thereby indicating its commitment to agricultural employment back home when warranted by the cropping pattern, now there are almost equal number of long-term and seasonal migrants. Among the migrant population, the seasonal migrant account for 58.02% while long-term migrants account for 41.98%. Similarly, the **upper castes too have seen their migrant workers (as percentage of total rural workers) becoming more than doubled in this period. While in the early 80s, 12.40 % of its total rural workforce was migrating, by the end of nineties this has gone up to almost 30%.** And here too, we see an **increase in the proportion of long-term migration as compared to the seasonal one**. While there is an increase in the migration across all social groups, the backward castes, in particular the Upper Backward Castes (the Yadav, the Koeri, the Kurmi et al) have remained firmly grounded in the rural agrarian economy.

Thus, we see that land emerges out to be the key asset which is seen to underline the socio-economic profile of the rural population, but is also found to underline the changes in them over the period. Changes in the landholding status not only are seen to go hand-in-hand with the changes in the employment profile, but also with the incidence of poverty and migration. Overall, it can be seen that the relations of production in agrarian Bihar are changing, but at the same time are loaded against labour. The condition of labour working in the fields of Bihar is seen to be continuously worsening over time, which is reflected in an increasing incidence of poverty amongst them and their migration out of the economy. Reforming these relations of production, therefore, is seen to be a major condition for releasing the forces of production that are dormant in the economy, which would propel the development of the state, and to this end, land reforms are considered to be a crucial means.

Land Reforms – Addressing Structural Bottlenecks in Agriculture??

Importance of Land

Land and labour have been at the core of a civilized human existence, with the relationship between the two reflecting not only the social and political structuring, but also the possibilities and constraints of human development in those structures. It was not for nothing that the Physiocrats, arguably the first great school of thought in Political Economy in the 18th century France, considered only labour working on land to be productive, terming the rest as sterile. While the theory and practice of economics has travelled far since then, the fact of the matter remains that it is labour on the fields which gives existence to various other kinds of labour and human enterprise on the face of this earth. For the very existence of a civilized human life, labour has to work on land. It was this centrality of land and labour that set the agenda of research in the political economy for over two centuries, right up to 1870 when the utilitarian school took over. When Sir William Petty (1660s), whom Karl Marx considered to be "the founder of modern political economy', noted that "Labour is the Father and active principle of Wealth, as Lands are the Mother (Petty, 1899 [1662]: 68)", he was merely reflecting this basic character of land and labour in the social (economic) and political dynamics. Given this centrality, it is not surprising that since the advent of human civilisation, wars, rebellions, movements, struggle of masses have, in substantial measures, been around the issue of land and the labour working on it.

Since Physiocrats – economic/political economy in particular and social sciences in general – have, of course, witnessed a mind-blowing explosion of arguments and knowledge, nevertheless, the centrality of land in facilitating the well-being through economic transformation continues to be an important argument. In particular, at the current juncture the importance of access to land for the rural masses, in ensuring decent livelihood is most developing countries is generally acknowledged throughout the entire academic and policy advocacy spectrum. Even for charting out a high growth path, inequity in distribution (of income or assets) cannot be afforded as it not only distorts the production structure and has a built-in demand-deficiency syndrome, but also entails a high-cost economy. The welfare burdens, social tensions, degradation of the environment, political instabilities, the costly flood of refugees and migrants – it is evident from

a very small list itself that the costs are distributed across classes. In this respect, poverty has become a luxury which even the rich can no longer afford in the long run (Jazairy, Alamgir and Panuccio, 1992).

Land and Poverty Reduction

Over time, access to land has become a strategic component of pronouncements of poverty eradication programmes, which are being run with much vigour and vitality of international concerns. Arguments aren't far to seek, as asset poverty more often than not lies at the core of poverty. There has been global campaign against poverty, under the tutelage of Bretton Woods Institutions. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers have been prepared for different countries (of course with similar prescriptions and proscriptions!) and aid is being pumped in via the civil society groups for combating poverty. Surely, importance of land reforms could not have been missed in this highly charged campaign against poverty. In fact, a World Bank study (quoted in Thompsom, p.413, 2003) observes that implementing a land reform has a similar effect on poverty to a 10 per cent increase in per capita income. Likewise, Bharat Dogra refers to a study by FAO which estimates that redistribution of only 5 per cent of farmland in India, coupled with improved access to water, could reduce rural poverty levels by 30 per cent compared to what it would otherwise be (Dogra, 2002). Besley and Burgess (2000), in their recent empirical work on the subject, make a persuasive case and argue that land reforms in India, as and where implemented, have had a robust impact in reducing poverty. A one-time redistribution of assets can in an environment of imperfect markets be associated with permanently high levels of growth, which is in contrast with the view of Kaldor and Kuznet. Cross-country regression clearly demonstrates that inequality in the distribution of land ownership is associated with lower subsequent growth (Birdsall & Londono 1918; Deininger & Square 1998, Deininger & Olinto World Bank, 2001 World Development Report). At the household level, asset ownership has a clear impact on subsequent growth possibilities (Blanchflower & Oswald 1998; Hoff 1996). Contribution of a more equitous distribution of land ownership to human development indicators comes out very powerfully in the country experiences, such as that of China *vis-a-vis* India (Burgess, 1999).

Rethinking Land : An Ownership Title *Vs* A Productivity Unit (A living Unit!)

Lack of assets is an effect as well as a cause of poverty in terms of income opportunities, consumption, capability-building of people and their institutions. Access to land and natural resources, invariably, have defined not only economic, but also social and political deprivation of the masses of the developing world. Land assumes critical significance in rural areas where entire social, economic and political life is weaved around it. With agriculture and primary sector activities being the primary source of income for the majority of population in the developing world, the pattern of land ownership assumes a critical significance, not only in decent livelihood capability of the masses, but also in their general well-being. Manifestations of ownership of land and corresponding relations of production are not limited to food security and question of subsistence. Of course, physical subsistence is the most primary human need, subject to the fulfillment of which does human enterprise cater to the other needs of a decent livelihood. However, fulfillment of all other needs is in crucial ways dependent on the conditions of fulfillment of this basic need of food. Positioning of the individual in the relations of exchange, giving entitlement to food, is more or less determinant and indicative of his capability of fulfilling other basic needs of a decent livelihood. A landless labourer selling his labour through the day to be able to barely feed himself and his dependents can neither afford education nor health in case of a medical contingency. Neither can he afford to bargain his wages, risking his daily bread. His state of existence is more or less defined by his positioning *vis-à-vis* the food market. Here, his day-long labour sells for a basic subsistence quantity of food grains, leaving him with practically nothing to substantiate his human existence, except for the breath he takes. Therefore, the issues of rights over land and access to it cannot be seen as merely a matter of equity in land distribution and efficiency in production. It must deal with land as a productive asset which gives access to basic needs of human existence, a source of decent livelihood.

And for this, land has to be conceptualized as a productivity unit, as a unit which engages as well as gives body to human action as well as contextualizes its social and political existence. The issue of land is not merely an issue of titles. It has been common experience across countries, that transferring of title *per se* does not convert into entitlements in the market and polity. There are ample evidences of concentration of land re-manifesting itself due to the unavailability/inaccessibility of complementary resources such as water, credit etc. which would

fructify in productive powers of land. Any production enterprise in these circumstances more often than not results in losses, which take the form of indebtedness, finally leading to alienation of land amounting to counter-reforms. In case of regions that are under forest cover and rich in mineral wealth, rights of indigenous population for habitation along with the rights of productive exploitation have to be recognized. Declaring these indigenous segments as encroachers and forbidding them from accessing the only source of livelihood and way of life they have known so far would amount to an effective de-capacitating these segments of any possibility of a decent livelihood. And it is in this context that land has to be seen in its relation with water and natural resources. An equitable distribution of land with an oligopoly over water would yet mean substantive inequity in terms of productive and social capacity. Similarly, forests have to be seen as productive resources which not only provide the inhabitants a livelihood, but also a way of life far simple and equitous than the modern societies have to offer.

Given the vitality of access to/control over land in determining the state of human existence, it is not surprising that 'Land' has been a major determinant of social status, political power and class structure since time immemorial. It is the main asset around which power system and social hierarchy gets structured, at least in the rural society (UpHoff, 2003). As Penn has rightly observed "in much of the world today, the ownership of land carries with it ownership to government - the right to tax, the right to judge, the power to enact and enforce police regulations...". Dore (1958) argues: "land ownership is a decisive determinant of the social structure, of the level of agricultural production, of the well-being of the mass of the population, and increasingly in this age when ideologies transcend frontiers, of the stability of the political system".

History and Typology of Land Reforms

Given the socio-economic and political underpinnings of the land question, land reforms have had a history concomitant with the history of political systems. Land reform has been a recurring theme of enormous consequence in world history — for example, the history of the Semproninan Law or *Lex Sempronia agraria* proposed by **Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus** and passed by the **Roman Senate** (133 BC), which led to the social and political wars that ended the **Roman**

Republic. In ancient Egypt, the tax exemption for temple lands eventually drove almost all the good land into the hands of the priestly class, making them immensely rich (and leaving the world a stunning legacy of monumental temple architecture that still impresses several millennnia later), but starving the government of revenue. In Rome, the land tax exemption for the noble senatorial families had a similar effect, leading to Pliny's famous observation that the latifundia (vast landed estates) had ruined Rome, and would likewise ruin the provinces. In the **Christian** world, this has frequently been true of churches and monasteries, a major reason that many of the French revolutionaries saw the Catholic Church as an accomplice of the landed aristos. In the Moslem world, land reforms such as that organized in **Spain** by **al-Hurr** in 718 have transferred property from **Muslims** to Christians, who were taxable by much higher rates.

In the modern world, there were basically three kinds of forces which were propelling the agenda of land reforms. The nature and intent of those forces in turn defined the agenda of land reforms being pushed by them. One was the force of peasant mobilisation in the nationalist struggle against colonialism. Deprivations and exploitation manifest in the land relations of the day were the mobilisation points of the peasants in the nationalist struggle against colonial power. Naturally, promise of reformed land relations, and freedom from its exploitative tangles was to be one of the key agendas of the freedom movements of these countries. The nature of colonial control on the rural agrarian structure therefore shaped the agenda of land reforms in these countries, and also defined in very basic way the possibilies and limitations of those reforms.

Enamored by the development path, followed by the capitalist world (unmindful of the historical contingencies of that path, of which colonialism was one!), these countries were all set to chart out a similar path for their economies. In doing so, they were led by the transition theory, which posed the classic transition problem, requiring agriculture to provide both surplus and labour for the growth of a modern industrial economy. The extant land relations here came in as a structural bottleneck in effecting a successful transition of the economy. But very nature of this problem placed distribution second to the primary concern of efficiency in agricultural production, which would release resources (capital and labour) for investment in the modern industrial sector. Of course, equity consideration too weighed-in due to the political considerations of these ‘free’ states, but nevertheless was fashioned in a way to play a seconding role to efficiency considerations. This comes to be seen in the content of their land reforms package as well its

outcome. This is not to say that efficiency of production and distribution are contradictory, rather quite the opposite. It is an equitous distribution which is a pre-condition of a sustainable expanding production, or otherwise it would severely compromise the functioning of the other blade (that of demand) of the famous Marshallian scissors.

The third force was the concern of the 'guardians' of the free world on spread of communism. A disaffected and distraught peasantry could be a very effective fodder for the fire of communism to spread on. Land reform which would at least take the peasantry out of its state of unrest was the immediate agenda of such reforms. While reforms under such motives were carried out in direct supervision of the colonial powers in some of the countries, in others it was carried out by the domestic regimes wary of communist movement gathering momemtum.

The Paradigm of Land Reforms in India

In India, while political urgency of land reforms derived from peasant mobilization during the national movement, its content was finally shaped by the demands of development strategy the country was to adopt. As agrarian India was to have an instrumental value in that development paradigm, prospects of land reforms and peasantry were aptly summed up by Nehruvian remark of 'allowing the size of cake to grow before it could be distributed'. Arguments have been made that this was also because of the character of leadership of the nationalist movement (Jannuzi, 1974).[1] While on the one hand were radical elements inspired by western liberal thought, who were all for radical measures in land reforms, on the other were leaders who were considered to be rustic, traditional and conservative in their belief system. This contradiction is highlighted by the fact that despite there being a number of organized peasant movements from about 1920, even by the late 1920s the Congress did not have a definitive agrarian policy. The initiative on this front came from the Communist Party of India which in 1930 published a "Draft Program of Action" calling for "confiscation without compensation of all lands and estates, forests, and pastures of the native princes, landlords, moneylenders, and the British Government, and the transference to peasant communities for use by the toiling masses of the peasantry… immediate confiscation of all plantations… immediate nationalization of the whole system of irrigation, complete cancellation of all indebtedness and taxes… the peasantry and agricultural proletariat to

[1] Jannuzi, F. Tomasson ; 1974, *Agrarian Crisis in India : The Case of Bihar*

engage in all kinds of political demonstrations, and collective refusal to pay taxes and dues… refusal to pay rent… refusal to pay debts and arrears to government, the landlords, and the moneylenders in ay form whatsoever" (Jannuzi, 1974, p 5).

It was not until 1936 that the Congress party came out with an election manifesto which included a statement advocating "a reform of the system of land tenure and revenue and rent, and an equitable adjustment of the burden on agricultural land, giving immediate relief to the smaller peasantry by a substantial reduction of agricultural rent and revenue now paid by them and exempting uneconomic holdings from payment of rent and revenue." [2]

However, one gets to see a very strategic balancing of contradictory interests within the Congress party. On the one hand, while it showed off its reformist colours with a radical language of policy resolutions, on the other, it ensured that conservative landed and industrial interests were not unduly disturbed. Even when India got independence, agenda of land reforms that finally got into effect was shaped by this balancing act of the party. After independence, an Agrarian Reforms Committee under JC Kumarappa was constituted. Its terms of reference were:

> The Committee will have to examine and make recommendations about agrarian reforms arising out of the abolition of zamindari system in the light of conditions prevailing in different provinces. The Committee will consider and report on co-operative farming and methods of improving agricultural production, position of small holdings, sub tenants, landless labourers and on improving the conditions of agricultural rural population (AICC 1949 : 3-4).

The Committee submitted its report on 9 July 1949. The report suggested a very low ceiling on ownership holdings and a policy of 'land to the tiller' as a programme to transform Indian Agriculture. The committee held the view that the existing agrarian structure was an obstacle in achieving economic and social goals of modern society. In economic terms, the report argued that large holdings were inefficient compared to small holdings and suggested a reduction in the size of large farms after imposition of ceiling on ownership, redistribution of surplus land among

[2] Jawahar Lal Nehru, as quoted by W. Norman Brown, *The United States and India and Pakistan*

dwarf holdings and rehabilitation of the landless. The Committee envisaged three types of post-reform holdings:

1) Economic holding was supposed to provide a reasonable standard of living, full employment to a family of normal size and a pair of bullocks with a bearing on the peculiar factors of the agrarian economy;
2) Basic holding was visualized as smaller than the economic holding (but not so small as to be palpably uneconomic) and was to be capable of being built-up by acquisition and otherwise into economic holdings;
3) Optimum holding was the largest holding suggested by the Committee. In the interest of better management by owner/cultivator, its recommended size was not to be more than three times of economic holding.

Besides these three classes of owner-cultivators, there were landless labourers and cultivators of uneconomic holdings, who lived primarily by agricultural wage employment. The land in excess of ceiling was to be distributed among them, and to be used for cooperative joint farming to be started by the village community. The model of land ownership suggested by the committee was 'land to the tiller' i.e. the actual cultivator. The cultivator was defined as one who puts in a certain amount of physical labour in cultivation. The committee was of the view that land should be held for use and the cultivators have permanent and heritable rights of cultivation of the land. The only exceptions were to be widows, minors and disabled persons. Renting-out of land was to be prohibited by law after a period of transition (AICC 1949: 7-36). Thus, the earlier thinking at the highest level in India was that the land either be held by the tiller who contributes physical labour in the cultivation of land or by the village community. It was against the capitalist norm of cultivation by hired labour.

However, as it was to be, the report of the committee did not get formal approval by the Congress party, which did not pass a formal resolution accepting the committee's recommendations. Party's resolutions on national agrarian policy other than abolition of intermediaries were vague and avoided the ceiling issue. The draft First Five-Year Plan (1952) rejected ceiling as too costly to implement and perceived it as contrary to the productivity imperatives in agriculture. As opposed to the position of Agrarian Reform Committee, the

absentee landlords were compared with absentee owners in industry (shareholders), and the publication of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (1955) argued that the landlords could not be condemned unless land resources were being inefficiently used. Contrary to the position of the Committee, the Agriculture Ministry justified the resumption of land from tenants for self-cultivation, and also argued against ceiling at low level on the grounds of modernization and efficiency. The Second Five-Year Plan (1956) recommended exemptions from ceiling for large farms that were efficient, mechanized and based on heavy investment. This was reflected in the ceiling laws passed by various state assemblies.

History of Revenue Administration and Expropriation of Agricultural Surplus in Bihar

Before Zamindari abolition in Bihar, the state had an intricately stratified system of relationship of people to land. Bihar was under Permanent Settlement, and in these Permanent Settlement Areas, there were numerous kind of landholdings. At the apex of the hierarchy was the State. Below the State were the zamindars, tenure-holders, and under-tenure holders. At the base were the peasants with limited rights to land and the landless labourers, wage labourers with no rights to land. It is found that in practice, the distinction between a tenure holder and a ryot was often hard to draw as many with interests in land combined roles, functioning simultaneously, for example as a tenure-holder over a portion of their holding and as a ryot over another portion.

As is well documented, all legislations of this period, dealing with landlord and tenant, had one primary objective viz. the security of public revenue, and each successive regulation served only to arm those who were under engagements for revenue with additional powers, so as to enable them to realize their demands in the first instance, whether right or wrong.[3] Regulation 8 of 1793, the infamous *Haftam* Regulation 7 of 1799, the *Pancham* Regulation 5 of 1812, and Regulation 11 of 1822 are cases in point.[4] It was only through Act 19 of 1859 and more clearly Act 8 of 1885 (the Bengal Tenancy Act, which later became with some modifications, the Bihar Tenancy Act) that the rights of the tenants got some recognition in law. The principle of the Tenancy Act, based strongly still on the basic assumptions of the Permanent Settlement, revolved on a system of fixity of tenure at judicial rents, and its three main objects were: first, to

[3] S.C.Ray (Comp.), *Land Revenue Administration in India*, Calcutta, 1915
[4] Arvind N. Das, *Agrarian Unrest and Socio-Economic Change in Bihar 1900-1980*, New Delhi, 1983

give the settled ryot the same security in his holding as he enjoyed under the old customary law; secondly, to ensure to the landlord a fair share of the increased value of the produce of the soil; and thirdly, to lay down rules by which all disputed questions between landlord and tenant can be reduced to simple issue and decided upon equitable principles. But in effect, the act did nothing to change the basic premises of the Permanent Settlement. In many other respects too the Act was merely declaratory about the rights of the tenant which he was left to enforce in the civil courts as best as he could. It was under such a declaratory legislation, an agrarian system developed in Bihar "which was possessed of the worst elements of the Permanent Settlement and contained none of the redeeming features which regulation, leadership and education provided through much of nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Bengal proper." [5]

Expropriation of the Agricultural Surplus in Colonial Bihar

One distinctive feature of zamindaris in Bihar, under permanent settlement was that the relative size of common zamindaris was small in spite of the existence of mammoth estates like Darbhanga, Bettiah, Banaili, Dumraon etc. For example, in Sircar Saran, there were many joint proprietors on the land, sometimes a single village with an annual *jumma* of a few hundred rupees, having ten or twelve different *putteedars* (co-sharers) on it.[6] In addition to these petty zamindars, there was also a very large section constituting an inferior or subordinate class of proprietors holding petty estates.[7] Further, the function of estate management had been so structured as to create a highly ramified set of middlemen, who functioned autonomously of the landlord except when they became a party to carrying out oppression on his behalf.[8] The result of such a structured layering of middlemen was that many *amlahs* acquired different rights on the land itself, became highly oppressive and made their conduct perennial source of agrarian tension.[9]

Sharing of agricultural surplus was the base motive of vesting the control over land in the Zamindars by the Permanent Settlement. The focus of economy of Bihar was on agriculture and

[5] Walter Hauser, *The Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha, 1929-1942 : A study of an Indian Peasant Movement*, D.Phil. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1961, Unpublished, p.22

[6] BOR Progs., 17th April 1793, No.42, Letter from Collector, Sircar Saran to the Board

[7] R. Colebrook, *Remarks on the Husbandry and Internal Commerce of Bengal*, London, 1804

[8] Walter Hauser, *The Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha, 1929-1942 : A study of an Indian Peasant Movement*, D.Phil. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1961, Unpublished, p.22

[9] Rahul Sankrityayana, *Tumhari Kshaya*, (in Hindi), Allahabad, 1959, pp.37-42

the focus of the agrarian structure was appropriation of agricultural surplus. In such a situation of monopoly over the primary productive resource – land – the exaction of rent i.e. peasant's payment for the use of land, was the principal mode of maintenance by the landlords of their control over land and therefore the rural economy, and that of the colonial regime over the agrarian set-up via the instrumentality of zamindari system.[10]

Since, governments share of surplus was fixed in absolute terms, the British administration was not particularly interested in maintaining accurate and detailed account of the agricultural produce, its rent component etc. In 1793, the revenue demand was fixed at 9/10 of the rent then received without much investigation, and since then there was no attempt to arrive at how much in fact the landlords were getting from the tenants. Only in the period 1892-1938 survey and settlement operations on a widespread extent were undertaken in the districts of Bihar but even these were mainly with a view to establishing a record of rights of various classes of tenants rather than to arriving at any accurate estimate of the relative quantum of revenue and rent. The records maintained by the zamindars themselves were obviously tailored to hide these figures. Thus, only, qualitative information and quantitative 'guesstimates' are available for rent charged due to the land monopoly in Bihar.

While in 1792, the zamindars were left with 1/10 of the rent, the benefits from extension of cultivation, sawyer income from fisheries, orchards, pastures etc. all accrued to them. It soon became obvious that revenue demand was nowhere near 9/10 of the total receipt of the zamindars from their estates. Furthermore, there were rent exactions of other kind in the form of labour rent, produced rent, homage, etc. and this 'pegging' of land revenue as compared to other taxes was reflected in the inflated value of land, the benefits from which flowed to the limited class of zamindars. And this was not all that was extracted from the peasantry. Rent related only to that paid by primary tenants and not to the rent exacted through sub-tenancy, another vicious

[10] Anand A. Yang, *The Limited Raj : Agrarian relations in Colonial India, Saran District, 1793-1920,* London, 1989

feature of the agrarian economy of Bihar to which, haltingly, attention was drawn only after the abolition of zamindari and the consolidation by the former 'occupancy ryots' of their position *vis-à-vis* the 'under-ryots', sharecroppers or bataidars as well as the agricultural labourers.

A distinctive feature of the produce rent system was its concentration in Bihar, and here again it was largely confined to the South Gangetic district (Table 1).[11] The area under produce rent was in fact much larger at the time of the Permanent Settlement, but with increasing productivity the tenants consistently tried to get the rent commuted into money. This trend persisted throughout the zamindari period and the attempt of the tenants was constant source of agrarian tension. The settlement reports make it clear that the custom of paying grain rents was suited to a state of society in which money was scarce, competition for land was not acute, and there was no need of legal machinery for recovering produce rent. When these conditions disappeared, the customary system which had been adapted to them began to disintegrate. Where the custom was in normal operation, no receipts were given for produce rents as they were not necessary, since custom did not contemplate the accrual of arrears or the institution of suits for their recovery. The landlord took his customary share of whatever the land produced at the time of harvest. The precise amount of this customary share depended on the relative strength of the parties and the prevailing custom. What the landlord received in practice was the maximum which the ryot could afford to pay, less what was taken by the *amlah*. 'The fundamental fact which was stressed in all the final reports on the South Bihar Settlement operations was that in practice the landlord never received more than one-fifth or one-fourth of the gross crop. In theory he may have been entitled to one-half or nine-sixteenths of the produce: 'but… the strict enforcement of the theretical demand was forbidden by custom, by tradition, and by a general feeling that it was not in the interest of the landlords themselves to ruin their tenants by trying to enforce it.'[12]

[11] Arvind N. Das, *Agrarian Unrest and Socio-Economic Change in Bihar, 1900-1980,* New-Delhi, 1983, p.39
[12] R.A.E. Williams, *Final Report on the Rent Settlement Operations Under Section 112, Bihar Tenancy Act, in eleven sub-divisions of the Patna, Gaya, Shahabad and Monghyr Districts (1937-1941),* Patna, 1943, p.37

Peasant Mobilisation in Bihar

With increased pressure of population on land and the increased competition for it led zamindars to make exorbitant demands for the share of the produce as rent. At times it amounted to even three-fourths of the gross produce.[13] Thus, customary norms were not only violated in making these demands, the zamindars took recourse to the machinery of the law for the execution of these demands. And as a result of failure to pay rents, the tenants' most productive asset – land was taken away by the Zamindars. Such lands appropriated in satisfaction of rent decrees were known as *bakasht* lands. This was another source of continuous agrarian tension which erupted in sporadic outbursts. In the 1930s, the tenants, hit by the low prices of food grains due to depression, faltered in their rent payments, and resisted this forced alienation of land and its produce. ***Bakasht* disputes became the focus of peasant unrest in Bihar in the 1930s.**[14] The issues agitating the peasants were thus getting crystallized. **Forced labour (*beggar*), illegal exactions (*abwabs)*, commutation of produce rent into cash rent, and refusal by landlord to grant receipts for rent accepted were among the major issues around which peasant unrest and mobilization began to take shape.**

Another perennial cause of dispute was the settlement of diara land and rights to forest produce and grazing. These permanent tensions flared up into full-fledged disputes whenever a new element was introduced. For example, in Bhagalpur district, the settlement operations brought to the fore the simmering discontent over the diara lands.[15] Floods and other natural phenomena also brought out agrarian conflict: 'disagreements occurred over lands rendered unfit for cultivation by the recession of the river Kosi and there was also considerable ill-feeling owing to the resumption of newly-accreted lands in the Ganges diara by the Berari estate."[16]

Thus, by the end of the 1920s, the rent and its mode of payment, the problem of *bakasht* lands and the continuance of beggar and *abwabs* produced an explosive situation. It was in this context

[13] Letter No : 2504 of the 28th April 1914, from the Director of Land Records, Monghyr, to the Secretary of the Board of Revenue, cited by Williams.
[14] Walter Hauser, op.cit, p.23
[15] Bihar and Orissa, Report on the Administration of Bihar and Orissa, 1920-21, Patna, 1922, p.11
[16] Bihar and Orissa in 1928-29, op.cit., p.77

that the Kisan Sabha was formed by Swami Sahjanand Saraswati in West Patna district in 1927. While the tenants in West Patna district had started getting organized with the formation of the Kisan Sabha, *Bakasht* disputes and tensions on account of other issues were building up in especially in Darbhanga, Champaran, Gaya, Monghyr, and Patna districts, and in 1929 the peasants were particularly agitated because a Bill to amend the Tenancy Act had been introduced in the Council and it was feared that if passed it would further weaken the position of the tenants. Ryot leaders, therefore, decided to set up an all-Bihar Kisan Sabha to exert pressure from outside for dropping the Bill. The initiative in this regard was taken by Pandit Yamuna Karjee, a peasant leader, and Ramdayalu Singh, a Bhumihar notable. Other Congress leaders were contacted and it was decided to form the Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha (BPKS) at the annual gathering of peasants during the Sonepur Fair in 1929. Swami Sahjanand Saraswati was persuaded to accept the leadership.

When the Sabha was started, it ideological bent and programmatic content was admittedly that of 'class collaboration'. Its immediate purpose was to seek concessions so as to prevent flaring up of any violent agrarian dispute. As Sahjanand himself wrote later :

> My sole object in doing so (setting up the Kisan Sabha) was to get grievances of the kisans redressed by mere agitation and propaganda and thus to eliminate all chances of clashes between the kisans and the zamindars, which seemed imminent and thus threatened to destroy the all-round national unity so necessary to achieve freedom. Thus I began the organized Kisan Sabha as a staunch class-collaborator.[17]

But this aspect of the Sabha changed soon enough. In fact, in the beginning there was confusion regarding definition of 'peasantry' itself. The earliest constitutional document of the Sabha in 1929 defined a peasant as anyone whose primary source of livelihood was agriculture and even the more elaborate constitution of the BPKS in 1936 said essentially the same thing. In the introduction of the Hindi edition of the Manifesto of the BPKS of 1936, written by Swami Sahjanand, agricultural labourer was considered for the first time as a peasant, with an explicit awareness by the author of the difficulties inherent in this concept.

[17] Sahjanand, The Origin and Growth of the Kisan Movement in India, unpublished manuscript, Sri Sitaram Ashram, Bihta

In its initial years, the Kisan Sabha was not even concerned with the abolition of zamindari. At first, all these leaders including Sahjanand merely wanted that the zamindars should give "more concessions to the kisans". It was only after a serious debate that the Sabha adopted the demand of zamindari abolition. It was at the third session of BPKS at Hajipur that the policy of zamindari abolition without compensation was adopted in November 1935. Just before his death, Sahjanand pointed the direction of the future peasant movement by forming an All-India United Kian Sabha (AIUKS) whose fundamental demand was "the nationalization of land and waterway and all sources of energy and wealth… such nationalization must also result in a planned system embracing not only agriculture and the land but also industries and social services". As its immediate demand, AIUKS stood for "acquisition of land… From those, who possess vast domains, (and) distributing them on reasonable basis among landless labourers or holders of very small plots." [18]

However, one must note that tenantry itself wasn't a homogenous class in Bihar. The upper caste tenantry such as the Rajput, Brahmin, Kayastha, Sheikhs and Pathans not only had the largest holdings but also paid the lowest rent. The next class of tenants was those of the middle castes, including the Yadav, Pauniya, Traders, and others who combined a variety of functions like agriculture through hired or self labour, maintenance of herds of milch cattle, trading in agricultural produce, and money-lending. While their frugality and industry has been recorded, some of these tenants were better-off than the individuals of higher castes.

Then came the ploughmen, belonging to lower castes whose holdings were of an inferior kind, but for which they had to pay higher rents. This category has been characterized roughly as middle-peasant class (Das, 1982) was subject to numerous extra-legal exactions (*abwabs*) by the zamindars and their henchmen. They were sometimes even forced by the better-off powerful peasants to quit their independent peasant status and become share-croppers and even agricultural labourers (Hunter, 1877). Vicious systems of share-cropping were imposed on such *chasis.* Peasants with enough stock for one plough, but with no land, would cultivate for a share of the crop. They provided the seed which they borrowed, almost always to be repaid at exorbitant rates of interest ranging up to one hundred percent. Almost universally they had no

[18] Algu Rai et al, A Move for the Formation of An All India Organisation for the Kisan, Azamgarh, 1946

legal or even traditional rights which would afford them the slightest protection against rapacity, as they were employed as under-tenants by the upper class tenantry, by tradesmen who leased-in land, and by *zamindars* for the cultivation of their private holdings.

Even below the *chassis* in the hierarchy came those with no property in land: such as hired agricultural hands, or bonded laboures. Among them those who hired out on a daily basis seem to have been better-off than those hired for longer periods. Hiring out for longer periods was coincident with the indebtedness, generally to the master, a richer peasant (Buchnan, 1928). Thus there was a class of tenantry monopolizing land to re-let it to the actual cultivator at an advanced rent, or for half the produce, with their activities centred around the exploitation of the actual cultivators of the soil (Colebrook 1884). And **it was this class of tenantry which took the leadership mantle, at least locally, in the early periods of *Kisan Sabha*** which was also instrumental in shaping its programmatic agenda. Petering out of the farmers' movement in Bihar in the post-zamindari abolition period is basically reflective of the character of the leadership of the pre-zamindari abolition movement, whose interests were served by abolition of zamindari, and any further radical measures would have proved counterproductive to their interests.

It was in this backdrop of agrarian movement, and peasant mobilization, which also took form of a mass anti-colonial nationalist movement, particularly on the issues of exploitation structured in the land relations of the day, that land reforms were pushed inside the agenda of governance of Bihar in the post-independence period. As the colonial state carried out exploitation of the peasantry through the local landed elites, zamindars, and it were these local allies that made colonial power functional in India, freedom movement also meant dismantling of the system of local agrarian control which vested in the zamindari system. Peasants translated the nationalist movement in their own terms. For example, no tax campaign of civil disobedience movement was transformed into no-rent movement. It was due to relentless pressure built up by the Kisan Sabha under the leadership of Swami Sahjanand Saraswati that Bihar became the first state to move the land reform bill in the assembly. However, it was among the last states to have passed the bill.

History of Land Reforms in Bihar

Bihar government made its first post-independence legislative attempts to abolish the zamindari system in Bihar by passing the Bihar Abolition of Zamindari Bill in 1947. This bill was then subject to immense resistance and hence had to face legal hurdles which took almost five years to negotiate. In 1952, the Supreme Court of India finally upheld the validity of the Bihar Land Reform Act, 1950.

Land Reform Laws

Zamindari Abolition

The Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950, popularly called the Zamindari Abolition Act, abolished intermediary tenures. At the time of zamindari abolition in Bihar, there were 205,977 revenue-paying, permanently settled estates, representing 90 percent of the total area of the state.[19] It did not, however, bring under-ryots, the actual cultivators of land, in contact with the state. The zamindaris were abolished in three phases, the last phase beginning on 1 April 1956. This phase was characterized by absentee landlordism. The Zamindari Abolition Act allowed ex-landlords to retain land in their *khas* possession. The blanket provision was not in consonance with the national guidelines which indicated that zamindars should be allowed to resume land up to three times the economic holding. The Patna High Court held the view that *khas* possession includes constructive possession i.e. possession through hired servants. It was only in the year 1964 that the Supreme Court overruled this view and held that '*khas* possession' connotes only personal possession.

The ex-landlords also issued a large number of antedated *hukumnamas*, supported by rent receipts in a number of cases with a view to claiming higher compensation. These *gair mazarua khas, gair mazarua aam* lands would have otherwise been vested in the state and would have been available for distribution amongst the weaker sections of society. The Act allowed the revenue officials to investigate transfers made after 1 January 1946, but this quasi-judicial

[19] J. Allen et al (eds.), *Cambridge Shorter History of India,* pp. 637-640

process was time consuming – for example, the Raja of Ramgarh had transferred a huge chunk of land, but the transfer could be annulled only in 1976-77. As a result, a large amount of land does not appear to have become available for cultivation.

The Ceiling Act

The Bill proposing to impose ceiling on surplus land was introduced in the Bihar Legislature in 1955. The bill was referred to a select committee of both the houses and their recommendations were received in 1957. The bill was then referred to the Bihar Land Commission, set up under section 34 of the Zamindari Abolition Act, to advise the state government on agrarian matters. The bill, finally passed by the legislature in 1959, received the President's assent in 1962. As is obvious, this time lag was sufficient for landholders to transfer land during the intervening period.

The Act of 1961 imposed ceiling, taking the individual as a unit. It suggested a ceiling of 20, 30, 40, 50 and 60 acres of land on each individual. It also allowed exemptions for education and health purposes, trusts and other charitable institutions, and public or private plantations etc. However, following the land grab movement of the seventies, a Chief Minister's conference was held on land reforms and a task force was set up. The Ceiling Act was accordingly amended in 1973 with retrospective effect to give it bite. Incidentally, the power to take cognizance was transferred from executive to the judiciary with effect from 1 April 1973.

Amending Acts and their Salient Provisions

1. Act 1 of 1973 introduced the definition of family. The due date was, however, not defined. It also introduced ceiling and classified the land into five categories. It also made a provision giving the collector the power to make inquiries in respect of transfers made after 22 October 1959, and to annul such transfers. It also had a provision as to how the surplus land should be settled. The sugar factories were allowed to hold a sugarcane farm up to 100 acres. A unit could be held by religious institutions of public nature for performing religious functions.

2. The Amending Act 9 of 1973 introduced one more classification bringing the total categories to six, a classification which is valid even now. The new classification introduced was in respect of land irrigated or capable of being irrigated by works which provide or are capable of providing water for one season. This amendment also fixed the rates of compensation payable.

3. The Bihar Act 12 of 1976 introduced a provision relating to the voluntary surrender of surplus land. This proved a shortcut method for acquiring surplus land. This section was used to request the landholders to surrender their surplus land. It had been found that on account of improper verification, land which was actually not in possession of the landholder was also surrendered and accepted. This is one of the factors which account for the gap in distribution.

4. Bihar Act 22 of 1976 clarified for the first time that the due date for determining majority shall be 9 September 1970. Section 4 was also amended to make it clear that the ceiling area has to be computed by that date. Another provision of this act made it expressly clear that the proceedings decided under the 1962 Act shall be reopened. Certain provisions regarding tenancy were introduced as to who could lease land and the limit on rent. It also provided for the preference to under-ryots in the settlement of surplus land. The appellate jurisdiction of Divisional Commissioner was taken away and vested in the Board of Revenue. Two new Sections, 45-A and 45-B, were also added. Section 45-A gave the state government the authority to give general or special directions. Section 45-B empowered the state government to call for and examine records and issue suitable directions.

5. The amending ordinance 219 of 1976 amended Section 15(3) taking away the right of parties other than the landholder to file objections. It also contained provisions conferring the status of occupancy ryot on the under-ryots on such surplus land. These provisions were kept alive by successive ordinances till the enactment in 1978. This enactment further provided a legislative basis to prevent ejectment and to restore possession to allottees of surplus land.

6. A comprehensive amendment was made to the Ceiling Act vide Ordinance 66 of 1981 which was finally promulgated as Act 55 of 1982. Some of the important provisions of this amending Act are as follows:

    a. The landholder had to necessarily retain land transferred in contravention of the Act i.e. lands transferred after 9 September 1970, without permission, and lands transferred between 22 October 1959 and 9 September 1970, the transfers having between annulled.

    b. The Collector was given the authority to examine transfers made after 22 October 1959 by registered documents or otherwise notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in any judgment, decree or order of any court.

    c. The ceiling area shall be re-determined when the classification of land changed as a result of investment made in irrigation projects by the state government.

    d. The most far reaching amendment was that the orders under Section 5(1)(3) regarding the transfer of land and Section 10 had to be passed simultaneously.

    e. Such of the surplus land in respect of which there was no claim or dispute could be acquired by the state even during the pendency of the appeal.

    f. All appeal, review, revision, reference were to have abated and all proceedings in which lands have not been acquired shall be deemed to have begun afresh.

    g. A provision for the substitution of legal heir was made.

Implementation of Land Reforms in Bihar : Problems

After having overcome the legal hurdles in May 1952, when court's ruling established the validity of the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950, the government of Bihar still lacked the means of implementing it fully. When the Bihar Land Reforms Act was passed, such records of interests in land as were in possession of the government were of little value in connection with the implementation of the act because of the passage of time from the dates of completion of the last Survey and Settlement operations in various districts of the state. The latest Survey and Settlement operations were nearly thirty years old, and the most obsolete, relating to certain

portions of the state, were over fifty years old.[20] Similarly, among others, following were the legal and administrative problems, which virtually stalled any effective implementation of land reforms in Bihar [21]:

1. Updating of land records – in 1973, the State government enacted the Maintenance of Land Records Act to provide a legal basis for the updating of land record. But the Act was notified in only nine out of 587 anchals of the state, and even there it was not fully implemented. In 1977-78, the Janata Dal government led by Karpoori Thakur launched a project called Kosi Kranti to first update land records, including recording of the rights of share-croppers, and only then implement rural development programmes. The project was transferred to the Rural Development Department and eventually scrapped for the fear that it would lead to disturbance of agrarian peace.

   It should be noted that the present scheme of settlement takes a very long time to complete. Many of the settlements had taken place a long time back; the field bujharat started in the wake of the zamindari abolition was never carried to its logical conclusion; the original Register II was prepared on the basis of information provided by the landlord and does not contain details of plots comprising the *Khata*. The original *khatian* was prepared only at the time of settlement operations, and no proper record has been maintained of subsequent changes in land ownership.

2. Problems were posed by the verification of the returns filed by landowners. Landowners were expected to furnish returns of land owned/transferred by them after 22 October 1959. The returns filed by them were often false and therefore the task of verification was entrusted to revenue functionaries who had to do it in the presence of the landowners. The classification of land in accordance with the Ceiling Act was based on the irrigation capabilities and this differed from the classification under survey records. To further complicate matters, the Courts held that such reports were not statutory reports and would have to be proved if challenged.

[20] F. Tomasson Jannuzi, *Agrarian Crisis in India, the Case of Bihar,* Austin, 1974
[21] Shankar Prasad, *Implementation of Land Reforms Legislation in Bihar,* Land Reforms in India, Delhi

3. The Classification of land also proved a trouble area where different views were possible. As classification was based on irrigation facilities, consultation with irrigation officials became necessary in cases where land fell under command area but was not irrigated, it was possible to take the view that though unirrigated, it was capable of being irrigated, and therefore should be classified as Class 1. A solution would have been to obtain irrigation commands in each village and superimpose them on revenue maps. The reports regarding classification were also not held to be statutory reports and thereby posed yet another problem.

4. The next major issue was determination of age of majority as on 9 Sep 1970. The dates of birth of very few persons are recorded under the Birth and Death Registration Act. As such, suddenly there were cases where students reading in colleges were declared illiterate. A full bench decision of the Patna High Court stated (though in a different context) that a matriculation certificate is not a conclusive proof of age.

5. As a lot of time elapsed before any teeth were put into the Ceiling Act, the landholders were able to make a lot of transfers including those permitted by law. The legal position as it obtained was that revenue officials were entitled to look into *benami* and *farzi* transfers made after 22 October 1959 with a view to defeat the provisions of the Ceiling Act. The Patna High Court in one of its judgments has held that if a document created before 22 October 1959 has not been acted upon the revenue officials can look into it for determining the surplus land held by the landholder. The onus of proof initially is, however, on the state in such cases. The crucial evidence again rested on who was exercising possession of the land. Matters which could be looked into were whether all transfers were on the same date, where were the registrations made, whether marfati rent receipts were being issued in favour of some persons, and whether they were being issued on the same date, etc. These reports had to be filed on affidavit or the report had to be formally proved. The Administration was hampered with lack of evidence. If workers of the political parties embedded the philosophy of land reforms had been available to lead evidence on these points it would have assisted the administration. In this context it may be interest to note

that in Purnea district many of the landowners holding more than hundred acres of surplus land were former socialists.

6. Improper verification was another problem area. Earlier, under the land Ceiling Act, there was a provision that notices could be issued and objections invited u/s 15(3). However, this section was deleted in 1976. After that, till 1981, persons other than landholders came under various sections. Finally after 1981 they had to file objections along with the landholder.

7. The scheme of things under the pre-1981 situation envisaged that cases of *benami* and *farzi* transactions should be finally disposed off before the main case is taken up for hearing. This meant that even if a single transferee contested the case in appeal/revision or filed a writ petition in the High Court, the original case could not be heard u/s 10(2) of the land Ceiling Act. This was actually the situation in the case of the majority of landholders. Similarly, in the case of trusts, the question of exemption had to be first decided at the state level before the actual proceedings.

8. Distribution of Surplus Land also posed interesting problems. The Act provides, and rightly so, that under-tenants on the land should have the first right of settlement. There were examples in Kishanganj which evoked a furore where industrialists/other rich persons, who had no concern with land, were buying under-tenancy rights, which were legally sustainable.

9. Introduction of Section 45-B of the land Ceiling Act which would enable the government to reopen cases disposed off under the old Act or to reopen cases disposed off under the old act or to reopen cases wrongly dropped by subordinate revenue officials was meant to deal with evasion by landowners. However, this section was also invoked by the state government in favour of the landholders to accept their representation even after the land had been declared surplus or was in the process of being so declared. The high court has been subsequently held that an application under this section can be filed even by the landholder.

Tenancy Reforms

1. In 1964 instructions were issued not to record share-croppers during the course of settlement operations. Apart from the settlement operations and the provisions of Maintenance of Land Records Act, 1973, tenancies can be registered in accordance with Section 48-E of the Bihar Tenancy Act. Though the proceedings under section 48-E of the BTA are not kept in abeyance as per Section 4-C of the Consolidation Act, the Consolidation Act does not provide a forum for adjudicating such claims.

2. The scheme under the BTA is that the bona fide dispute has to be referred to a Board having *panch* of both the sides. The Patna High Court's decision implied that the dispute cannot be referred to the Board straightaway. This is notwithstanding the fact that complaints are examined from the point of view of the complainant, and injunctions are granted in civil matters.

3. The other difficulty was transfer of land by the landholder during the pendency of conciliation. The scheme of the BTA as it existed in the bill of the 1986 presumed that only landholders shall have a cause of disagreement and hence no appeal was provided against the order passed by Land Reforms, Deputy Commissioner (here after LRDC) rejecting the claims of bataidars.

4. The Bihar Tenancy (Amendment) Act, 1986, provides a definition of personal cultivation. This has been defined as cultivation by one's labour, or his family's labour or by hired labour or by servants on wage payment in cash or in kind, but not in crop share under personal supervision of oneself or members of the family. The Act also provides for acquisition of occupancy rights by under-ryots but the amount to be paid has not been mentioned.

Land reforms in Bihar can hardly be called successful. In fact, the land reform experience in Bihar is almost a lesson of lacunae which need to be addressed for any successful land reform enterprise. In the 14 years up to June 1975, the Act of 1961 yielded a paltry 11,000 acres of surplus land. The then (1973-74) revenue minister claimed in the Legislative Assembly that the Amendment Act of 1972 would make available 18 lakh acres of surplus land. As against this, the

achievement in respect of acquisition was only 2.36 lakh acres till July 1979. This figure, includes land acquired under voluntary surrender and compulsory acquirement, and was 1.31 lakhs (55.51 per cent), 1.05 lakhs (44.49 per cent) acres, respectively. The largest number of acres of surplus land was acquired in the districts of Purnea, Katihar, West Champaran, Saharsa, Bhagalpur, Monghyr, Ranchi and East Champaran. On the other hand, a very low measure of land was acquired in the districts of Dhanbad, Nalanda, Giridih, Singhbhum, Santhal Parganas, Saran and Nawada. The position as on 15 March 1989 according to the Bihar government Revenue Department was as follows :

Land acquired	3.69 lakh acres
Land distributed	2.49 lakh acres
Land under dispute	0.91 lakh acres
Land available for distribution	9.285 acres

As against 385,013 acres which the government claims to have acquired, an estimate of potential surplus land in Bihar is found to be 1,776,630.7 acres, which is the least that should have been acquired had the ceiling Act been enforced properly (Table 15).[22] This tells the story of land reforms in Bihar in a very stark way. Similarly, following observation reflects strongly on the political will of carrying out land reforms, in particular tenancy reforms. On July 10, 1964, instructions were issued by the Bihar Government about the organisation of a special drive for completing assessment of rent and compensation rolls, disposal of mutation cases, record of under-ryots and privileged persons etc. The drive was to consist in two parts. The first field drive was to include completion of field bujharat, completion of held enquiries for the preparation of compensation assessment rolls especially for petty intermediaries, initiation of proceedings for fixation of fair rent (land revenue) on, unassessed lands etc. This was to be completed by

[22] Indu Bharti, *Potential for Surplus Land in Bihar and the Ground Realities, in Land Reforms in India,* ed, K. Gopal Iyer. The 1970-71 agricultural census included in its ambit only such land as were wholly or partly used for agricultural production. So, obviously, the ceiling fixed for class V and V1 land did not apply to the landholdings included in the agricultural census. Therefore, for estimating the potential surplus, the next higher ceiling i.e. , 30 acres, has been taken in the paper as the cut-off point. The average size of more than 30 acres is recorded for all the districts of Bihar. Taken as a whole, there were 135,105 such holdings in Bihar in 1970-71 and the average size of such holdings came to 43.15 acres. When the number of such holdings is multiplied by 13.15, i.e., the difference between the highest applicable ceiling of 30 acres and the actual average size of such holdings, then this gives us an estimate of the potential surplus of 1,776,630.7 acres that could have been mopped up had the ceiling been eforced strictly.

November 30, 1964. The second field drive in which the under-ryots were to be recorded was to be taken up on. December 1, 1964 and completed by March 31, 1965. The preparatory work for the recording of the under-ryots was to be taken up as part of the first field drive. All this was set out in detailed printed instructions enclosed with the Government letter of July 10, 1964. Subsequently, on the 12th September, 1964, the Government issued a second letter (No. SD/208/64-8603 dated 12th September, 1964) which directed as follows:

> "Reports have been received about the eviction of under-raiyats and other agrarian disturbances. Government desire that every effort should be made to maintain peaceful relations between the raiyat and the under-raiyat and requisite steps should be taken to avoid any action which may give rise to disorder. In order to achieve the same, the collection of details to that extent should be kept in abeyance".

As a result, no steps have so far been taken in the field for recording of under-ryots as part of the drive. The Bihar Government is apparently afraid of possible agrarian disturbances due to such recording. The Task Force of Planning Commission made a critical review of the implementation of land-reforms, and identified the following factors for poor performance :

- lack of requisite political will
- Absence of pressure from below
- Lack of effective administrative organization
- Absence of up to date land records
- Protracted litigation and the writ jurisdiction

The Task Force took up certain policy issues and suggested that :

1. Though it would be desirable to pass a law that persons who do not cultivate land should not be allowed to won it, they felt that such a law would not be enacted, and if enacted, would not be implemented in the prevailing socio-economic environment. However, the provision relating to personal supervision by landholder or his family members, who must reside in the same or adjacent village, would reduce the incidence of absentee landlordism.

2. In view of the commitment to the objective of land to the tiller of the soil, leasing-in should be permitted only in certain special cases.
3. The beneficiaries should be organized.
4. Alternative administrative machinery should be set up.
5. The Constitution amended to bar the jurisdiction of the civil courts and the writ jurisdiction of the High Court and Supreme Court as far as land reform laws is concerned.

Table 15 : Surplus Land Acquired and Distributed against Estimated Potential (%)

Sl. No.	Districts	Operational Holding above 30 Acres			Estimated Surplus land	Surplus land Acquired (As % of Col. 4)	Surplus Land Distributed (As % of col. 5)
		Number	Area	Average Size			
1	Patna	1,463	54,641.34	37.35	10,753.05	3,238	2,239
2	Nalanda	674	25,357.02	37.62	5,135.88	632 (12.31)	519 (10.10)
3	Gaya	960	39,022.87	40.65	10,224	20,663 (202.10)	16,664 (162.99)
4	Jehanabad	160	6,358.44	39.74	1,558.4	605 (38.82)	451 (28.94)
5	Aurangabad	2,111	78,728.78	37.29	15,389.19	5,054 (32.84)	1,909 (12.04)
6	Nawada	1,102	52,803.66	47.92	19,747.84	3,072 (15.56)	2,380 (12.05)
7	Bhojpur	3,413	129,786.15	38.03	27,406.39	5,808 (21.19)	3,363 (12.27)
8	Rohtas	5,757	230,888.19	40.10	58,145.7	11,952 (20.56)	4,636 (7.97)
9	Saran	876	34,132.93	38.96	7,848.96	1,400 (17.84)	1,003 (12.78)
10	Siwan	1,064	42,264.17	39.72	10,342.08	1,169 (11.30)	551 (5.33)
11	Gopalganj	969	38,845.69	40.09	9,777.21	1,736 (17.76)	1,463 (14.96)
12	East Champaran	3,298	147,263.87	44.65	48,315.70	23,664 (48.98)	12,191 (25.23)
13	West	4,047	198,173.04	48.97	76,771.59	31,512	18,545

	Champaran					(41.04)	(24.16)
14	Muzaffarpur	2,256	83,342.74	36.94	15,656.64	5,781 (36.92)	3,327 (21.25)
15	Vaishali	958	39,423.67	41.15	10,681.7	2,893 (27.08)	2459 (23.02)
16	Sitamarhi	2,171	86,721.7	39.95	21,601.45	6,768 (31.33)	5,733 (26.54)
17	Darbhanga	1,114	44,082.09	39.57	10,660.98	10,722 (100.57)	6,595 (61.86)
18	Samastipur	2,192	99,822.58	45.54	34,063.68	8,793 (25.81)	4,358 (12.79)
19	Madhubani	2,064	95,663.10	46.35	33,746.4	11,554 (34.24)	7,751 (22.79)
20	Begusarai	1,490	75,431.33	50.62	30,723.8	10,144 (33.03)	6,025 (19.61)
21	Munger	5,755	286,028.47	49.70	113,373.5	21,378 (12.68)	13,257 (8.25)
22	Bhagalpur	5,511	275,442.05	49.98	110,109.78	16,810 (15.27)	12,550 (11.40)
23	Santhal Parganas	13,217	534,673.49	40.45	138,117.65	2,626 (1.90)	1,568 (1.13)
24	Saharsa	6,180	268,874.32	43.51	83,491.8	27,458 (19.32)	16,395 (12..14)
25	Purnea	11,794	568,191.39	48.18	214,414.92	69,100 (32.23)	59,150 (12.14)
26	Katihar	3,413	155,600.12	45.59	53,208.67	39,219 (73.71)	31,241 (58.71)
27	Hazaribagh	5,219	225,963.01	43.30	69,412.7	10,368 (14.93)	5,754 (8.29)
28	Giridih	4,223	177,425.04	42.01	50,718.23	1,915 (3.78)	1,560 (3.08)
29	Dhanbad	2,535	101,171.2	39.91	25,121.85	285 (1.13)	266 (1.06)
30	Palamu	8,625	384,144.28	44.54	125,407.5	10,162 (8.10)	6,125 (4.88)
31	Ranchi	23,576	994,105.84	42.17	286,919.92	16,277 (5.67)	10,662 (3.72)
32	Singhbhum	6,918	255,299.2	36.90	47,734.2	2,250 (4.71)	1,784 (3.74)
All Bihar		135,105	5,829,674.2	43.15	1,776,630.7	385,013 (21.67)	262,476 (14.77)

Source: Table 9.1, pg. No. 130, chapter 9, Land Reforms in India : Bihar, Vol 1 (Govt. of Bihar, Department of Revenue and land Reforms, Nov 1990)

Table 16 : Surplus Land Acquired and Distributed (in Acres)

S.No.	Districts	Land	Land	Disputed	Not Fit	Distributi	Land

		Acquired as Surplus	Distributed (as % of col. 1)		for Redistribution	on Debarred by Court	Available For Redistribution
				993 (30.67)	6	-	-
2	Nalanda	632	519 (82.120	65 (10.28)	48	-	-
3	Gaya	20,663	16,664 (80.65)	1,779 (8.61)	1,544	640	36
4	Jehanabad	605	451 (74.55)	7 (1.16)	66	81	-
5	Aurangabad	5,054	1,909 (37.77)	2,423 (47.94)	150	-	572
6	Nawada	3,072	2,380 (77.47)	595 (19.37)	18	-	79
7	Bhojpur	5,808	3,363 (57.90)	2,034 (35.02)	268	-	141
8	Rohtas	11,952	4,636 (38.79)	4,806 (40.21)	2,260	-	250
9	Saran	1,400	1,003 (71.64)	237 (16.93)	160	-	-
10	Siwan	1,169	551 (47.13)	232 (19.85)	3	383	-
11	Gopalganj	1,736	1,463 (84.27)	262 (15.09)	11	-	-
12	East Champaran	23,664	12,191 (51.52)	5,286 (22.34)	150	5,561	406
13	West Champaran	31,512	18,545 (58.85)	12,207 (38.74)	431	329	-
14	Muzaffarpur	5,781	3,327 (57.55)	-	2,425	-	20
15	Vaishali	2,893	2459 (85.00)	310 (10.71)	24	-	100
16	Sitamarhi	6,768	5,733 (84.71)	982 (14.51)	20	-	33
17	Darbhanga	10,722	6,595 (61.51)	4,057 (37.84)	70	-	-
18	Samastipur	8,793	4,358 (49.56)	4,014 (45.65)	335	-	86
19	Madhubani	11,554	7,751 (67.08)	457 (31.96)	328	2,422	596
20	Begusarai	10,144	6,025 (59.36)	1,404 (13.84)	644	2,012	64
21	Munger	21,378	13,257	5,234	1,434	1,445	8

			(62.01)	(24.48)			
22	Bhagalpur	16,810	12,550 (74.66)	1,831 (18.50)	1,255	933	239
23	Santhal Parganas	2,626	1,568 (59.71)	783 (29.82)	128	-	147
24	Saharsa	27,458	16,395 (59.71)	2,481 (9.04)	837	7,582	163
25	Purnea	69,100	59,150 (85.60)	5,109 (7.39)	1,029	1,286	2,526
26	Katihar	39,219	31,241 (79.66)	5,926 (15.11)	1,948	1,286	2,526
27	Hazaribagh	10,368	5,754 (55.50)	1,889 (18.22)	967	791	967
28	Giridih	1,915	1,560 (81.46)	102 (5.33)	253	-	-
29	Dhanbad	285	266 (93.33)	-	19	-	174
30	Palamu	10,162	6,125 (60.27)	2,395 (23.57)	1,127	341	-
31	Ranchi	16,277	10,662 (65.50)	3,416 (20.99)	1,915	72	167
32	Singhbhum	2,250	1,784 (79.29)	226 (10.05)	75	165	-
Total		385,013	262,476 (68.17)	71,542 (18.58)	19,948	24,288	6,749

Source : Table 9.1, pg. No. 130, chapter 9, Land Reforms in India : Bihar, Vol 1 (Govt. of Bihar, Department of Revenue and land Reforms, Nov 1990)

Building up of Agrarian Unrest

The failure of land reforms to deliver any substantive relief to the cultivating masses and poor peasantry is reflected in the agrarian unrest that has been building up in Bihar since early seventies. While Bihar has seen a spate of massacres on the one hand, on the other, it has become a hub of naxalite movement, which is fast threatening to undermine any orderly functioning governance in the regions affected by them.

Naxalite Movement

The naxal groups have different approaches to what they term agrarian revolution. Consequently, the naxal action in Bihar has varied from annihilation to mass protests. There are hardliners like the MCC and PW, soft-liners like Liberation and mass-liners like New Initiative and New Democracy. This situation, not surprisingly, has also resulted in a recurrence of clashes between the MCC and PW and between the MCC and Liberation.

The MCC action plan rests firmly in the belief of class annihilation. It believes that struggle against bourgeoisie forces can succeed only if the class enemies and their supporters, facilitators are subjected to counter-terror. The killing of 34 upper caste peasants identified as Ranbir Sena supporters, sympathisers in Senari village was committed in pursuance of this thesis. In a press release, the secretary of the zonal committee of the MCC declared that if the killing of the poor did not stop, Dalelchak-Baghaura, Bara and Senari would be repeated. A news item based on this press release is headlined 'Senari Narsamhar: Ranveer Sena Ko Munhtod Jawab' (Senari massacre: befitting reply to Ranveer Sena). It is relevant to note here that the MCC had massacred 54 Rajputs and 42 Bhumihars, respectively, in Dalelchak-Baghaura (1987) and Bara (1992).

The report of the PUCL on the Senari killings says the victims in Senari were as 'innocent' as the victims of Shankarbigha and Narainpur. "Since the victims did not belong to the Ranveer Sena, it is clear beyond any shadow of doubt that they were butchered simply because they were Bhumihars, just as 54 persons were murdered by the MCC at Dalelchak- Baghaura simply because they were Rajputs, 42 persons were murdered in Bara simply, because they were Bhumihars... The MCC is, thus, following the same policy which has been followed by the

Ranveer Sena, which has massacred hundreds of innocent dalits only because it believes them to be sympathisers or supporters of the CPI-ML groups." The MCC's counter-terror thesis perceives that the victims of Senari village were sympathisers and supporters of the Sena and that their killing was therefore justified. It is, however, open to question how far this thesis is valid from a Marxist-Leninist perspective.

People's War has a different perspective. It holds that the peasant struggle under its leadership is neither a caste struggle nor a struggle prompted by communal conflict; it is purely a class struggle, participated in by large numbers of agricultural labourers and peasants belonging to every caste and religion. People's War believes in organising mass struggle against the patrons, the organisers and the combatants of the Ranveer Sena. It does not believe in attacking upper caste people even if they have sympathy for the Sena on a caste/class basis. It resorts to economic blockade and social boycott of the main centres of Sena support. In pursuance of its 'selective killing' tactics, PW has eliminated four persons in Bhimpura village. The victims were involved in the Sawanbigha killing of dalits. In the same vain, PW killed three persons in Barthua village on August 5, 1999. This form of struggle, it argues, reduces the danger of the class struggle degenerating into a caste struggle.

As for Liberation, it holds that in view of the landlords' reactionary forces' outrageous acts, dalits would have to be armed for self-defence. It demands that the state arm the dalits because the police and the state administration have failed totally to protect them from the attacks perpetrated by the Sena. It also demands the 'de facto' disbanding of the Sena. Some Liberation supporters indiscriminately killed seven persons in Usri Bazar. Party spokesperson Krishnadeo Yadav clarified that this killing was a result of *'janakrosh'* (people's anger) among the local cadres in the wake of the Shankarbigha and Narainpur killings. Yadav also said that one of the slain persons was the local leader of the BJP and one of the good organisers of the Sena. While Liberation seeks the arming of the dalits, it does not rule out *janakrosh* provoked retaliatory actions, including killings. But it disapproves of Senari-type massacres. In Liberation's opinion, Senari was a planned massacre of people belonging to an upper caste. Liberation does not consider Ranveer Sena to be an organisation of Bhumihars. Pursuing a class line, it views it as a 'sena of bhupatis' (landlords), a private army guided by the BJP and patronised by the RJD. It,

therefore, regards struggle against the Sena as struggle against the ruling parties, a struggle which cannot succeed without entering the arena of party politics and opposing the BJP and the RJD and electoral battle is one of the important means to achieve this end.

New Initiative, Janashakti, New Democracy and some other ML organizations pursue the mass-line form of struggle rejecting both armed struggle against the state and the parliamentary path in the present situation. They opted for forming the Jan Abhiyan forum to fight the Sena menace and the ensuing state oppression in Jehanabad. Some other mass organization close to PW, such as the All-India People's Resistance Forum (AIPRF) and Lok Sangram Morcha (LSM) also believe in mass-line action. The mass-line organisations hold that a two-pronged strategy is needed: a militant peasant movement at the grass roots level (struggle from below) and a broad anti-imperialist, anti-feudal mass movement at the state and the national level (struggle from above). The two forms of struggle need to be integrated in such a way that the struggle from above strengthens that from below, and vice versa. Although the mass-liners advocate armed peasant resistance against the Ranveer Sena, they do not favour armed struggle against the state in the present situation.

They support arming for self-defence of the vulnerable sections frequently victimised by the Sena along with peaceful but militant mass protests, demonstrations, etc, aimed at strong class-based mass mobilisation of the poor against the Sena and its patrons, organisers. The mass-liners hold that the Sena represents the interests of the propertied (landed) classes under the garb of caste struggle. Therefore, the struggle against the Sena is in essence class struggle against the semi-feudal socio-economic relations still prevailing in the region. The PUCL report on Shankarbigha and Narainpur says, "It is an undisputed fact that the landowners have not been able to get rid of their feudal mindset nor are reconciled to the various measures which deprive them of land in excess of the ceiling or '*gair mazarua*' (government) land that they have been managing to hold without the authority of law. Due to their feudal mindset they are not prepared to accord to the downtrodden the status of equality as citizens of a republic and want to retain the status of superiority which they enjoyed earlier."

The Ranveer Sena, according to the mass liners, represents the last desperate course of upper caste landlords struggle to retain the old socio-economic order. The mass liners see their struggle as a continuation of a three-decade long process of challenging the existing order which began in 1967 and which has considerably demolished the old order and changed and reformatted the balance of power in rural society.

Three Strands of Naxalism

The elections have brought to the fore the division and debate among the different Naxal forces. The left stream of the movement advocates election boycotts. This segment argues that political education and the development and unification of the class struggle are not only 'irrelevant' but 'confusing' and 'illusory' for the masses. This way, they appear to be ignoring the Leninist principle of tactics for utilising the electoral process to heighten the political consciousness of the working people when 'there is no high revolutionary tide' in the country. This tactical line appears to be heavily influenced by Lin Piao's line of 'New Era', which does not regard the Leninist tactics as 'good' (Report of the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party of China, 1969).

According to the tactical line suggested by Lin Piao, participation in elections, trade union struggles and other forms of mass struggle are no longer required. "Guerrilla war is the only way to mobilize the masses" – this was the main slogan of this trend. The CPI (ML) committed several mistakes at the outset under influence of the concept of the new era. Although no ML organisation overtly accepts the validity of this line, its impact on their actions is obvious. Thus Shravan Kumar of PW perceives that his party "...would wipe out all vestiges of formal governance and supplant it with revolutionary people's committees in near future". He offers details of "the model of the government and responsibilities which the supreme revolutionary council would undertake...including seizure of all banks run by capitalist organizations and the state in the revolutionary areas as also the wealth with the industrial families." People's War claims to have already activated 2,500 such committees in seven south central Bihar districts where the Party has a powerful influence. However, these expectations appear to be far ahead of the existing realities in Bihar, and a gross underestimation of the people's role in effecting

revolutionary changes, and overestimation of the role of armed squads. This view also lacks proper evaluation of the might of the state which does not constitute only the local police, but the paramilitary forces and the army.

The right stream of the movement, represented mainly by Liberation, started its rightward journey in the mid-1980s, when it changed the CPI (ML) position on socialism and declared the Soviet Union a socialist state. This changed assessment of the Soviet Union was a portent of Liberation's moving closer to the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist). The right stream's main political slogan for the past eight years – for the formation of a left confederation – has its roots in this changed position. The left confederation as concerned includes the CPI, and the CPI (M) and other official left-front organisations. But the official left under the leadership of the CPI (M) has spurned this offer till date. Dipankar Bhattacharya, general secretary of Liberation, called for a unity among all the anti-BJP forces, including the RJD, for defeating the BJP-led combine in Bihar in the elections. Neither the official left nor the RJD took much interest in this offer. The mainstay of Liberation has become the electoral battle and the sharing of political power. The party is trying to 'adjust' the grass roots struggle within its electoral-struggle framework – a standard official left tactic. It is like making a 'bonsai' of the whole wood. The centrist stream, represented by the mass-line organizations, mainly New Initiative and Janashakti, continues to accept the Leninist principles of tactics and reject the New Era concept as well as the revisionist thesis of peaceful transformation to socialism. They believe in utilizing elections to enhance the political consciousness of the masses and thus promote class struggle. They also advocate armed resistance to the Ranveer Sena. They believe that a proper correlation between the militant peasant struggle at the grass roots and a general anti-feudal, anti-imperialist political struggle at the state and national levels would create a situation for the success of the revolution. The mass-liners thus believe in 'situation- specific' utilisation and combination of all forms of struggle aimed at creating a revolutionary situation, which could culminate in the seizure of power by the people. They firmly believe in the people's role being the most important one for the success of the revolution. Neither armed squads nor electoral victory alone could be a proper alternative to such a course.

The centrist stream's understanding is that the electoral spectrum has been deprived of a left pole with the official left having forged an alliance with the Congress. The revolutionary left (the Naxalites) could be in a strong position to emerge as the left pole to place issues like poverty, unemployment, rising prices, corruption and the criminalisation of society and the collapse of public institutions on the national political agenda. All the parliamentary ruling formations have adopted the policy of economic liberalisation pursued by the Manmohan Singh-Narasimha Rao duo. It is no longer a secret that this policy is further hurting the common people. The need of the hour is to create a centre within the electoral political specturm which could effectively re-cultivate the culture of politics based on people's issues. In pursuance of this perspective Kanu Sanyal, one of the pioneering leaders of the Naxalbari uprising, called a meeting15 of different communist revolutionaries in Calcutta on July 28, 2001. The meeting culminated in the formation of a joint forum. Sanyal announced this development at a press conference in Calcutta on September 4.

The First Knock

The first knock of naxalite movement in Bihar was in Mushahari block of Muzaffarpur district, which was orgainsed by the Bihar State Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries led by Satnarain Singh. Though this struggle could not be sustained for long, and in turn invited a positive intervention of J.P in the development of the region, which later formed the model of IRDP. The naxalite movement, however, took roots in Bihar in Bhojpur, which was its next stop after Mushahari.

In Bhojpur, the naxalite movement had its origins in Ekwari village, where a local school teacher Jagdish Mahto became the focal point of the movement. The subsequent movement in Bhojpur became associated with the present CPI (ML) Liberation. A brief description of the movements in both, Mushahari and Ekwari would be useful in presenting the agrarian dynamics leading to building up of naxalite movement in Bihar.

Mushahari

The Naxalite movement in Bihar had its first origins in the Mushahari Block of Muzaffarpur district. In a short span to time, the agrarian unrest gathered such force that led the radical communists to hail the peasant struggle as 'Srikakulam of the north'. Though this struggle did not last long, it opened the floodgates of possibilities of armed struggle in Bihar.

The Mushahari struggle was fought for two basic issues : for land to the tiller and against caste discrimination. The main issue taken up in initial phase of the Mushahari struggle was occupancy right over land, with slogans like 'Fasal Kabja Karo aur Zamin Kabja Karo'(Seize the crops, Seize the land). Mobilising the peasants were a band of local leaders of various villages and castes, prominent among them being Ram Deo Paswan, Taslimuddin, Ashok Singh, Sri Pat Mahato, Ram Prit Ram and Raj Kishore Singh. The struggle clearly brought out the demarcation between two groups of people in the agrarian society, one group represented by the landlord-cum-mukhiya-cum Mahajan Baiju Shahu and the other by Raj Kishore Singh who led the peasants to protest against the accumulated injustices, questioning the existing land relations.(Working Group on Land Reforms 1973:16)

As Jayaprakash Narayan had commented that though the struggle in Mushahari was created in pursuance of political ideology but the politicians, administrators, landowners and money lenders were to be blamed for the agrarian unrest (Jayaprakash Narayan, 1972:10). He had observed that wage of an attached labourer was half of what was prescribed and that the ground for rural violence had been prepared by the persistence of poverty, unemployment and socio-economic injustices.

Ekwari

The agrarian struggle in Mushahari was followed by simmering peasant protest in neighbouring areas such as Darbhanga, Champaran, Sitamarhi, Purnea and Samastipur. But it was in village Ekwari in Bhojpur district that the struggle was most vigourous.

Ekwari is one of the oldest and largest villages in Sahar Block in Shahabad district. Shahabad district, unlike many other districts of Bihar, had very few big landlords. The literacy rate (at 24.56 percent) of the district too was above the state average of 19.9 percent. Ekwari itself had a

higher literacy rate than the block, district and state. Sahar was a reserved constituency with a scheduled caste population of 16.37 percent, slightly higher than the state average, but the Scheduled Caste population of Ekwari was only 11.85 percent.

The Caste division of the population of Bhojpur was: upper castes 37.45 per cent, upper backward castes 36.18 percent, and the others, including lower castes, Scheduled Castes and the Muslims, 14.36 per cent. The predominant upper castes were the traditional landowners. Movements like BPKS and Triveni Sangh had raised consciousness among the upper backward castes, the intermediary group. It was among the backward and Scheduled Caste population that the agrarian movement as well as the Naxalbari movement found fertile ground. Various movments that preceded the Naxalite movement, especially the struggles mobilized by the Kisan Sabha, Triveni Sangh and the Socialist movments, had prepared the ground for a protracted agrarian struggle.

Ekwari had experienced the green revolution. Of its 3,149.88 acres of arable land, 2,451.68 acres (77.83 per cent) was irrigated. Large landowners were few in the village, but they owned substantial amounts of land. The Sahar block had been adopted by the government as the model block of the Intensive Area Development Project (IADP), which resulted in conflicting consequences. The intensified agricultural production due to the green revolution measure made Sahar the ‘grain bowl’ or the ‘Haryana of Bihar’ (Mukherjee and Yadav 1980:40), but this also led to greater polarization between the landlords as the beneficiaries and the landless as the victims of the IADP. Economic development itself became a bone of contention, making affluence an eyesore for the poor.

During the fourth Assembly Elections in 1967, Jagdish Mahto was beaten almost to death by the henchmen of landlords for attempting to prevent them from rigging votes. Meanwhile news of Naxalbari upsurge had started spreading in the area, and Naxalite slogans inciting armed revolution had also started appearing on the walls of some towns of Bhojpur. The Naxalite message caught the imagination of Jagdish Mahato, who started looking for like-minded friends. He was joined by a dacoit turned rebel Rameshwar Ahir. Both had no prior communist background.

While it is reported that Jagdish Mahto travelled to West Bengal to seek Naxalite leaders, some Naxalite cadres had started leaving West Bengal, where repression was at its height, and spreading to rural areas of Bihar including Bhojpur. Since the groups which came to Bhojpur belonged to the pro-Lin Piao group, the subsequent movement in Bhojpur became associated with this group.

The first act of annihilation, followed by propaganda, was carried on 23 february 1971 in Ekwari. Sheopujan Singh, a henchman of the landlords was murdered.Jagdish Mahato and Rameshwar Ahir were killed in 1972 and 1975, respectively. In this initial phase of the movement, which lasted until 1980, the focus was on annihilation of oppressive landlords and their henchmen, and fight against the state. The struggle against landlords was not only about land but their feudal attitudes and behavior.

Then next major struggle was at Chauri, which was on the issue of wages. Chauri had about 200 households, about 40 of them Bhumihars, and rest backwards and dalits. The Bhumihars owned most of the land. Since 1968 the labourers had been demanding a raise in wages and by 1972 they struck work to press their demand. The laboures used to get 3 seers of paddy and the banihars (attached labourers) 20 *katthas* of land for personal cultivation. In response to the strike the landlords reduced the land allocation to 12 *katthas* and devised devious means to oppress labourers. On 29th of November 1972 Ram Nath Rai, a feudal landlord was killed by the Naxalites. The peasants also planted a red banner on the four bigha land of the notorious landlord and moneylender Muni Nath Rai. The peasants also looted a truck loaded with rice from the village, brought by the traders of Arwal. An encounter with the police ensued in which 4 persons were killed. The strike at Chauri did not increase the wages, though it did manage to mobilize for the first time the strength of labourers to fight.

After the formation of the mass fronts of the Liberation group, the struggle on the ground started focusing on other issues, namely, the question of land and wages. These struggles also gained ground beyond Ekwari.

Issues of Naxalite Movement

Land struggle revolves around ***gair mazarua* land**, **ceiling surplus land**, **vast tracts of land possessed by the *muths* and land belonging to absentee landlords**. In the study conducted by Prakash Louis in five Naxalite-affected districts, the main struggle was found to be for *gair mazarua* land. *Gair Mazarua Khas* is cultivable land for which government holds title. This used to be common land, but in most villages landlords continue to exercise control over this land.

It is noteworthy that the land reform legislation itself has snowballed into an agrarian crisis. Even 15 years after amendment of Ceiling Act in 1973, there were landowners owning land above the ceiling limit, 351 of them in Jenhanabad district alone, 141 of them from Arwal block (Table 8.1). There were 16 landholders with a holding above 50 acres in Arwal, while there was a multitude that did not even have homestead land. This adds up to other determinant factors leading to agrarian crisis and the resultant massacres. This is reflected in Arwal massacre in 1986, proceeding up to Lakshmanpur Bathe in 1997, Shankarbigha and Usri Bazar in 1999. All these trouble spots came under the jurisdiction of Arwal Block, now Arwal district. Thus, land reform policies, which were supposed to ensure greater equality in the agricultural sector, have instead sharpened the conflict over resources.

The struggle over land, whether in Nevna-Sarmastpur (Jehanabad), Lai (Gaya), Baruhi (Bhojpur) or Madhuban (Patna), reinforces the stark reality that landownership gives not only economic power but also socio-political power. The process of seizing of land at least puts up a serious question mark on the power positioning of the landed elites in the agrarian setup, and to that extent empowers the landless.

The Arwal massacre of dalits at the hands of the police is an illuminating case study of the inbuilt bias of the system itself against the poor and marginal in cases of conflict over land. 23 persons lost their lives in police firing at Arwal for having seized a mere 27 decimal of *gair mazarua* land. This land was adjacent to the house of eight most-backward caste families. They had taken possession of it and were utilizing it for a long period, but in 1985, Baijnath Razak, a scheduled Caste government employee, through blatantly illegal means got legal right over the land and evicted the eight families from the site. Razak then began to erect a wall around this property. The labourers, under the leadership of MKSS, mobilized the poor segment of the area and pulled down the wall. The police arrested eight labourers. Thereafter, People gathered at the nearby Gandhi Library for a public meeting to protest against the injustices committed by Razak and repressive measures of the police. During the course of the meeting, C.R. Kaswan, the newly appointed S.P of the Jehanabad district, came with a contingent of police, which then blocked the only exit and fired at random even without a warning to disperse. Twenty-three persons died in this atrocity and many more were wounded.

Struggle for Wages has been another hallmark of the naxalite movement in Bihar, in particular the regions dominated by Liberation wings. The Bathani Tola massacre, which took place in April 1996, sheds some light on the struggle for better wages in central Bihar. Bathani Tola forms part of Barki Kharav village of Bhojpur district. While upper caste households constituted only one-fifth of the village households, they owned most of the land of the village. They also controlled 90 bighas of *gair mazrua* land in the village. In 1988, laboureres struck agricultural work demanding Rs 21, breakfast and a meal as daily wages instead of the prevailing 2.5 seer kachchi. The labourers under the leadership of CPI (ML) Liberation mobilized the labourers of nearby villages and carried on the strike for about four months. Finally, a compromise was worked out for Rs 20. Once again in 1990, a struggle broke out demanding better wages for the banihars. At this sage the district administration intervened and declared 5 kg of rice as wage to the banihars. But this victory was short-lived. With the emergence of Ranveer Sena, the

landlords brought down the wages to one kilo of rice. The massacre by the Ranveer Sena was the culmination of this struggle. Increase in wages in the areas of agrarian struggle is seen to be a function of the depth of mobilization and organization of the labourers and the poor peasants under the banner of radical organizations. For example, though the labourers and the poor peasants were organized under the banner of naxal outfits, in the areas of strong presence of reactionary forces such as Ranveer Sena, the labourers have to abide by the dictates of the landlords.

The issues of naxalite movement can be very succinctly seen in the following programme of action charted out by BPKS :

- Land struggle would b e waged to seize *gair mazarua* land, ceiling surplus land, common land, canals, ponds and orchards from the feudal elements. The seized land would be distributed among the landless, and the poor and middle peasants.

- Struggle was to be initiated for an increase in wages and for equal wages for male and female labourers. This struggle would also include the contractors who employed the workers to work in various governmental and non-governmental projects.

- A protracted struggle would also be organized against social oppression like caste discrimination and sexual exploitation of lower caste women by upper-caste landlords. An attempt would be made to unite the dalits and the backwards. Where the backwards themselves were feudalistically oriented the struggle would be directed against these backward-caste feudal elements too.

- Struggle would be waged on other issues like police repression, anti-social elements, dacoits, *goondas*, corruption at various administrative levels, the eviction of sharecroppers, etc. side by side, developmental activities like education, social reform and rural reconstruction would be carried on (CPI (ML) 1984:20-4).

The Problem of Tenancy

The Zamindari Abolition Act enacted that the zamindar could keep his private lands, called *zirat*. Secondly, he could 'declass' himself and become a tenant. Finally, he was paid huge compensation in money. In the wake of zamindari abolition and during the intervening years of land reform, large-scale evictions of occupancy tenants occurred and, thereby, the *khas* possessions were extended. Since the actual tenant could not prove his right of occupancy, he was evicted and the under tenure holders became tenants.

In 1962, the Land Ceiling Act was passed, only for it to be discovered in 1966 that there was a meager surplus of 7977 acres in the whole state (Das, 1981). The law had so many loopholes that it was remarked: 'Methods of retaining control of lands in excess of the ceiling areas were sometimes suggested by certain provisions of the act' (Jannuzi, 1974). The 1960s, therefore, saw a great number of transfers to ryotwari holdings. In the year of the Ceiling Act (1962) the number of such transfers – mostly malafide – reached a record of over 70,000 in one single year. Tenants who somehow survived the zamindars' offensive in the early 1950s were evicted in the 1960s. A large number of these tenants became non-occupancy under-tenants or tenants-at-will. These are the bataidars or sharecroppers.

The batai system existed in the past, but not to the extent that it does today. During the early twentieth century when the Survey Settlement operations took place, out of a total of 224.8 lakh acres, non-occupancy ryots and under-ryots accounted only for 6.6 lakh acres.[23] Thus the majority of the ryots enjoyed occupancy right. In Purnea, out of 19.8 lakh acres non-occupancy *ryots* and under-*ryots* accounted for only 1.43 lakh acres.[24]

To from an idea of the growth of bataidars, examination of the data from the Survey Settlement of 1908 and from that of 1952-58 is revealing. In 1908, some 93,000 *under-ryoti* holdings were recorded; they owned 90,000 acres as homestead and *bari* lands and 35,000 acres of cultivating land. In the 1950s the number of such *under-ryots* jumped to 3.24 lakhs, holding only 2.64 lakh

[23] India, 1945, *Final Report on the Famine Inquiry Commission,* Delhi
[24] O'Malley, L.S.S., 1911, *District Gazeteer*; Purnea, Calcutta

acres. But what is more interesting is that of these only one lakh had any land under cultivation, the rest having only homestead and/or bari land.[25]

Thus a majority of *under-ryots* had only homestead and bari land on the eve of independence. These holdings were rent-free and they were tenants only in the sense that they have occupancy rights on these bits of lands averaging 0.04 acres. They were not tenants in the sense of being sharecroppers.

Since then, evictions have gone on at a very fast pace. A government document says : 'it is not without significance that the percentage of holdings fully or partially under lease, as reflected in the 1970-71 Agricultural Census, shows a steadily declining trend'(Bihar, 1978).[26] **In the 1950s, 30.50 per cent of operational holdings were returned as partially or fully cultivated as under-tenures. The 1970-71 agricultural census yielded a ridiculous figure of 0.40 per cent of operational holdings as the average for the whole state.** The landlords had seen to it that under-tenants are not recorded at all.

Thus, while only a fraction of bataidars are small and marginal farmers who take land on batai to survive as cultivators, the great majority of them are agricultural labourers. They stick to cultivation because of their peasant aspirations and the hope that they can get land through land reforms. The process of extensive land alienation from the occupancy tenants that began during the Great Depression, continued for all the following years: because of tenant-zamindar tension, and because of zamindars' precautionary moves against the consequences of the impending zamindari abolition, and later on ceiling legislation. Moreover, guided by the idea of extension of capitalist production in agriculture, all the land reform measures in the post-independence period encouraged resumption of land by proprietors for 'own cultivation'. In the six years following the introduction of the Zamindari Abolition Bill, such evictions occurred from no less than 1 million acres of land throughout the State, affecting about 7 million people (CPI, 1954).[27] In a single year, in 1962, in the year the Ceiling Act was effected, over 0.7 million transfers of

[25] Chakravarti, S.K., 1972, *Final Report of the Revisional Survey and Settlement Operations* (1952-60), Patna
[26] Bihar, 1978, *Kosi Kranti Kya Hai?* (in Hindi), Purnea
[27] CPI, 1954, *Report, Fourteenth State Conference of the All India Kisan Sabha*, Muzaffarpur, August

ryotwari holdings were recorded all over the state.[28] The extent of concentration of land that has resulted from this whole process is reflected partially in the Agricultural Census of 1971. To give an idea : about 1,00,000 families in the State, constituting less than 2 per cent of the total population, each possessing land area of 25 acres or more, owned more than 20 per cent of total agricultural land. The 41 biggest trustees and landlords in the State each had 1000 acres or more , the biggest ones above 10,000 acres (Ojha, : 142).

Zamindari abolition has done away with the tenurial titles. Even the biggest landlord at present is a ryot of the State and would have been considered as a kisan in the pre-Independence definition of the term. The class character of the agrarian contradiction has completely changed : in place of the kisans there have emerged two great classes in the countryside – the bataidars (sharecroppers) and the agricultural labourers. The batai (sharecropping) system of tenancy is old, but not the class of bataidars in a historic sense. All were mostly occupancy tenants, had similar problems and emerged as a single class of kisans during the zamindari period. Non-occupancy under-ryots, with inferior or no legal right over land, comparable to the bataidars of today, were rare except in a few pockets like the lately settled Kosi belt. By contrast, in the present period, it is the occupancy tenants who are almost an extinct category: for, whenever landlords cultivate their lands by tenants, as a precautionary measure they invariably engage tenants of inferior status on oral lease, paying kind rent with no security of tenure. In the large-scale land alienation of the preceding periods only a part of the dispossessed peasantry had been made fully proletarian (agricultural labourers). The rest were deprived only of their legal rights over land and have emerged as the bataidars of today. Indeed, this class emerged almost overnight after Independence: reference to them in the pre-independence period is rare.

This is also reflected in the changed nature of agrarian movement in the post-independence Bihar. The old *bakasht* movement of occupancy tenants to assert possession of lands alienated from them was automatically transformed into the bataidari movement of the same tenants to assert possession of same lands, the only difference being that the old tenants were divested of their claims over occupancy rights after the old zamindars were conferred ryotwari rights with

[28] Ojha, G., Land Problems and Land Reforms, New Delhi

respect to those holdings.[29] By about 1950, the AIKS was active in defending the rights of bataidars in Purnea, Madhubani, Bhagalpur and elsewhere.

The differentiated nature of the agrarian poor was already in evidence by the 1930s. Sporadic clashes between agricultural labourers and landlords over questions of homestead tenancy and social oppression began being reported. The post-war increase in the prices of consumer goods had worsened the condition of this section. The impending zamindari abolition had driven the apprehensive zamindars to evict agricultural labourers from their house sites. Along with tenants agricultural labourers, too, fought the anti-eviction struggles in this period. From around 1946, separate agricultural labourer struggles, encompassing wage demands and the issue of homestead tenancy began to be waged in a number of places, under the leadership of political activists belonging to the CPI.

The struggle of Adivasi Bataidars in the Kosi belt: An Example!

Of all the agrarian struggles during the 1950s, the struggle of adivasi bataidars in the Kosi belt has special significance. It was the pioneering struggle of the bataidar class and probably the only successful movement of that period. Even after the Survey and Settlement operations were over in the district of Purnea, as the Kosi continued to change its course almost every year new land was available for settlement. For example, in the 1911-20 period, an extensive area was in the process of reclamation in Dhamdaha thana. Teh zamindars brought many tenants, including hardworking adivasis from the adjacent district of Santhal Parganas, to reclaim and settle on this land. But once the land was cleared for cultivation, the zamindars were eager to evict the tenants and settle the land wit others at higher rents. As the Survey work was already over, the newly settled tenants had no record of their rights, just as is the case with the bataidars of today. They organised themselves to oppose the zamindars and keep the reclaimed land in their possession. This organisation was purely an adivasi organisation with no links either with the Kisan Sabha or Congress. However, the bataidari laws passed during the Congress Ministry in 1937 (for example, reduction of batai rents to nine-twentieths of the produce) gave a fillip to the movement. And, parallel to this, non-adivasi bataidars, too, were waging a similar struggle in other parts of Purnea under the leadership of Nakshatra Malakar. Since 1939, the adivasi

[29] Sengupta, Nirmal, - ' Contemporary Agrarian Movements in Bihar', Patna, unpublished

bataidars in particular and bataidars in general, had resisted the landlords in the fields mostly by force.[30] They demanded successfully that the legal machinery and the conciliatory committees move tot eh fields and decide possession not on the basis of documents but by on-the – spot verification. In 1952, a new Survey and Settlement operation was launched in Purnea. Nearly 140,000 – estimated to be at least a half of the total bataidar families- were recorded as occupancy tenants (Chakraborty, 1972). The struggle for possession did not stop there, but became easier. In a number of places, bataidars were successful in reducing the rent to one-fourth of the produce or stopped paying altogether.

The current pattern of Tenurial Arrangements

It is widely acknowledged that official figures of leased-in area are plagued by underreporting, and are gross underestimates of actual extent of tenancy. Nevertheless, the NSS figures provide us with at least a trend of change in the leasing-in of land in the state. Tenancy in Bihar is seen to fall quite sharply in the eighties, as compared to all India trend. But quite interestingly, its incidence is seen to increase equally sharply during the nineties. In 1981-82, nearly 20 per cent of operational holdings were tenant holdings, and percentage of leased-in area in total operated area was 10.3 per cent (Table 17). In 1991-92, while the share of tenant holdings in total operated holdings fell to 5.6 per cent, the share of leased-in area fell to 3.9 per cent. Thereafter we see a sharp increase during the nineties, with share of tenant holdings in total operational holdings rising to nearly 13 per cent, and area leased-in increasing to about 9 per cent of the operated area. This is in contrast to the all-India trend, which shows a secular decline of both the per cent of tenant holdings and per cent of leased-in area all through the eighties and the nineties.

Table 17 : Percent of Tenant Holdings and operated area leased-in Rural Bihar

	% of Tenant Holdings			% share of Leased-in Area		
	1981-82	1991-92	2002-03	1981-82	1991-92	2002-03
Bihar	19.7	5.6	12.7	10.3	3.9	8.9
India	15.2	11	9.9	7.2	8.3	6.5

Source : Table 3.12, NSS Report no. 492

[30] Sengupta, Nirmal, op.cit.

A somewhat greater incidence of leasing-in is seen from the figures of the survey of twelve villages undertaken by ADRI in twelve districts of Bihar in 2007. Of the households surveyed, only 16 per cent reported leasing-in of land. But the households leasing-in varied greatly across the villages surveyed. While nearly 36 per cent of the households of Gandhigram of Katihar district reported leasing-in of land, the percentage of households leasing-in in D.K. Shikarpur was found to be only 4.7 per cent. This low incidence of leasing-in in Shikarpur is explained by prevalence of sugarcane plantations in the area as well as a well-entrenched feudal family in the region being in control of huge chunks of land going in for the sugarcane plantation on an extensive scale.

When the households were mapped according to their landholding status, biggest incidence of leasing-in is found to be among the marginal landholders. While 22 per cent of marginal landholders are found to be leasing in land, nearly 19 per cent of small landholders too are found to be leasing-in land. Thus the incidence of leasing-in is found to fall uptil the semi-medium landholding category, from where it increases to 16.1 per cent in the medium landholding group, falling again to 6.3 per cent in the large landholding category. This probably is an indicator towards practice of reverse tenancy in the villages surveyed.

A somewhat larger figure for leased-in area and proportion of households leasing-in land is reported by the 1981 A.N. Sinha Institute and ILO survey, and resurvey of the same set of villages by IHD in 1999-00 of Bihar. The survey also throws up interesting figures of social distribution of households leasing-in land. According to the findings of the survey, proportion of households leasing-in land has considerably declined from about 36 per cent in1981-82 to about 23 per cent in 1999-2000, but the proportion of leased in area to total cultivated area has marginally increased from 24.5 per cent in 1981 - 82 to 25.5 per cent in 1999-2000. This has resulted in an increase in the average size of leased-in land in general (Table 18).

The decade of nineties has seen the **landless and the marginal farmers moving out of tenancy arrangements**, but significantly enough **big landed segments of the population moving into the land renting market**. While in 1982-83, 34.53% of landless were leasing-in land, in 1999-00 only 22.63% were leasing in. Similarly, for marginal landholders (owning land of size less than 0-1.0 acres) while 53.5% of these households were leasing-in land in 1982-83, in 1999-2000 only 36.09

were leasing-in. The share of leased-in area in total cultivated area of this segment also saw a fall from 62.65% of area cultivated to 58.15% in the same period.

Similarly, a fall in leasing-in is observed across all groups belonging to landholding category of less than 10 acres. **For households owning 10-20 acres, percentage of households leasing in land increased from 3.85 to 11.11, and percentage of leased-in area increased from 1.97 to 5.04**. For the households owning land of size more than 20 acres, percentage of households leasing-in registered an increase (that of 1.17%) and now 1.98% of cultivated area was being leased-in by this class. Thus there is clearly a trend of reverse tenancy in the last two and a half decades pointing towards a growth of capitalist farming in rural Bihar. This if further confirmed by the observation that, while percentage of area leased in total area cultivated has fallen across the groups, the fall tempers down as one move up the land size. For land size above 10 acres, the percentage of area leased-in in total cultivated area has registered an increase. This is a pointer towards capitalist mode of production gaining strength in the rural- agrarian setup, with big landed segment entering into 'reverse tenancy' arrangements. In fact, it is a general observation in the villages in Bihar that **the households which take land on lease are those which are involved in cultivation and which are capable of making investments in cultivation to begin with and are able to pay rent even after low agricultural production**. Thus, those who sell labour power are not the main lessees.

Social groups in tenancy arrangements

The **importance of leased-in land is found to be significantly high for the weaker sections** of the population. For SC/ST households around 80% of cultivated land was leased-in. While OBC farmer households lease in nearly 50% of their cultivable land, the proportion for backward castes is near 35%, for Muslims 30% and for upper/middle caste farmers it is only around 8%.

If one takes a look at the change in the status of various social groups in the tenancy relations, one finds an across the board decrease in percentage of households leasing in land for all caste groups. Here **while there isn't much change in households leasing-in land in the OBC II group, the percentage of households leasing-in land in the BC1 and SCs has almost halved to around 27% and 24%, respectively.** Here again, **while the percentage of households leasing-in land in the uppercaste categories has declined but percentage of area leased-in total cultivated area has increased for these groups.** This points to the phenomena of small numbers of households leasing-

in huge tracts of land, the **phenomena of reverse tenancy**, indicating capitalist farming. One of dominant caste in the OBC group**, the Kurmis have witnessed an increase in the area leased-in total cultivated area, this despite percentage of household leasing-in land falling**. This again could be a pointer to the emergence of capitalist production in agriculture wherein the better placed in the cultivating castes producing for the market and seeking land in tenancy arrangements. Similarly, for the Yadav, though percentage of leased in land in total cultivated area has fallen but still accounts for around 51% of cultivated land. The OBC 2 group too, though witnessing a fall in percentage of households leasing in land has seen an increase in the share of leased in area in total cultivated area.

Table 18 : Percentage of households leasing-in, and percentage of leased-in area by land size and caste, 1981-82 and 1999-2000

	Percentage of households leasing in		Percentage of area leased in total area cultivated	
	1982-1983	1999-2000	1981-1982	1999-2000
Land size(Acres)				
Landless	34.53	22.63	100.00	100.00
0 – 1.0	53.57	36.09	62.63	58.15
1.0 – 2.5	36.99	28.57	37.52	27.62
2.5 – 5.0	34.48	5.19	18.87	3.88
5.0 – 10.0	10.00	0.00	4.21	0.00
10.0 – 20.0	3.85	11.11	1.97	5.04
20+	0.00	1.17	0.00	1.98
Caste				
Brahmin + Kayastha	13.58	11.45	3.49	6.21
Bhumihar + Rajput	23.33	13.64	5.74	11.88
Kurmi	25.00	21.43	4.90	16.64
Yadav	70.97	57.69	61.67	50.91
Koeri	59.26	13.33	33.84	27.27
OBC II	25.93	23.61	31.75	46.00
BC I	42.42	27.10	55.66	52.04
SCs	42.19	23.88	73.85	58.17
Muslims	42.37	24.24	55.65	42.03
Total	36.23	22.67	24.59	25.47

Source: A.N. Sharma – Agrarian relations and socio-economic change in Bihar, EPW March 5, 2005

Terms of Tenancy

NSS estimates show that while share-cropping still remains the predominant form of tenancy arrangement in Bihar, it has nevertheless been on decline over last two decades. In 1981-81, while 73.3 per cent of leased-in area was on the terms of sharing of produce, it declined to 43.5 per cent in 1991-91, but rising thereafter to 67 per cent in 2002-03 (Table 19). There has been an increase in the area leased-in under fixed money and fixed produce tenurial arrangements. While percent of area leased-in under fixed money contract increased from 6.5 per cent to 12 per cent over the period, the corresponding increase for fixed produce contract was from 3.6 per cent to 17.5 per cent. Increased incidence of share cropping contract over the nineties together with increase in the incidence of tenancy is a pointer of increased recourse to cultivation for subsistence by the population marginalized by the growth process during the nineties.

The survey done by ADRI while corroborates the NSS estimates showing predominance of sharecropping as the predominant form of tenurial arrangement, but the figures for the fixed produce contract and cash/fixed money contract differ to quite and extent. Nevertheless, fixed produce contract system is found to the second most prevalent system of contract, followed by fixed-money/cash rent system, which is the order of things emerging from the NSS estimates. Share-cropping emerges out to be the predominant form of tenurial arrangement between the landowners and the tenants, with 82 per cent of the households leasing-in getting it on a sharecropping basis. While 14.5 per cent of leasing-in was found to be on a fixed produce rental agreement, only 3.2 per cent of the land leased-in was on the basis of cash rent. Bonded labour was found to the arrangement in 0.4 cases of leasing-in. Incidence of bonded labour was found only in cases of landless and marginal landowing households leasing-in land. Incidence of sharecropping as the tenurial arrangement goes on increasing from 75.7 per cent in the landless category to 93.6 per cent in the small category, thereafter it falls to 61.9 per cent in the large land-holding category. Interestingly, while fixed produce tenurial arrangement is seen to be falling from 21.1 per cent among the landless households to 2.5 per cent among the semi-medium landholding households, it is seen to shoot up again to 23.8 per cent in case of large landholding households.

Table 19 : Percent Distribution of area leased-in by terms of lease for Bihar and All-India

	Year	Terms of Lease Rural					
		Fixed Money	Fixed Produce	Share of Produce	From Relatives : No terms	Others	All
Bihar	2002-03	12	17.5	67	0.5	3	100
	1991-92	9.5	12.8	43.5	0.6	33.6	100
	1981-82	6.5	3.6	73.3	-	16.6	100
India	2002-03	29.5	20.3	40.3	4	5.9	100
	1991-92	19	14.5	34.4	7.4	24.7	100
	1981-82	10.9	6.3	41.9	-	40.9	100

Source : Table 3.15, NSS Report no. 492

Thus, the socio-economic profile of Bihar has changed significantly over the years, in particular over the last two decades. And the changes in the socio-economic structure that have brought about the economic and political empowerment of cultivating castes, have also initiated changes in the kind of authority these castes could exercise in their immediate socio-economic and political setting. Abolition of zamindari and independence brought about a gradual weakening of the hold of upper caste landed segments on the agrarian economy and a simultaneous rise in the upper backward castes's hold over the rural production process. While decreeing of the bonded labour and begar as illegal, over the time (not immediately) meant freeing of labour from the crutches of the erstwhile rural elite, and a freer rural labour market for this upwardly mobile cultivating caste group to build upon their prosperity, it also meant greater freedom for the labour in the rural market . And because profit in any productive enterprise has to come at the cost of labour, its maximization requires a control on the freedom of labour.

Table 20 below reveals the growing conflict between the ascendant upper backward caste landlords and the dalit labourers and sharecroppers. **The class dimensions of these conflicts and atrocities are quite obvious as the primary cause of conflict emerges out to be wages, proper share of the crops, or land dispute.** It is this greater freedom of the weakest in society, who have a correspondence with the caste groups of dalits and the lower backward castes and this freedom threatening the vested interests of the new rural elites that can perhaps explain to a certain extent the

churning of polity and economy of Bihar (notice the defeat of the RJD regime in the Assembly elections of 2005).

Thus, while caste and social profile of power has changed in rural Bihar, significant proportion of rural masses directly engaged in agriculture continue to be at the exploitative end of the production chain. Land reforms, thus, have merely changed/initiated change in the social face of those who exploited the rural economy, the relations of exploitation continue to vex agriculture in Bihar, which are sought to be enforced either through political power or brute physical power (note massacres).

Table 20 : Caste violence in Bihar

	Place	Aggressor		Victim		Issues
		Caste	Economic status	Caste	Economic status	
1	Bajitpur	Bhumihar	Landlord	Harijan	Agricultural labourers and share croppers	Wage,, sharecroppers' right over land ,
2.	Belchi	Kurmi	Landlord	All castes	Poor peasants, agricultural labourers, and sharecroppers	social oppression
3.	Beniapatti	Kurmi	Landlord	Harijan	Agricultural labourers	Wage
4.	Bishrampur	Kurmi	Landlord	Harijan	agricultural labourers, and sharecroppers	Wage, sharecroppers's rights
5.	Chandadano	Kurmi	Landlord	Harijan	Agricultural labourer	Wage
6.	Dharampuri	Brahmin	Landlord	Harijan	agricultural labourers, and sharecroppers	Wage, sharecroppers's rights
7.	Dohija	Yadav	All class	Bhumihar	Poor peasant and one big landlord	Retaliation
8.	Gopalpur	Kurmi	Landlord	Harijan	Agricultural labourer	Wage
9.	Jarpa	Bhumihar	Landlord	Yadav	Poor peasant and Sharecropper	Land dispute
10.	Kalia	Kurmi	Landlord	Harijan	Agricultural labourer	Wage
11.	Khijuria	Brahmin	Landlord	Harijan	Sharecroppers	sharecroppers's rights
12.	Parasbigha	Bhumihar	Landlord	Yadav	Sharecroppers	sharecroppers's rights
13.	Pathada	Yadav	Landlord	Harijan	Agricultural labourer	Wage
14.	Pipra	Kurmi	Landlord	Harijan	Agricultural labourer	Wage
15.	Pupri	Kurmi	Landlord	Harijan	Agricultural labourer	**Wage and possession over land**

Source : P K Bose, table 2 - mobility and conflict, caste, conflict and reservation, 1985, New Delhi

The Comeback of Land Reforms

It is the failure of the governments to deliver on the agenda of land reforms, along with the growing agrarian unrest amidst growing inequity and rural-urban divide, with the rural masses having been practically left out of the developmental gains in the post-independence period, which has brought land reforms back on the national and international agenda. While the cause of land reforms is well established, there is a divergent opinion regarding the agency of reform. Till date, there have been two primary agents of land reform: 1) the state, and 2) the market. While the land reforms in the immediate post-colonial period were led by welfare states, overtime the mantle has shifted to the market, especially at the pushing and shoving of the World Bank.

Both approaches have a theoretical foundation based on very different premises, which at once reveal their respective priorities and perspectives. While the market led land reforms are backed by neo-classical and neo-liberal paradigms, state led land reforms derive from institutionalist and classical/Marxist paradigms. While the former are production centric paradigms in which distribution is an outcome of production, latter propound distribution to be determinant of production. Obviously, their prescriptions for land policy would be opposite both on questions of agency and also content. More specifically, neoclassical economists argue that market forces will efficiently allocate land to the best users, thus market forces should prevail to ensure the efficient use of land. Alternatively, institutionalists argue that land tenure systems emanate from an interaction between the tool-using heritage of a society and the ceremonies that it has put in place in order to ensure that land is used in accordance with the society's prosperity code.

Where the State-led reform with a redistributive focus takes into account the economic and social justice, the market led reforms are led by the sacred principle of efficiency. Market by its very construction does not recognize need. It is driven by demand, which is need backed by purchasing power. As Samuelson aptly remarks, market recognizes only dollar votes in which the legitimate demands and just needs of a society have no cognitive value. Now, if land is taken to be merely a commodity, market could successfully yield its efficient allocation (or would it?). But in this land market, of which the IFIs are staunch votaries, equity has no place.

Commoditization of land would very simply mean that at the end of the day, howsoever circuitous route may be followed, land would ultimately get concentrated in the hands of those with greater dollar votes.

Land policies should be made in order to make land an accessible asset for those who till it, invest in it, whose livelihood and well-being is dependent on it, rather than to direct it in the hands of those who can buy it with their money, derive rental income and speculate on it. M. Borras Jr (2006) distinguishes between these two reform kinds in the context of ongoing critique of these two reforms. According to him market led approach is based on three stages (1) Getting access to land, (2) post-land purchase farm development and (3) financing mechanism. He also establishes the failure of market-led reforms in Colombia, South Africa, and Brazil. Regarding the land market, the lands sold is of inferior quality. Evidence from Brazil, Colombia and South Africa puts into serious question the MLAR assumption of lower price of land. The unrecognized power equations between the two actors- buyer and the seller, favours the more powerful in setting the price of land and bargaining. The willing buyer and willing seller principle of the market led reform is dubious to say the least, as it does not recognize the inherent imperfections in the nature of market mediating the transaction between the two. Power and money plays a role in financial assistance too, which is more affordable by the rich class than the poor peasants. This power is likely to be more captivating at the local level as Griffin warned that, 'it is conceivable, even likely that power at the local level is more concentrated, more elitist and applied more ruthlessly against the poor than at the centre' (1980, 225).

Agrarian reform – one that is truly redistributive, and based on the twin foundations of economic development and social justice – remains urgent and necessary in most developing countries today. But the market, as advocated in the MLAR model, cannot carry out a redistributive function in the way that the state can. Empirical evidence from the initial implementation of the MLAR model in Brazil, Colombia and South Africa suggests that the model simply does not work in the manner predicted by its proponents. Altering the legal framework of land relations causes great inequity; those with knowledge or access to knowledge of the new legal regime and finance can rapidly acquire land at the expense of those who suddenly find that they have no recognized interests in the land any more. Security of livelihood for them disappears along with

equity, and the basis is laid for a disaffected, landless peasantry and an unemployed urban proletariat, hardly a recipe for a stable society (Alamgir, Jazaivry, and Pannucio, 1992)!

The impact of state led land reforms on landlessness is much more profound than the market-led reforms. Even here, state-led land reform has taken many forms. These include successful one-time state interventions to create egalitarian peasant ownership (Republic of Korea), and expropriation to create collectivized agriculture (Cuba). In countries such as India, intermediary rights in land tenure were abolished but with due compensation. A token of equity too was bought from the landed segments in the form of ceiling act, and security of tenure was sought to be provided to the under-ryots by recording their rights. The success of reforms has varied: Japan's reform was highly successful, Bolivia's was less successful and the Philippines somewhere in-between. In India, while abolition of intermediary rights in land was successful, recording of rights and acquisition of ceiling surplus had only a very marginal success, that too in certain pockets.

As mentioned earlier, effective land reforms by negating the economic prowess and profligacy of landlords, releases resources which can then be judiciously utilized for productive investment in agriculture and to increase the rate of capital formation. The following two premises of redistributive policies are particularly relevant for the understanding of the economics of land reform: (1) total income available for consumption and for capital formation in an economy is itself a function of the state of distribution. (2) Changes in the state of distribution have a direct impact on the prospects of income generation in the economy.

One of the benefits of Land reform counted by a host of academicians is that it also shifts saving and labour from agriculture to industrial sector, thus further creating environment for development. Guinnane and Miller go on to argue that land reforms, particularly the reform of tenancy system and reduction of the size of very large farms, should be seen in the liberalized situation to increase economic efficiency in three ways- 1) security of tenure and livelihood, 2) land as collateral, and 3) commoditisation of land (Guinnane and Miller1997). In fact this is seen to be among the most important lessons emerging from development experience in the post

World War II era. This approach is very succinctly brought in the land policy papers of the World Bank, which have now got crystallized in the PRRs.

The World Bank and the PRRs

There has been a flurry of international activity on land issues in recent years. Meetings on land policy and administration are being sponsored by international institutions such as the World Bank, USAID, the Inter-American Development Bank, FAO and others. The policy research report prepared by the World Bank on land policy very succinctly puts forth view of these institutions on land reforms. The PRR concludes that :

1. Improving land tenure security, access and socially-desirable use are essential for growth, poverty reduction and good governance.
2. Approaches must be tailored to country circumstances, and governments should develop coherent national strategies in consultation with civil society.
3. There is a menu of options for promoting greater tenure security and access, from legal and institutional reforms to liberalise markets, to redistributive land reforms.
4. While redistributive land reform may be an instrument of last resort in some parts of the world, history suggests that such reforms should be carried out in new ways to avoid the sub-optimal outcomes of the past.

Security of Tenure

Security of tenure has traditionally been associated with the land titling exercise and recording of rights. There is a consensus that formal titling and registration, that makes land fully transferable, increases land values. Titling benefits poor and rich landowners alike to the extent that it increases their net wealth. But an increase in wealth does not necessarily result in poverty-reduction with respect to income or consumption levels. That depends on whether increased tenure security leads to greater investment and hence higher productivity and farm incomes or greater possibilities for non-farm income generation.

The main argument for secure titles, according to this viewpoint, is that they will lead to both an increased demand for investment on the part of farmers and an increased supply of credit on the part of financial institutions since titles can be used as collateral. The issue in terms of poverty reduction then is whether these responses will be similar for small versus large landowners. Most studies of the credit response suggest that this is negligible for small farmers; that is, the benefits of titling with respect to enhanced access to credit go disproportionately to the wealthy.[31]

In fact, this view questions the necessity of formal registered titles in providing adequate levels of tenure security. And from this question, it puts forth an alternative which needs very careful reading. The PRRs suggest a simple titling combined with the lifting *of regulations on just rental*.

Land Markets

Within the neo-liberal paradigm, well functioning land rental and sales market should promote both efficiency and equity, since they should transfer land from less to more efficient producers. And given the inverse relation between farm size and productivity, well functioning land markets should transfer land from the land rich to the land-poor. But formal land market has largely been limited to large landowners and those of their class, while informal transactions predominate among the peasantry. Here, relatively limited degree of transactions between the land-rich and land poor has been attributed to *persistence of regulations that hamper land sales and rentals*, besides high transaction costs and lack of financing.

The PRR argues that "poorly designed land market interventions and regulations continue to hamper the development of land markets" and that such restrictions especially limit access to land by the poor".[32] Among the policies that the PRR considers deleterious are i) outright prohibitions on land rentals or sharecropping; ii) government regulations establishing ceilings on land rents; iii) prohibitions on land sales; iv) maximum sized limits on land ownership; and v) maximum price ceilings on land sales.

[31] Carter and Barham (1996) on Paraguay, Carter and Salgado (2001) on Honduras
[32] Deininger (2003:2)

It is not surprising that much of neo-liberal land legislation of the 1990s across the developing world has aimed to lift some or all of these restriction under the program of what is famously called the second generation "Land Reforms".

One very important point to note, however, is that the arguments made for land reforms in effect define its content. At the risk of deviation from the immediate focus of the study, it may be pertinent to note here that development defined today is in effect a production centric process, which calls for cumulative accumulation of capital, irrespective of the sector in which it has to set in. It is in this perspective that transformation of land as collateral and a commodity are seen to be as 'should be' targets of land reforms, a step towards an efficient mode of production. What is missed is that the very fact of commoditizing land and giving it a collateral value would pose serious questions not only on equity, but also sustainable economic growth (let alone development!), a sustainable environment, and last but not the least – a truly democratic and just polity. Majority of literature on land reforms has confined itself to discussing the need and packaging of reforms in the context of current development paradigm. Any reform measure aimed at establishing, or allowing a full fledged land market, inevitably establishes a tendency towards concentration of land and a tendency towards derivation of rental income from it.

The economic performances of the so called Asian miracle cases, such as Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, which are considered to be very impressive examples of extremely effective land reforms, by making small farms efficient through dispersal strategies, have only highlighted the superiority of these farms in contributing agricultural surplus for investment in other sectors of the economy. The conditional ties of structural adjustment cannot be consciously permitted to obscure the virtues of small farms in fostering wholesome agricultural development. Thus the efficiency of the sector should be improved by activating the small farms through easy access to factor markets by removing various imperfections (be it a social or of market make). Otherwise, the unbridled growth of large enterprises, and the resultant over-specialization would exacerbate the landlessness among the rural masses. The retrenched unskilled agricultural labour force would have to seek employment in the urban service sectors, this would further the social

problems. Hence, the reforms in agricultural sector, particularly land ceiling, should not be integrated with blanket reforms consistent with liberalization in the other sectors.

Feudal centres, created by the concentration of land in a few hands, are the main reason of low productivity of agricultural sectors of many developing countries. It is generally well-acknowledged that the class of emancipated and economically empowered small peasant producers played a key role in the agricultural revolutions in these countries. In India, a variety of regional and sub-regional politico-economic patterns have emerged since independence, and here too, the relatively successful agricultural performances have often been via the peasant route: for instance, the early green revolution belt in India, i.e. Punjab, Haryana, Western Uttar Pradesh and some other pockets can be described as a version of the 'capitalism from below'. Any argument against small farms and farmers made on the issue of capital formation and hence economic development is clearly ignorant of the inter-sectoral linkages. Jha very aptly points towards historical experiences, which suggest the need for addressing agrarian questions for the developing countries is even more urgent as some of the critical inputs that facilitated economic transformation of many among the contemporary developed countries in their early stages, in particular colonialism/imperialism and massive migration, are simply not available to the developing world.

Furthermore, the range of trajectories of agrarian transition for the latecomers has also got constrained in significant ways. Specifically, it has become increasingly clear that for countries in the third world, where large sections of the population are dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods, feasibility of successful agricultural transformation through the landlord road, or by any other road that ignores the issue of land reform, is highly suspect. There is a great deal of evidence from countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America that the agricultural policies pursued in the post World War II era (i.e. period when most of these countries got the political space to embark on trajectories of relatively autonomous economic development) generally neglected thoroughgoing land reforms. By and large, the strategies adopted by them resulted in betting on the strong and excluding the weak. Not surprisingly, across these continents, agrarian structure has either remained, or has evolved towards, what Barraclough (1997) has described, with reference to the Latin American agriculture, as 'bi-model', or what Joshi (1987) calls, with

reference to the Indian agriculture, as 'structural dualism'. Such a characterization does seem useful for much of the Third World, with suitable qualifications for country-specific differences and varying degrees of complexity, and does capture one of the fundamental traits of most of these countries: that a large section of the rural population is almost trapped in agriculture for livelihood, much of it barely surviving, with no means of escape. Much of this section forms the hardcore of persistent rural poverty globally.

Thus, the process of agricultural transformation in much of the Third World, even though it may have pockets of substantial achievements, can hardly be considered as being on a successful trajectory, even in terms of the conventional kinds of paradigm thrown up by the early literature in Development Economics regarding the contribution of the agricultural sector to a country's economic development. In the case of latecomers to modern economic growth, the limited success, or even abject failure in many cases, in terms of agricultural transformation can be traced to their inability to confront squarely the structural constraints related to inequalities in access to land, with substantial masses of landless populations in several instances eking out barest of subsistence, and insecure tenancies etc. And the fact that masses of these societies continue to suffer their bondage and deprivations with an unwavering faith in the institutions of democracy is perhaps explained by the following quote of Sudipta Kaviraj, who said that the 'the idea of democracy exerts considerable influence on third world politics not because it is realized in a governmental form, but through this powerful intangibility of political imagination.' And it is this intangibility of political imagination, that might be an explanatory variable for the expanse of deprivations and domination in a society with an increasing participation and unwavering faith of the numerous deprived in the political process.

Appendix I

Findings of the Village Survey

I. Introduction

Importance of land in any predominantly agrarian society can hardly be overemphasized. It not only forms the economic base of the lives of the masses, but has also been seen to be crucially defining their positioning in the social and political power structuring. Particularly, in case of Bihar, its history of prosperity, of exploitation, of struggles and wars, of movements and religion has been 'landesque' in character. In modern times, while land again became the focal point of surplus expropriation by the colonial state, in post-independence Bihar it has been at the centre of agrarian dispute and unrest since early seventies.

While the agrarian question and with it the land would form a core point of any serious study of Bihar, most studies lack empirical database. The official figures have their own limited academic reach, in terms of extrapolation of a limited sample of NSS and limited coverage of economic variables by the Census. Thus, most of the careful examinations of trends and tendencies in Bihar have been based on field surveys done by researchers, which, though limited in geographical expanse, prove to be the vast information sources of the processes and direction of change. However, since the early eighties even these sources have dried up.

It was in this background of the importance of land in understanding Bihar – lack of latest empirical evidence reflecting on its agrarian question especially in the post-bifurcation era – that ADRI undertook a survey of 12 villages in twelve districts of Bihar. While random sampling was not possible with a sample size of 12 villages in all of Bihar, we did a purposive sampling, keeping in mind the geographical spread across the state, and 'landesqueness' of the very purpose of study/survey. While the villages were picked from almost all regions of Bihar, each of the villages was picked up for, particularly, explicit land relation/relations exhibited by its socio-economic profile. A list of the same is given below:

Sl. No.	District	Village	'Landesqueness' of Socio-economic Profile
1	West Champaran	D K Shikarpur	A powerful zamindar family, still controlling a huge area of land through its political and social domination
2	Gopalganj	Maniyara	Estate of one of the biggest zamindars and allies of the British in colonial period - the Hathua Raj - still in control of a huge area of land; simmering naxalite upsurge in the area
3	Madhubani	Selibeli	Site of massacre of dalits by the powerful *mahant* on the issue of control over ceiling surplus land
4	Mushahari	Muzaffarpur	Opening ground of Naxalite movement in Bihar (Issues of ceiling surplus, wages and *izzat*)
5	Madhepura	Murho	Village of powerful land-owning elites from OBC-II
6	Katihar	Gandhigram	A village of displaced from the Diara, under ryots of Kursela estate
7	Purnea	Rupaspur Khaga	Site of first massacre in Bihar
8	Patna	Nurichak	Simmering naxalite problem, unrest over ceiling surplus
9	Jehanabad	Damuha	Naxalism
10	Gaya	Shekhwara	Peasant mobilization, which peacefully settled agrarian dispute over ceiling surplus land of Bodh Gaya *math*
11	Bhojpur	Bihta	Site of Massacre; issues of political domination underlined by feudal relations of production
12	Bhabhua	Devri	Hotbed of current naxalite movement

In the villages surveyed, we tried picking up the complete revenue village which in most cases also happened to an economic unit. While most of the villages surveyed could be singularly defined as revenue as well as economic village, in some cases (Murho and Rupaspur Khaga) economic village was found to be a subset of the revenue village, in which case economic village was surveyed. In the household survey of the villages surveyed, hundred percent enumeration was done and all the households in the villages were surveyed. In the definition of households,

the standard NSSO definition was followed. Thus, 7605 households formed the sample of the survey of the 12 villages surveyed in 12 districts of Bihar in 2007.

II. Social Composition :

Of the 7605 households surveyed in 12 villlages of 12 districts across the state, following was their social composition :

Caste	Number of households	% of total households
Scheduled Castes	323	4.2
Scheduled Tribes	1688	22.2
OBC 1 (Annex. 1)	2023	26.6
OBC II (Annex. II)	2385	31.4
Upper Castes	707	9.3
Muslims	479	6.3

III. Land Endowment

Landlessness :

a) Social Profile: Incidence of landlessness was found to be highest (35.4 per cent) in the OBC-I (Annexure I) castes, followed by the SCs (30.9 per cent). One of the reasons of lower incidence of landlessness among the SCs than amongst the Annexure-I castes was targeting of Scheduled Caste households for redistribution of land wherever land reforms were carried out in whatever limited terms. The villages surveyed were mostly villages which had witnessed serious agrarian unrest and, hence, a more proactive state intervention in the redistribution of land among the weakest of the weaker sections.

But despite the above observation, the share of SC households in the landless households was found to be 40 per cent more than their share in the total number of households. Similarly, while STs had a share of mere 0.3 per cent in the total population, their share in landless households was 3.8 per cent, more than ten times their share in the total population. Proportion of landless among the OBC-I households was also found to be more than their representation in the total population. On the other hand, while upper-caste households

constituted 9.7 percent of the households surveyed, their share of landlessness was only 2.2 per cent. OBC-II households too were found to be relatively better-off than their OBC-I counterparts, SCs and STs. Interestingly, while the share of Muslim households in the total sample was 24 per cent, their share in landless households was only 10 per cent.

b) Village profile: Incidence of landlessness is found to be very high across almost all the villages surveyed, the lowest being in Shekhwara in Gaya at 11.4 per cent and 15.5 per cent in Kaimur. While Shekhwara had seen a successful agrarian struggle by the masses against the landlordship of the Bodhgaya *Math* for redistribution of its ceiling surplus land, Devri village of Kaimur district has a lower incidence of landlessness because of its geo-cultural reasons. It is a tribal-dominated village in the hilly tracts of Kaimur ranges of Bhabhua district.

Highest incidence of landlessness was found to be in the Noorichak village of Patna district. Incidentally, the village also has the highest percentage of SC population (60 percent) among all the villages, and is an active breeding ground of Liberation in Patna district. Thus, here we see a close connection amongst caste, class and agrarian unrest, converting it to a breeder ground for the naxalite movement. Next incidence of landlessness came in Mushahari block of Muzaffarpur district, with 69 per cent of its households being landless. Here too the correspondence between caste and class in obvious, as OBC-I (43 per cent) and SC (30 percent) together account for 73 per cent of total households in the village. Landlessness was found to be the most acute among these two groups. D K Shikarpur emerges as a study in contrast as it has thousands of acres of land concentrated in the hands of just one family, while 65 per cent of total households were found to be landless. Here too OBC-I, SC and Muslim households together accounted for about 70 per cent of the total households, which is quite close to the figure of 65 per cent landless in the village.

Of the 7605 households surveyed, nearly 52 per cent of the households surveyed were found to be landless (possessing no land other than homestead). Households falling in the marginal and small holding category accounted for another 37 percent (Marginal holdings 28.6 per cent and small holdings 8.7 percent). Only 1.3 per cent of the households fell in the large landholding category.

Among the landholding households, an overwhelming majority (nearly 60 per cent) was found to be marginal landholders. Another 18 per cent of the landowning households owned small landholdings, with only 2.62 per cent of the landowners owning land in the large landholding category.

Village (District)	**Landholding Category**							**% of total Landed households**		
	Landless	Marginal	Small	Semi-Medium	Medium	Large	Total	Mar + Small	Med + Large	Semi-Medium
D K Shikarpur (West Champaran)	908	323	67	61	11	25	1395	80.08	7.39	12.53
Maniyara (Gopalganj)	118	68	6	2	0	0	194	97.37	0.00	2.63
Selibeli (Madhubani)	152	277	19	11	6	0	465	94.57	1.92	3.51
Musahari (Muzaffarpur)	1003	358	44	26	16	7	1454	89.14	5.10	5.76
Murho (Madhepura)	386	235	79	55	48	23	826	71.36	16.14	12.50
Gandhigram (Katihar)	137	75	41	13	25	2	293	74.36	17.31	8.33
Rupaspur Khagha (Purnea)	432	164	70	54	37	19	776	68.02	16.28	15.70
Nurichak (Patna)	131	33	6	5	3	0	178	82.98	6.38	10.64
Damuha (Jehanabad)	153	177	48	31	6	0	415	85.88	2.29	11.83
Shekhwara (Gaya)	38	145	85	51	12	2	333	77.97	4.75	17.29
Bihta (Bhojpur)	472	298	170	121	90	15	1166	67.44	15.13	17.44
Devri (Kaimur)	17	25	24	22	19	3	110	52.69	23.66	23.66
Total	**3947**	**2178**	**659**	**452**	**273**	**96**	**7605**	**77.56**	**10.09**	**12.36**

While 77.56 per cent of the landholdings were small and marginal, 10.09 per cent were found to be in the medium and large category. Semi-medium category of landholdings was found to be 12.36 per cent. Thus, a predominant majority of landholders were found to be in the category of poor peasantry with barely enough land for subsistence. And, except for Devri, which stands out

in its geo-cultural features, all the villages surveyed show an outstanding uniformity in terms of having more than two-third of their holding being small and marginal. However, there is a wide variation in the semi-medium, and medium and large category across different villages. While none of the landowning households in Maniyara village were found to be having medium and large holdings, percentage of such households in Devri was found to be 23.66 per cent.

While more than 97 percent of the landholdings in the Maniyara were found to be marginal and small holdings, the corresponding figure for Selibeli and Mushahari was found to be 94.5 per cent and 89 per cent, respectively. It is noteworthy that the villages such as Selibeli, Shekhwara, and Damuha, having a fairly low proportion of large landowning households have had a history of Naxalite movement. Whether it is indicative of a correlation between the concentration of land in few hands and the agrarian unrest against it is a question open for interpretation.

Average Size of land holdings :

While the average size of owned land in the villages surveyed was found to be nearly two acres, it varied widely across different landholding size classes. While the average size of landholding in marginal landholding category was found to be 0.43 acres, it was found to be 1.51 acres, 2.88 acres, 5.99 acres, and 22.01 acres for small, semi-medium, medium, and large category landholdings, respectively. While the variation between smallest and largest landholding category was found to be more pronounced in some villages such as Rupaspur Khaga, Shikarpur, Mushahari, and Shekhwara, differentiation was less pronounced in others. For example, in Rupaspur, while average size of maginal lanhdholding was 0.44 acres, the average size for large landholding category was nearly 30 acres. Shikarpur, Mushahari and Shekhwara too show a similar degree of differentiation. Shall we note that, except for Shikarpur, all the above-mentioned villages have had a history of agrarian disturbance??

Homestead Land

While only a minor segment of the surveyed households were found to be without any homestead land, the real problem here was found to be the legal status of homestead land under possession. Of the 99.7 per cent households with homestead land, 24.4 per cent did not have

proper papers. This mere physical possession of homestead land without proper documents to legally back their claims in case of a dispute is pregnant with very strong possibilities of an agrarian conflict. This is also indicative of the extent of *Bataidari* in a sense that although no rent is paid for the homestead, the homestead land under possession of these 24.4 per cent of the households is basically under-ryoti land. There has been a strong argument based on empirical evidence that a huge proportion (in fact a majority) of land under-ryoti land is taken for homesteads, and this figure of 24.4 per cent of the households having homestead without any papers is only indicative of that phenomena.

Across the villages, the percentage of households with no papers of their homestead varied from a high of 97 per cent in Gandhigram, to 49 per cent in Maniyara, to a low of 2.7 per cent in Devri. Gandhigram with 97.3 per cent of such households is an exceptional case, as it is a village settled villagers of Gobrahi *Diyara* when their village was eroded by the changing course of the Ganges. Administration had then settled the displaced villagers on the ceiling surplus land acquired from a local landlord-cum-moneylender, papers of which the villagers are yet to receive from the administration. It is interesting to note that this problem is found to be the least (only 1.2 per cent households with no paper) in the Damuha village of Jehanabad district with a history of Naxalite movement.

The fact that the households without any papers to back their homesteads are otherwise also amongst the most vulnerable sections of society, if reflected by the fact that nearly 35 per cent of the landless households had no papers to back their homestead lands. This is seen as falling down as one goes up the higher landholding categories, but ironically it suddenly goes up from 8 per cent in the semi-medium category to 12 in the medium category, and then falls again to 3 per cent in the large landholding category. This is possibly explained by the presence of cultivating castes in the medium category who were settled there by ex-*zamindars*.

Main Source of Income/Occupation

Major source of income among the landless households was found to be the agricultural labour. About 58 per cent of the landless households reported agricultural labour as their main source of

income. Only 5 per cent of such households were found to be engaged in farming. Nearly 85 per cent of the landless households were found to be depending on labour (agricultural and non-agricultural) as their main source of income. Agricultural and non-agricultural labour, taken together, is found to be the main source of income for around 63 per cent of the households surveyed. And, as is obvious, among the labour households agricultural labour is found to be the predominant source of income, with it being the main source of income for nearly 74 per cent in Noorichak to 24.5 per cent in Kaimur. The incidence of landlessness in Noorichak and percentage of agricultural labour households correspond very well in Noorichak. It isn't coincidental that Noorichak is one of the naxal-prone areas in Patna district. As one goes up the landholding category, dependence on agricultural and non-agricultural labour is found to have been decreasing steadily, falling to 0 in the large landholding category.

On the other hand, dependence on farming is found to be increasing as one goes up the landholding category, increasing steadily up to the medium landholding category, thereafter registering a fall from 78.0 per cent in the medium to 68.8 per cent in the large. While the incidence of labour-households decreases as one goes up the landholding categories, the incidence of households reporting farming as their main source of income increases from 5 per cent in the landless category to 78 per cent in the medium land holding category.

Income opportunity structure outside agriculture is found to be closely related to the land endowment. While only 2.3 per cent of the landless reported paid employment as their main source of income, 26 per cent of the large landholding owning households reported paid employment to be their main source of income. The percentage of households having access to gainful paid employment is found to increase steadily as one goes up the landholding category. Self employment is seen to be a resort of extremes, with incidence of self-employment among the households falling as one goes up from the marginal landholding category, but is suddenly found to have increased from 1.8 per cent for the medium landholders to 5.2 per cent among the large landholders, indicating a differentiation among those reporting self-employment as their main source of income.

IV. Land Market for Leasing

Of the households surveyed, only 16 per cent reported leasing-in of land. But the households leasing-in varied greatly across the villages surveyed. While nearly 36 per cent of the households of Gandhigram of Katihar district reported leasing-in of land, the percentage of households leasing-in in D K Shikarpur was found to be only 4.7 per cent. This low incidence of leasing-in in Shikarpur is explained by the prevalence of sugarcane plantations in the area as well as a well-entrenched feudal family in the region being in control of the huge chunks of land going in for the sugarcane plantation on an extensive scale.

When the households are mapped according to their landholding status, biggest incidence of leasing-in is found to be among the marginal landholders. While 22 per cent of marginal landholders are found to be leasing-in land, nearly 19 per cent of small landholders too are found to be leasing-in land. Thus, the incidence of leasing-in is found to fall up till the semi-medium landholding category, from where it increases to 16.1 per cent in the medium landholding group, falling again to 6.3 per cent in the large landholding category. This, probably, is an indicator of the practice of reverse tenancy in the villages surveyed.

Average Size of Leased-in Land :

Average size of the land leased-in across different landholding categories reveals an interesting pattern and character of the lease market. While there isn't much difference between the landless and marginal landowners in the lease market, where landless households are seen to be leasing-in land of an average size of slightly less than an acre, marginal landowners are seen to be leasing-in land of size slightly more than an acre. The character of leasing-in, in case of these two categories of farmers, is quite clearly 'subsistence farming'. While the size of the leased-in land increases as one goes up the landholding category, size of land leased-in land remains less within the range of subsistence farming up till the semi-medium category. The character of leasing-in shows signs of transcending the subsistence motive in the medium landholding category, while revealing an explicitly capitalist character for the large landholding category. The size of leased-in land is seen to increase from 0.97 acres in the landless category to 1.04 acres in the marginal, 1.33 acres in small, 1.78 acres in semi-medium to 2.96 in medium, thereafter suddenly jumping

to 35.36 acres in the large category. However, one needs to be mindful of the limitations of the character of the 'average', as one sees that much of the average size of 35.36 acres of leased-in land in the large landholding category comes from 68.18 acres of average size of leased-in land in this category in Shikarpur village.

Terms of Leasing-in :

Share-cropping emerges out to be the predominant form of tenurial arrangement between the landowners and the tenants. While 14.5 per cent of leasing-in was found to be on a fixed produce rental agreement, only 3.2 per cent of the land leased-in was on the basis of cash rent. Bonded labour was found to the arrangement in 0.4 cases of leasing-in.

Incidence of bonded labour was found only in cases of landless and marginal landowing households leasing-in land. Incidence of sharecropping as the tenurial arrangement goes on increasing from 75.7 per cent in the landless category to 93.6 per cent in the small category, thereafter it falls to 61.9 per cent in the large landholding category.

Interestingly, while fixed produce tenurial arrangement is seen to be falling from 21.1 per cent among the landless households to 2.5 per cent among the semi-medium landholding households, it is seen to shoot up again to 23.8 per cent in case of large landholding households.

Mortgage of Land :

About 6 per cent of the households surveyed reported mortgage of land. Here, the inter-village variation wasn't found to be much, with the highest incidence of mortgage (10 per cent) reported from the village Devri of Kaimur district. It would be worth noting that nearly 65 per cent of the households in the village consisted of Scheduled Tribes, and that this region has been declared a sanctuary area. Other villages reporting relatively high degree of mortgage are also the ones with a history of agrarian disturbance, such as Shekhwara (9.3 per cent), Damuha (8.4 per cent), Rupaspur (8.5 per cent) and Maniyara (7.7 per cent). Shikarpur is also found to be having a fairly high degree of mortgage, with about 8.5 per cent households reporting mortgaging of their land.

Incidence of mortgage of land is found to have increased as one moves up from the landless households to small landholding households (11.5 per cent of which report mortgage). Thereafter, it is seen to be falling to 4.8 per cent for the medium landholding households. Interestingly, incidence of mortgage of land is found to have gone up again for the large landholding households to 9.4 per cent. But this again is reflective of a substantive differentiation between the mortgaging households. While mortgage by marginal and small landholders is basically an act of last resort for survival, and is invariably engaged in the informal money market with atrocious interest rates, the mortgage by the bigger landowning households is done more for strategic reasons, either to capitalize on their access to formal money market or for investment in commercial farming; here, mortgage is most likely in the formal money market sector. These bigger landowning households with access to formal credit use it in their commercial farming enterprise and for purchasing the farm equipments, for which they mortgage their land. They also do it because there is no fear amongst them of ever losing their land, owing to their power positioning in society.

V. Land Market for Sale of Land

While only 5 per cent of the households were found to have engaged in any sell-out of land over the last 10 years, the percentage varied across the villages from 0 per cent in Gandhigram and Noorichak to 5.6 per cent in Murho. Interestingly, while only around 1.9 per cent of the presently landless households report selling out of land over the last 10 years, it is a significant proportion of the small and medium landowning households (4.2 per cent and 4.4 per cent, respectively) who are found to be selling their land. In fact, the highest proportion of land sellers is found to be among the medium landholding households, among whom the act by cultivators too is also the highest (78 per cent of the households of this category are found to be engaged in farming). Whether it is an indicator of a worsening 'terms of trade' for agriculture and agriculturalists, leading to a loss of their land, over the last decade are a question open for debate.

Village (District)	Landless	Marginal	Small	Semi-Medium	Medium	Large
D K Shikarpur (West Champaran)	0.8183	0.4537	0.7235	1.121	0.583	1.547
Maniyara (Gopalganj)	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!
Selibeli (Madhubani)	0.347	0.423	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!
Musahari (Muzaffarpur)	0.8	0.721	0.441	0.505	0.58	#VALUE!
Murho (Madhepura)	0.921	0.58	0.622	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	1.7
Gandhigram (Katihar)	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!
Rupaspur Khagha (Purnea)	#VALUE!	0.553	1.052	3.38	2.49	2.92
Nurichak (Patna)	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!
Damuha (Jehanabad)	0.249	0.277	0.319	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!
Shekhwara (Gaya)	0.879	0.921	0.35	0.7	#VALUE!	#VALUE!
Bihta (Bhojpur)	1.548	0.77	1.6312	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!
Devri (Kaimur)	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	2	#VALUE!
Total	0.817	0.5716	0.717	1.448	1.456	2.087

VI. Indebtedness

A huge proportion of households (44 per cent) were found to be indebted among the villages surveyed. Again, there was a wide variation of the proportion of indebted households across different villages, ranging from 18.2 per cent in Devri village of Kaimur to 65 in Murho of Madhepura district. This variation was found to be more reflective of the capacity to pay back rather than an absolute need for loan. This is further confirmed by the distribution of indebted households by landholding category. While 44.2 per cent of the landless were found to be indebted, 56.4 per cent of the medium landholding households were found to be indebted. Also, the average amount of loan taken by the marginal landholders is seen to be more than small and semi-medium landowners as well as the landless. This reflects the importance of land as an asset facilitating access to the money market, it further reflects that the indebtedness in the lower landholding categories is more for survival needs which are seen to decline as one goes up the landholding category from small to semi-medium. Thereafter, the loan amount is seen to increase, but this increase in loan amount is reflective of changing nature of loan that is more of a production loan than of a consumption loan, and is more likely to be taken in the formal money market.

Appendix II

Bathani Tola Massacre

Bathani Tola is a hamlet of Barka Kharav village under Sahar block of Bhojpur district. In the afternoon, a little after 2 pm, of 11th July, 1996 the tola was surrounded by 100 armed men who opened fire indiscriminately. 19 dalit women and children were killed, while five sustained bullet injuries and deep cuts from swords and sharp instruments.

In late April, as many as 50 muslim and dalit families had run away from the main village, Barki Kharav, and had sought shelter in this tola. The assailants had attacked from three sides and houses of the tola were torched to begin with. A majority of the households torched belonged to those who had recently resettled or of those who had dared to shelter them.

The socio-economic and political backdrop of the massacre :

Barki Kharav is a large village with more than 400 households, as opposed to Chhotki Kharav a little distance away. The village has three smaller tolas, almost like separate villages. Tandi Tola on the northwest has 35 dalit households of Rajwads, Paswans and Kanu Savs. Southwest of Tandi is Ujwallia Tola of approximately 100 houses, of which 60 are those of Brahmins and the rest include Kahars, Paswans and Kanu Savs. South of Tandi is Bathani, a tola of 60-70 households, including Kanu Savs, Yadavs, Mallahs and Chamars. South of Bathani Tola is a canal, across which is Lodhipur village with around 100 houses of Yadavs and Mallahs. Southwest of Bathani is Chhotki Kharav, with 50 households of Bhumihars and the rest of dalits including Chamars, Paswans and others. The latest addition to Bathani Tola were 18 muslim and 32 dalit households who decided to quit Barki on 25 April 1996, after one Sultan Miya was killed in broad daylight. They moved to Bathani Tola on 29 April, and later built around a dozen mud-houses, two to three families to each house.

Barki Kharav is one of the few villages in Bhojpur and Central Bihar, with both Bhumihar and Rajput presence. Significantly, both castes are equal in number (60 houses each) as well as in terms of land ownership. Though these two castes together constituted less than half of the total number of households, they enjoyed uncontested supremacy. Besides these two dominant castes,

other numerically strong castes included Muslims (35 houses) who lived next to the Rajputs before shifting, Yadavs (25), Koeri (20), Sav (25), Paswan (40), Chamar (20) and Dhobi (20).

Most of the land was also owned by Rajputs and Bhumihars. While 12-15 of them own land up to 60 bighas, a majority had less than 20 bighas. Similarly, most of the *gairmajarua* (both *Aam* and *Khas*) land was also reported to be under their control. A few landlords had also occupied around 1.5 acres of Karbala and Imambada land.

Here socio-economic fabric of the area had enough imbalances in it to generate countering forces. A combination of issues, over a period of time, resulted in the massacre. To begin with, it was the political assertion of the dalits, which manifested itself in the election of a Muslim as a mukhiya in the panchayat election of 1978. Then came the struggle for wages, which culminated in the wage strike of 1988 that lasted for four months. Labourers from three Barki tolas were mobilized by the CPI(ML) and labourers of the neighbouring villages too joined in. They demanded a daily wage of Rs 21 along with the traditional breakfast and lunch instead of approximately half *paseri* (1 kg and 750 gms of coarse cereals). Finally, a settlement was reached at Rs 20. Prior to the strike, the harvesters received 1 *bojha* (headload) for every 21 *bojhas* of harvested crop. After the strike, this changed to 1 *bojha* for every 10 *bojhas*.

The immediate cause happened to be the Karbala land under the control of some of the upper caste landlords. To contest this possession, CPI (ML) had organized Karbala Mukti March in February 1996, in which two upper caste men from Barki Kharav were killed. From then on, situation got really tensed. On 24 April 1996, Gyanchand Bhagat (Ganeri Caste) of the nearby Dhanchua village was found murdered in the fields at two in the afternoon. On the same night, a meeting of Ranbeer Sena was held in Barki Kharav village. Early next morning, Sultan Miya, a youth in his early 20s, who was going to the local shop was killed by 5 Rajputs of the same village.[33] After this murder, the 35 muslim households located next to the Rajput houses fearing for their lives decided to seek refuge in the neighbouring Bathani Tola, a CPI (ML)-stronghold. It was followed by several incidences of violence and murder over the next two months, and one thing led to the other with the final culmination of the massacre on 11 July.

[33] Bela Bhatia, Anatomy of a Massacre

Appendix III

Land needed for distribution among Rural Landless Labourer households/ Rural Landless households

1.	Number of Rural Households (2001 census).	1,24,07, 132 (124.07 lakh)
2.	Estimated Number of Rural Households (2005) assuming a population growth rate of 2.5 percent.	143.92 lakh
3.	Proportion of Agricultural Labourers among the Rural male Main Workers	39.27%
4.	Estimated no. of rural landless household/ no. of rural agricultural labour households	56.55 lakhs
5	Land required togrant 0.25 acres to each landless rural households	14.14 lakh acres = 5.72 lakh hectares
6	Land required to grant 0.5 acres to each landless rural household	28.24 lakh acres = 11.44 lakh hectares
Note : $(1.025)^6$ = 1.16, 1 Hectare = 2.471 acres		

Appendix IV

Table 1 A : Percentage Distribution of Households by Religion-Caste Groups for Different Villages

Village (District)	Religion – Caste Groups						
	UCH	**OBC-I**	**OBC-II**	**SC**	**ST**	**MUS**	**TOTAL**
D K Shikarpur (West Champaran)	135 (9.7)	442 (31.7)	269 (19.3)	210 (15.1)	4 (0.3)	335 (24.0)	1395 (100.0)
Maniyara (Gopalganj)	1 (0.5)	6 (3.1)	108 (55.7)	44 (22.7)	20 (10.3)	15 (7.7)	194 (100.0)
Selibeli (Madhubani)	40 (8.6)	204 (43.9)	68 (14.6)	140 (30.1)	13 (2.8)	0 (0.0)	465 (100.0)
Musahari (Muzaffarpur)	51 (3.5)	622 (42.8)	307 (21.1)	432 (29.7)	0 (0.0)	42 (2.9)	1454 (100.0)
Murho (Madhepura)	6 (0.7)	28 (3.4)	483 (58.5)	228 (27.6)	31 (3.8)	50 (6.1)	826 (100.0)
Gandhigram (Katihar)	0 (0.0)	287 (98.0)	1 (0.3)	5 (1.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	293 (100.0)
Rupaspur Khagha (Purnea)	88 (11.3)	321 (41.4)	186 (24.0)	42 (5.4)	139 (17.9)	0 (0.0)	776 (100.0)
Nurichak (Patna)	0 (0.0)	22 (12.4)	47 (26.4)	107 (60.1)	0 (0.0)	2 (1.1)	178 (100.0)
Damuha (Jehanabad)	0 (0.0)	107 (25.8)	205 (49.4)	103 (24.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	415 (100.0)
Shekhwara (Gaya)	1 (0.3)	89 (26.7)	46 (13.8)	152 (45.6)	45 (13.5)	0 (0.0)	333 (100.0)
Bihta (Bhojpur)	383 (32.8)	232 (19.9)	292 (25.0)	224 (19.2)	0 (0.0)	35 (3.0)	1166 (100.0)
Devri (Kaimur)	2 (1.8)	25 (22.7)	11 (10.0)	1 (0.9)	71 (64.5)	0 (0.0)	110 (100.0)
Total	**707 (9.3)**	**2385 (31.4)**	**2023 (26.6)**	**1688 (22.2)**	**323 (4.2)**	**479 (6.3)**	**7605 (100.0)**

Table 1 B : Percentage Distribution of Households by Religion-Caste Groups for Different Landholding Categories

Landholding Category	Religion – Caste Groups						
	UCH	**OBC-I**	**OBC-II**	**SC**	**ST**	**MUS**	**TOTAL**
Landless	86 (2.2)	1396 (35.4)	701 (17.8)	1218 (30.9)	149 (3.8)	397 (10.1)	3947 (100.0)
Marginal	176 (8.1)	697 (32.0)	809 (37.1)	372 (17.1)	56 (2.6)	68 (3.1)	2178 (100)
Small	135 (20.5)	145 (22.0)	247 (37.5)	63 (9.6)	56 (8.5)	13 (2.0)	659 (100.0)
Semi-Medium	154 (34.1)	87 (19.2)	146 (32.3)	27 (6.0)	37 (8.2)	1 (0.2)	452 (100.0)
Medium	106 (38.8)	54 (19.8)	84 (30.8)	7 (2.6)	22 (8.1)	0 (0.0)	273 (100.0)
Large	50 (52.1)	6 (6.3)	36 (37.5)	1 (1.0)	3 (3.1)	0 (0.0)	96 (100.0)
Total	**707 (9.3)**	**2385 (31.4)**	**2023 (26.6)**	**1688 (22.2)**	**323 (4.2)**	**479 (6.3)**	**7605 (100.0)**

Table 1 C : Percentage Distribution of Households by Landholding Categories for Different Villages

Village (District)	Landholding Category						
	Landless	**Marginal**	**Small**	**Semi-Medium**	**Medium**	**Large**	**Total**
D K Shikarpur (West Champaran)	908 (65.1)	323 (23.2)	67 (4.8)	61 (4.4)	11 (0.8)	25 (1.8)	1395 (100.0)
Maniyara (Gopalganj)	118 (60.8)	68 (35.1)	6 (3.1)	2 (1.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	194 (100.0)
Selibeli (Madhubani)	152 (32.7)	277 (59.6)	19 (4.1)	11 (2.4)	6 (1.3)	0 (0.0)	465 (100.0)
Musahari (Muzaffarpur)	1003 (69.0)	358 (24.6)	44 (3.0)	26 (1.8)	16 (1.1)	7 (0.5)	1454 (100.0)
Murho (Madhepura)	386 (46.7)	235 (28.5)	79 (9.6)	55 (6.7)	48 (5.8)	23 (2.8)	826 (100.0)
Gandhigram (Katihar)	137 (46.8)	75 (25.6)	41 (14.0)	13 (4.4)	25 (8.5)	2 (0.7)	293 (100.0)
Rupaspur Khagha (Purnea)	432 (55.7)	164 (21.1)	70 (9.0)	54 (7.0)	37 (4.8)	19 (2.4)	776 (100.0)
Nurichak (Patna)	131 (73.6)	33 (18.5)	6 (3.4)	5 (2.8)	3 (1.7)	0 (0.0)	178 (100.0)
Damuha (Jehanabad)	153 (36.9)	177 (42.7)	48 (11.6)	31 (7.5)	6 (1.4)	0 (0.0)	415 (100.0)
Shekhwara (Gaya)	38 (11.4)	145 (43.5)	85 (25.5)	51 (15.3)	12 (3.6)	2 (0.6)	333 (100.0)
Bihta (Bhojpur)	472 (40.5)	298 (25.6)	170 (14.6)	121 (10.4)	90. (7.7)	15 (1.3)	1166 (100.0)
Devri (Kaimur)	17 (15.5)	25 (22.7)	24 (21.8)	22 (20.0)	19 (17.3)	3 (2.7)	110 (100.0)
Total	**3947 (51.9)**	**2178 (28.6)**	**659 (8.7)**	**452 (5.9)**	**273 (3.6)**	**96 (1.3)**	**7605 (100.0)**

Table 2 : Average Size of Family Members per Households in Different Landholding Categories and Different Villages

Village (District)	Landholding Category						
	Landless	**Marginal**	**Small**	**Semi-Medium**	**Medium**	**Large**	**Total**
D K Shikarpur (West Champaran)	4.19	4.24	4.57	4.38	5.91	4.24	4.24
Maniyara (Gopalganj)	4.39	4.82	5.33	6.00	0.0	0.0	4.59
Selibeli (Madhubani)	4.44	4.45	4.89	5.27	5.33	0.0	4.50
Musahari (Muzaffarpur)	4.33	4.61	5.11	4.88	5.63	5.71	4.45
Murho (Madhepura)	4.44	4.89	4.89	5.29	5.71	4.35	4.74
Gandhigram (Katihar)	5.23	5.21	5.37	5.08	6.04	6.00	5.31
Rupaspur Khagha (Purnea)	4.74	4.80	4.91	4.93	5.11	5.42	4.82
Nurichak (Patna)	4.98	5.33	6.00	4.80	6.67	0.0	5.11
Damuha (Jehanabad)	4.50	4.93	5.19	5.61	5.33	0.0	4.86
Shekhwara (Gaya)	5.21	5.31	5.56	5.71	6.50	6.50	5.47
Bihta (Bhojpur)	5.14	5.12	5.49	5.44	5.76	6.33	5.28
Devri (Kaimur)	4.65	4.68	3.87	5.00	4.74	5.67	4.60
Total	**4.53**	**4.76**	**5.15**	**5.19**	**5.64**	**5.06**	**4.73**

Table 3 A : Percentage Distribution of Households by Main Source of Income for Different Villages

Village (District)	Main Source of Income					
	Farming	**Labour (Ag.)**	**Labour (Non Ag.)**	**Paid employment**	**Self employment**	**Total**
D K Shikarpur (West Champaran)	183 (13.1)	821 (58.9)	204 (14.6)	76 (5.4)	111 (8.0)	1395 (100.0)
Maniyara (Gopalganj)	16 (8.2)	69 (35.6)	96 (49.5)	1 (0.5)	12 (6.2)	194 (100.0)
Selibeli (Madhubani)	88 (18.9)	170 (36.6)	152 (32.7)	39 (8.4)	16 (3.4)	465 (100.0)
Musahari (Muzaffarpur)	173 (11.9)	535 (36.8)	559 (38.4)	55 (3.8)	132 (9.1)	1454 (100.0)
Murho (Madhepura)	227 (27.5)	313 (37.9)	225 (27.2)	43 (5.2)	18 (2.2)	826 (100.0)
Gandhigram (Katihar)	129 (44.0)	128 (43.7)	11 (3.8)	3 (1.0)	22 (7.5)	293 (100.0)
Rupaspur Khagha (Purnea)	235 (30.3)	354 (45.6)	125 (16.1)	25 (3.2)	37 (4.8)	776 (100.0)
Nurichak (Patna)	21 (11.8)	131 (73.6)	8 (4.5)	7 (3.9)	11 (6.2)	178 (100.0)
Damuha (Jehanabad)	140 (33.7)	119 (28.7)	54 (13.0)	28 (6.7)	74 (17.8)	415 (100.0)
Shekhwara (Gaya)	107 (32.1)	108 (32.4)	66 (19.8)	9 (2.7)	43 (12.9)	333 (100.0)
Bihta (Bhojpur)	455 (39.1)	372 (31.9)	105 (9.0)	139 (11.9)	95 (8.1)	1166 (100.0)
Devri (Kaimur)	59 (52.7)	27 (24.5)	22 (20.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.7)	110 (100.0)
Total	1833 (24.1)	3147 (41.4)	1627 (21.4)	425 (5.6)	573 (7.5)	7605 (100.0)

Table 3 B : Percentage Distribution of Households by Main Source of Income for Different Landholding Categories

Landholding Category	Main Source of Income					
	Farming	**Labour (Ag.)**	**Labour (Non Ag.)**	**Paid employment**	**Self employment**	**Total**
Landless	196 (5.0)	2284 (57.9)	1069 (27.1)	89 (2.3)	309 (7.8)	3947 (100.0)
Marginal	638 (29.3)	747 (34.3)	454 (20.8)	137 (6.3)	202 (9.3)	2178 (100.0)
Small	392 (59.5)	12 (12.4)	71 (10.8)	79 (12.0)	35 (5.3)	659 (100.0)
Semi-Medium	328 (72.5)	25 (5.5)	25 (5.5)	57 (12.6)	17 (3.8)	452 (100.0)
Medium	213 (78.0)	9 (3.3)	8 (2.9)	38 (13.9)	5 (1.8)	273 (100.0)
Large	66 (68.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	25 (26.0)	5 (5.2)	96 (100.0)
Total	1833 (24.1)	3147 (41.4)	1627 (21.4)	425 (5.6)	573 (7.5)	7605 (100.0)

Table 4 A : Percentage Distribution of Households by Ownership of Homestead Land for Different Villages

Village (District)	Status of Ownership of Homestead Land			
	Landless	Homestead Land with Paper	Homestead Land without Paper	Total
D K Shikarpur (West Champaran)	9 (0.6)	796 (57.1)	590 (42.3)	1395 (100.0)
Maniyara (Gopalganj)	0 (0.0)	99 (51.3)	95 (48.7)	194 (100.0)
Selibeli (Madhubani)	1 (0.2)	405 (87.1)	59 (12.7)	465 (100.0)
Musahari (Muzaffarpur)	2 (0.1)	1036 (71.2)	416 (28.7)	1454 (100.0)
Murho (Madhepura)	2 (0.2)	753 (91.2)	71 (8.6)	826 (100.0)
Gandhigram (Katihar)	0 (0.0)	8 (2.7)	285 (97.3)	293 (100.0)
Rupaspur Khagha (Purnea)	2 (0.3)	610 (78.4)	164 (21.3)	776 (100.0)
Nurichak (Patna)	0 (0.0)	113 (63.5)	65 (36.5)	178 (100.0)
Damuha (Jehanabad)	3 (0.7)	406 (98.1)	6 (1.2)	415 (100.0)
Shekhwara (Gaya)	2 (0.6)	276 (83.1)	55 (16.3)	333 (100.0)
Bihta (Bhojpur)	4 (0.3)	1113 (95.5)	49 (4.2)	1166 (100.0)
Devri (Kaimur)	0 (0.0)	107 (97.3)	3 (2.7)	110 (100.0)
Total	25 (0.3)	5722 (75.2)	1858 (24.4)	7605 (100.0)

Table 4 B : Percentage Distribution of Households by Ownership of Homestead Land for Different Landholding Categories

Landholding Category	Status of Ownership of Homestead Land			
	Landless	**Homestead Land with Paper**	**Homestead Land without Paper**	**Total**
Landless	21 (0.5)	2546 (64.5)	1380 (35.0)	3947 (100.0)
Marginal	4 (0.2)	1851 (85.0)	323 (14.8)	2178 (100.0)
Small	0 (0.0)	576 (87.4)	83 (12.6)	659 (100.0)
Semi-Medium	0 (0.0)	416 (92.0)	36 (8.0)	452 (100.0)
Medium	0 (0.0)	240 (87.9)	33 (12.1)	273 (100.0)
Large	0 (0.0)	93 (96.9)	3 (3.1)	96 (100.0)
Total	25 (0.3)	5722 (75.2)	1858 (24.4)	7605 (100.0)

Table 5 : Average Amount of Owned Land (in acre) per Households for Different Landholding Categories and Different Villages

Village (District)	Landholding Category					
	Marginal	**Small**	**Semi-Medium**	**Medium**	**Large**	**Total**
D K Shikarpur (West Champaran)	0.42	1.32	3.05	5.86	26.23	2.32
Maniyara (Gopalganj)	0.19	1.23	2.59	—	—	0.34
Selibeli (Madhubani)	0.36	1.57	2.80	4.78	—	0.60
Musahari (Muzaffarpur)	0.33	1.47	3.00	5.92	25.38	1.18
Murho (Madhepura)	0.46	1.44	2.80	6.42	17.97	2.49
Gandhigram (Katihar)	0.70	1.69	2.63	5.93	13.62	2.12
Rupaspur Khagha (Purnea)	0.44	1.46	2.77	6.16	29.51	3.23
Nurichak (Patna)	0.39	1.52	2.71	2.73	—	1.11
Damuha (Jehanabad)	0.40	1.49	2.85	5.02	—	0.99
Shekhwara (Gaya)	0.72	1.60	2.61	5.26	25.91	1.66
Bihta (Bhojpur)	0.47	1.56	2.95	5.81	11.98	2.11
Devri (Kaimur)	0.69	1.63	3.24	6.83	15.13	3.26
Total	**0.43**	**1.51**	**2.88**	**5.99**	**22.01**	**1.91**

Table 6 A : Percentage Distribution of Households by Status of 'Leasing-in Land' for Different Villages

Village (District)	Status of Leasing-in		
	No Leasing-in	**Leasing-in**	**Total**
D K Shikarpur (West Champaran)	1330 (95.3)	65 (4.7)	1395 (100.0)
Maniyara (Gopalganj)	173 (89.2)	21 (10.8)	194 (100.0)
Selibeli (Madhubani)	356 (76.6)	109 (23.4)	465 (100.0)
Musahari (Muzaffarpur)	1212 (83.4)	242 (16.6)	1454 (100.0)
Murho (Madhepura)	578 (70.0)	248 (30.0)	826 (100.0)
Gandhigram (Katihar)	188 (64.2)	105 (35.8)	293 (100.0)
Rupaspur Khagha (Purnea)	671 (86.5)	105 (13.5)	776 (100.0)
Nurichak (Patna)	156 (87.6)	22 (12.4)	178 (100.0)
Damuha (Jehanabad)	333 (80.2)	82 (19.8)	415 (100.0)
Shekhwara (Gaya)	308 (92.5)	25 (7.5)	333 (100.0)
Bihta (Bhojpur)	985 (84.5)	181 (15.5)	1186 (100.0)
Devri (Kaimur)	99 (90.0)	11 (10.0)	110 (100.0)
Total	6389 (84.0)	1216 (16.0)	7605 (100.0)

Table 6 B : Percentage Distribution of Households by Status of 'Leasing-in Land' for Different Landholding Categories

Landholding Category	Status of Leasing-in		
	No Leasing-in	**Leasing-in**	**Total**
Landless	3448 (87.4)	499 (12.6)	3947 (100.0)
Marginal	1694 (77.8)	484 (22.2)	2178 (100.0)
Small	535 (81.2)	124 (18.8)	659 (100.0)
Semi-Medium	393 (86.9)	59 (13.1)	452 (100.0)
Medium	229 (83.9)	44 (16.1)	273 (100.0)
Large	90 (93.8)	6 (6.3)	96 (100.0)
Total	6389 (84.0)	1216 (16.0)	7605 (100.0)

Table 6 C : Average Amount of Leased-in Land (in acre) per Households for Different Landholding Categories and Different Villages

Village (District)	Landholding Category						
	Landless	**Marginal**	**Small**	**Semi-Medium**	**Medium**	**Large**	**Total**
D K Shikarpur (West Champaran)	0.92	0.63	0.72	1.59	—	68.18	4.26
Maniyara (Gopalganj)	0.53	0.33	—	0.74	—	—	0.44
Selibeli (Madhubani)	0.75	0.79	0.50	0.80	—	—	0.76
Musahari (Muzaffarpur)	0.51	0.85	1.02	1.59	0.91	—	0.65
Murho (Madhepura)	1.06	0.98	1.02	1.50	2.76	—	1.16
Gandhigram (Katihar)	1.60	1.80	2.09	3.86	2.82	0.83	1.94
Rupaspur Khagha (Purnea)	1.23	1.08	1.62	1.71	3.00	5.81	1.43
Nurichak (Patna)	1.33	1.74	2.21	1.66	5.41	—	2.06
Damuha (Jehanabad)	1.05	0.90	0.99	0.94	0.62	—	0.94
Shekhwara (Gaya)	0.37	0.76	1.00	1.27	—	—	0.93
Bihta (Bhojpur)	1.34	1.64	1.70	3.27	4.24	—	1.60
Devri (Kaimur)	1.23	0.92	1.23	0.62	—	1.00	0.93
Total	**0.97**	**1.04**	**1.33**	**1.78**	**2.96**	**35.36**	**1.32**

Table 7 A : Percentage Distribution of Households by Condition of Leased-in Land for Different Villages

Village (District)	Condition of leased-in				
	Fixed produce rent (qunt. / acre)	Cash	Share cropping	Bonded labour	Total
D K Shikarpur (West Champaran)	10 (16.1)	1 (1.6)	50 (80.6)	1 (1.6)	62 (100.0)
Maniyara (Gopalganj)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	20 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	20 (100.0)
Selibeli (Madhubani)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	118 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	118 (100.0)
Musahari (Muzaffarpur)	1 (0.4)	7 (2.7)	247 (98.9)	0 (0.0)	255 (100.0)
Murho (Madhepura)	15 (6.3)	1 (0.4)	222 (93.3)	0 (0.0)	238 (100.0)
Gandhigram (Katihar)	0 (0.0)	5 (4.7)	101 (95.3)	0 (0.0)	106 (100.0)
Rupaspur Khagha (Purnea)	10 (9.8)	7 (6.9)	85 (83.3)	0 (0.0)	102 (100.0)
Nurichak (Patna)	3 (13.6)	10 (45.5)	9 (40.9)	0 (0.0)	22 (100.0)
Damuha (Jehanabad)	0 (0.0)	5 (6.4)	73 (93.6)	0 (0.0)	78 (100.0)
Shekhwara (Gaya)	0 (0.0)	1 (4.5)	21 (95.5)	0 (0.0)	22 (100.0)
Bihta (Bhojpur)	136 (79.1)	2 (1.2)	31 (18.0)	3 (1.7)	172 (100.0)
Devri (Kaimur)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	13 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	13 (100.0)
Total	175 (14.5)	39 (3.2)	990 (82.1)	4 (0.3)	1208 (100.0)

Table 7 B : Percentage Distribution of Households by Condition of Leased-in Different Landholding Categories

Landholding Category	Condition of leased-in				
	Fixed produce rent (qunt. / acre)	**Cash**	**Share cropping**	**Bonded labour**	**Total**
Landless	113 (21.1)	14 (2.6)	405 (75.7)	3 (0.6)	535 (100.0)
Marginal	43 (11.3)	11 (2.9)	325 (85.5)	1 (0.3)	380 (100.0)
Small	6 (4.3)	3 (2.1)	131 (93.6)	0 (0.0)	140 (100.0)
Semi-Medium	2 (2.5)	5 (6.3)	72 (91.1)	0 (0.0)	79 (100.0)
Medium	6 (11.3)	3 (5.7)	44 (83.0)	0 (0.0)	53 (100.0)
Large	5 (23.8)	3 (14.3)	13 (61.9)	0 (0.0)	21 (100.0)
Total	175 (14.5)	39 (3.2)	990 (82.0)	4 (0.3)	1208 (100.0)

Table 8 A : Percentage Distribution of Households by Sale of Land in Different Villages

Village (District)	Status of Sale of land		
	No sale of land	Sale of land	Total
D K Shikarpur (West Champaran)	1378 (98.8)	17 (1.2)	1395 (100.0)
Maniyara (Gopalganj)	193 (99.5)	1 (0.5)	194 (100.0)
Selibeli (Madhubani)	444 (95.5)	21 (4.5)	465 (100.0)
Musahari (Muzaffarpur)	1423 (97.9)	31 (2.1)	1454 (100.0)
Murho (Madhepura)	780 (94.4)	46 (5.6)	826 (100.0)
Gandhigram (Katihar)	293 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	293 (100.0)
Rupaspur Khagha (Purnea)	762 (98.2)	14 (1.8)	776 (100.0)
Nurichak (Patna)	178 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	178 (100.0)
Damuha (Jehanabad)	400 (96.4)	15 (3.6)	415 (100.0)
Shekhwara (Gaya)	325 (97.6)	8 (2.4)	333 (100.0)
Bihta (Bhojpur)	1134 (97.3)	32 (2.7)	1166 (100.0)
Devri (Kaimur)	109 (99.1)	1 (0.9)	110 (100.0)
Total	**7419 (97.6)**	**186 (2.4)**	**7605 (100.0)**

Table 8 B : Percentage Distribution of Households by Sale of Land in Different Landholding Categories

Landholding Category	Status of Sale of land		
	No sale of land	**Sale of land**	**Total**
Landless	3872 (98.1)	75 (1.9)	3947 (100.0)
Marginal	2123 (97.5)	55 (2.5)	2178 (100.0)
Small	631 (95.8)	28 (4.2)	659 (100.0)
Semi-Medium	443 (98.0)	9 (2.0)	452 (100.0)
Medium	261 (95.6)	12 (4.4)	273 (100.0)
Large	89 (92.7)	7 (7.3)	96 (100.0)
Total	7419 (97.6)	186 (2.4)	7605 (100.0)

Table 8 C : Average Amount of Land Sold (in acre) per Households for Different Landholding Categories and for Different Villages

Village (District)	Landholding Category						
	Landless	Marginal	Small	Semi-Medium	Medium	Large	Total
D K Shikarpur (West Champaran)	.0313	.0567	.0395	.13	.003	.057	.054
Maniyara (Gopalganj)	—	—	.037	—	—	—	.037
Selibeli (Madhubani)	.016	.069	.006	.137	—	—	.055
Musahari (Muzaffarpur)	.09	.044	.015	.018	.027	—	.057
Murho (Madhepura)	.206	.134	.214	.192	.084	.35	.187
Gandhigram (Katihar)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rupaspur Khagha (Purnea)	—	.018	.087	2.1	.5	.7	.607
Nurichak (Patna)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Damuha (Jehanabad)	.026	.024	.009	—	—	—	.024
Shekhwara (Gaya)	.189	.061	.018	.015	—	—	.13
Bihta (Bhojpur)	.088	.048	.0112	—	—	—	.078
Devri (Kaimur)	—	—	—	—	.5	—	.5
Total	.106	.0676	.103	.516	.276	.417	.138

Table 9 A : Percentage Distribution of Households by Mortgage of Land for Different Villages

Village (District)	Status of mortgaged of land		
	No mortgage of land	Mortgage of land	Total
D K Shikarpur (West Champaran)	1277 (91.5)	118 (8.5)	1395 (100.0)
Maniyara (Gopalganj)	179 (92.3)	15 (7.7)	194 (100.0)
Selibeli (Madhubani)	445 (95.7)	20 (4.3)	465 (100.0)
Musahari (Muzaffarpur)	1356 (93.3)	98 (6.7)	1454 (100.0)
Murho (Madhepura)	790 (95.6)	36 (4.4)	826 (100.0)
Gandhigram (Katihar)	287 (98.0)	6 (2.0)	293 (100.0)
Rupaspur Khagha (Purnea)	710 (91.5)	66 (8.5)	776 (100.0)
Nurichak (Patna)	174 (97.8)	4 (2.2)	178 (100.0)
Damuha (Jehanabad)	380 (91.6)	35 (8.4)	415 (100.0)
Shekhwara (Gaya)	302 (90.7)	31 (9.3)	333 (100.0)
Bihta (Bhojpur)	1139 (97.7)	27 (2.3)	1166 (100.0)
Devri (Kaimur)	99 (90.0)	11 (10.0)	110 (100.0)
Total	7138 (93.9)	467 (6.1)	7605 (100.0)

Table 9 B : Percentage Distribution of Households by Mortgage of Land in Different Landholding Categories

Landholding Category	Status of mortgage of land		
	No mortgage of land	**Mortgage of land**	**Total**
Landless	3824 (96.9)	123 (3.1)	3947 (100.0)
Marginal	1978 (90.8)	200 (9.2)	2178 (100.0)
Small	583 (88.5)	76 (11.5)	659 (100.0)
Semi-Medium	406 (89.8)	46 (10.2)	452 (100.0)
Medium	260 (95.2)	13 (4.8)	273 (100.0)
Large	87 (90.6)	9 (9.4)	96 (100.0)
Total	7138 (93.9)	467 (6.1)	7605 (100.0)

Table 9 C : Average Amount of Mortgaged Land (in acre) per Households for Different Landholding Categories and Different Villages

Village (District)	Landholding Category						
	Landless	**Marginal**	**Small**	**Semi-Medium**	**Medium**	**Large**	**Total**
D K Shikarpur (West Champaran)	.787	.397	.684	.991	.58	1.49	.549
Maniyara (Gopalganj)	.156	.15	—	.266	—	—	.175
Selibeli (Madhubani)	.331	.354	—	—	.065	—	.317
Musahari (Muzaffarpur)	.71	.677	.426	.487	.553	—	.613
Murho (Madhepura)	.715	.446	.408	—	—	1.35	.645
Gandhigram (Katihar)	.693	2.02	—	1.16	—	—	1.21
Rupaspur Khagha (Purnea)	1.29	.535	.965	1.28	1.99	2.22	1.08
Nurichak (Patna)	—	.25	.29	1.08	—	—	.675
Damuha (Jehanabad)	.223	.253	.31	—	—	—	.243
Shekhwara (Gaya)	.69	.86	.332	.685	—	—	.649
Bihta (Bhojpur)	1.46	.722	1.62	—	—	—	1.11
Devri (Kaimur)	—	1.22	.32	.62	1.50	—	1.03
Total	**.711**	**.504**	**.614**	**.932**	**1.18**	**1.67**	**.659**

Table 10 A : Percentage Distribution of Households by Loan Amount for Different Villages

Village (District)	Status of loan		
	No loan taken	Taken loan	Total
D K Shikarpur (West Champaran)	676 (48.5)	719 (51.5)	1394 (100.0)
Maniyara (Gopalganj)	93 (47.9)	101 (52.1)	194 (100.0)
Selibeli (Madhubani)	195 (41.9)	270 (58.1)	465 (100.0)
Musahari (Muzaffarpur)	823 (56.6)	631 (43.4)	1454 (100.0)
Murho (Madhepura)	289 (35.0)	537 (65.0)	826 (100.0)
Gandhigram (Katihar)	163 (55.6)	130 (44.4)	293 (100.0)
Rupaspur Khagha (Purnea)	469 (60.4)	307 (39.6)	776 (100.0)
Nurichak (Patna)	94 (52.8)	84 (47.2)	178 (100.0)
Damuha (Jehanabad)	294 (70.8)	121 (29.2)	415 (100.0)
Shekhwara (Gaya)	243 (73.0)	90 (27.0)	333 (100.0)
Bihta (Bhojpur)	833 (71.4)	333 (28.6)	1166 (100.0)
Devri (Kaimur)	90 (81.8)	20 (18.2)	110 (100.0)
Total	4262 (56.0)	3343 (44.0)	7605 (100.0)

Table 10 B : Percentage Distribution of Households by Loan Amount for Different Landholding Categories

Landholding Category	Status of loan		
	No loan taken	**Taken loan**	**Total**
Landless	2202 (55.8)	1745 (44.2)	3947 (100.0)
Marginal	1275 (58.5)	903 (41.5)	2178 (100.0)
Small	362 (54.9)	297 (45.1)	659 (100.0)
Semi-Medium	250 (55.3)	202 (44.7)	452 (100.0)
Medium	119 (43.6)	154 (56.4)	273 (100.0)
Large	54 (56.3)	42 (43.8)	96 (100.0)
Total	4262 (56.0)	3343 (44.0)	7605 (100.0)

Table 10 C : Average Amount of Loan (in Rs. hundred) per Households for Different Landholding Categories and Different Villages

Village (District)	Landholding Category						
	Landless	**Marginal**	**Small**	**Semi-Medium**	**Medium**	**Large**	**Total**
D K Shikarpur (West Champaran)	129.17	188.04	253.24	296.28	1133.33	1380.00	185.79
Maniyara (Gopalganj)	93.25	100.21	160.43	55.00	124.29	0.00	111.36
Selibeli (Madhubani)	199.01	215.44	169.58	185.00	193.08	0.00	201.74
Musahari (Muzaffarpur)	165.41	125.11	190.00	163.19	115.10	161.43	152.32
Murho (Madhepura)	160.57	175.55	228.46	153.91	136.81	188.00	169.60
Gandhigram (Katihar)	108.72	304.40	113.39	201.90	77.27	0.00	184.40
Rupaspur Khagha (Purnea)	101.31	173.44	229.11	206.40	859.44	561.67	188.49
Nurichak (Patna)	80.15	140.36	526.67	105.00	566.67	0.00	121.95
Damuha (Jehanabad)	152.33	120.30	96.11	95.00	100.00	0.00	127.25
Shekhwara (Gaya)	247.00	259.61	66.67	132.00	100.00	0.00	235.49
Bihta (Bhojpur)	256.36	791.41	566.82	154.13	245.00	357.50	384.07
Devri (Kaimur)	203.25	60.63	87.86	10.00	0.00	0.00	96.15
Total	**159.96**	**221.77**	**207.09**	**186.94**	**284.79**	**536.90**	**192.96**

Table 11 A : Percentage Distribution of Households by Loan Amount for Different Villages

Village (District)	Condition of loan					
	Interest upto 12%	**Interest 13-24%**	**Interest 25-48%**	**Interest 49-96%**	**Interest above 97%**	**Total**
D K Shikarpur (West Champaran)	102 (14.4)	6 (0.8)	17 (2.4)	515 (72.8)	67 (9.5)	707 (100.0)
Maniyara (Gopalganj)	7 (7.3)	3 (3.1)	4 (4.2)	78 (81.3)	4 (4.2)	96 (100.0)
Selibeli (Madhubani)	25 (9.5)	0 (0.0)	56 (21.3)	182 (69.2)	0 (0.0)	263 (100.0)
Musahari (Muzaffarpur)	110 (17.7)	12 (1.9)	7 (1.1)	358 (57.6)	135 (21.7)	622 (100.0)
Murho (Madhepura)	46 (8.6)	1 (0.2)	15 (2.8)	434 (81.6)	36 (6.8)	532 (100.0)
Gandhigram (Katihar)	25 (19.4)	1 (0.8)	2 (1.6)	77 (59.7)	24 (18.6)	129 (100.0)
Rupaspur Khagha (Purnea)	61 (20.0)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)	166 (54.4)	76 (24.9)	305 (100.0)
Nurichak (Patna)	3 (3.9)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.3)	52 (67.5)	21 (27.3)	77 (100.0)
Damuha (Jehanabad)	8 (6.6)	0 (0.0)	5 (4.1)	105 (86.8)	3 (2.5)	121 (100.0)
Shekhwara (Gaya)	37 (44.0)	1 (1.2)	3 (3.6)	36 (42.9)	7 (8.3)	84 (100.0)
Bihta (Bhojpur)	124 (38.5)	0 (0.0)	38 (11.8)	160 (49.7)	0 (0.0)	322 (100.0)
Devri (Kaimur)	2 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	10 (50.0)	8 (40.0)	20 (100.0)
Total	550 (16.8)	25 (0.8)	149 (4.5)	2172 (66.3)	381 (11.6)	3277 (100.0)

Table 11 B : Percentage Distribution of Households by Condition of Loan for Different Landholding Categories

Landholding Category	Condition of loan					
	Interest upto 12%	**Interest 13-24%**	**Interest 25-48%**	**Interest 49-96%**	**Interest above 97%**	**Total**
Landless	245 (14.3)	10 (0.6)	64 (3.8)	1193 (70.0)	193 (11.3)	1705 (100.0)
Marginal	138 (15.6)	8 (0.9)	56 (6.3)	593 (67.0)	90 (10.2)	885 (100.0)
Small	49 (16.6)	5 (1.7)	15 (5.1)	179 (60.7)	47 (15.9)	295 (100.0)
Semi-Medium	64 (32.3)	0 (0.0)	9 (4.5)	103 (52.0)	22 (11.1)	198 (100.0)
Medium	38 (25.0)	1 (0.7)	3 (2.0)	83 (54.6)	27 (17.8)	152 (100.0)
Large	16 (38.1)	1 (2.4)	2 (4.8)	21 (50.0)	2 (4.8)	42 (100.0)
Total	550 (16.8)	25 (0.8)	149 (4.5)	2172 (66.3)	381 (11.6)	3277 (100.0)

Appendix V

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Purnea District (Bihar)

No.	Date	Place	**Assailants**	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1971 Nov. 22	Chandwa-Rupaspur	Rajput landlords	Adivasi Sharecroppers (14)
2.	1998 Dec. 14	Nikhraul	Landlord gang of Muslims	Scheduled Tribes (7) 100 houses burnt

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Nalanda District (Bihar)

No.	Date	Place	**Assailants**	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1975 Oct. 2	Dergartha	Brahmin Kurmi landlord-criminal gang	Dalit labourers Dalit agricultural labourers (24)
2.	1978 Dec. 9	Kalia	Kurmi	Dalit labourers
3.	1994 Sep 17	Brahampura	CPI(ML)	Kurmi (7)
4.	2000 April 16	Panki (Silaw)	Bhumihar	Chamar(SC) (2) & 4 injured
5.	2000 May 21	Tetrawan (Manpur)	Gang	Yadavs (5)
6.	2000 June 1	Palni	Gang	SC (2)

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Patna District (Bihar)

No.	Date	Place	Assailants	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1977 May 27 (day: 11-5)	Belchi	Kurmi landlord-criminal gangs	Dalit agricultural Labourers and Sharecroppers (14)
2.	1980 Feb. 25 (night)	Pipra-Kalyanchak	Kisan Suraksha Samiti (Kurmis)	Dalit ('Naxals') (14)
3.	1986	Jeenpura	Ramanand Yadav group/ Lorik Sena	Scheduled caste/ Agricultural labourers (6)
4.	1990	Dariyapur	Kisan Sangh (Yadav, Bhumihar, Kurmi)	Scheduled caste/ Agricultural labourers (5)
5.	1990 Nov. 6	Deghama	PU	Yadavs (5)
6.	1991 Feb. 19	Tiskhora	Kisan Sangh (Yadav, Bhumihar, Kurmi)	Dalits (14)
7.	1991 Sept. 23	Karkatbigha	Kisan Sangh (Yadav, Bhumihar, Kurmi)	Dalit (4)
8.	1993 March 2	Harnathchak	PU	Kishan Sangh mainly Yadavs (5)
9.	1997 Jan	Raghopur	PU	Upper caste (9)
10.	1997 Feb. 1	Jalpura	Party Unity	Bhumihar land-Owners (4) & Police (1)
11.	1997 March 23	Haibaspur	Ranbeer Sena of Bhumihar	Musahar Labourers (10)
12.	1997 Apr. 20/21	Raghopur	Party Unity	Bhumihar Landowners (6)
13.	1997 Apr. 22/23	Indo (PS Sigori)	Police	Party Unity Members (5)
14.	1997 Sep. 27	Mirapur (Mashaurhi)	PU	Yadav (2)
15.	1997 Dec. 20/25	Ankoori	PU	Ranbeer Sena of Bhumihar (5)
16.	1999 June 2	Chakiya (Masaurhi)	PU	Police (CRPF) (9) & Police driver (1)
17.	2000 Jan. 4	Chandhosh (Paligary)	MCC	PWG Supporters (1)
18.	2000 March 31	Akdanga in Belehi PS.	(Paswan) (SC)	Mallah (1) OBC

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Rohtas District (Bihar)

No.	Date	Place	Assailants	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1978	Bishrampur	Kurmi	Dalit labourers
2.	1979	Samhauta	Rajput Landlords	Scheduled caste/ Agricultural albourers (4)
3.	1984	Gagan Bigha	Rajput Landlords	Scheduled caste/ Agricultural labourers (5)
4.	1986	Parasdiha		Mostly backwards (17)
5.	1989	Tijorpur		Upper caste (6)
6.	1990	Kesari		Dalits (10)
7.	1992	Chainpur	Police	PU caders (4)
8.	1993	Dabar	Police	Liberation caders (3)
9.	1994	Aghoura	Police	Party Unity (4)
10.	1999 Dec. 30	Tara Nagar	PWG	Persons (1)
11.	2000 April 1	Panchkhori in Baghela	Ranveer Sena	SC (4)

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Begusarai District (Bihar)

No.	Date	Place	**Assailants**	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1978 Nov. 15	Bajitpur	Bhumihar	Dalit labourers
2.	1991 Feb 3	Vishnupur	Police	Dalit (7)

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Jehanabad District (Bihar)

No.	Date	Place	Assailants	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1980 Feb. 6 (night)	Parasbigha	Bhumihars	Yadavs (8)
2.	1981	Paras bigha	Bhumihar	Dalit (11)
3.	1986	Aminabad	Bhumihar Brahamarshi Sena	Muslims/ Beedi workers (3)
4.	1986, April 19	Arwal	Police	MKSS caders (24)
5.	1986 May 21	Daulatpur	Mkss / PU	Bhumihars (5)
6.	1986 July 8	Kansara	Sabarana Liberation front of Bhumihar	PU activists, Kahar (BC) (11)
7.	1988 June 16	Nonhi-Nagama	Lorik Sena of yadavs support by PU	CP (ML) activists killed mainly dalit (18)
8.	1988 Aug. 11	Damuhan-Khagri	Lorik Sena (Yadavs) supported by PU	CP (ML) activists (11) Dalits
9.	1988, May 13	Golakpur	Sabarna Liberation front of Bhumihar	PU activists (4)
10.	1988, July 9	Aligari	Sabarna Liberation front of Bhumihar	PU activists (3)
11.	1988, Nov 22	Narhi	Sabarna Liberation front of Bhumihar	Scheduled caste (4)
12.	1988	Kodaria		Dalit (7)
13.	1989, Jan 1	Malibigha	Lorik Sena of Yadav	Scheduled castes (5)
14.	1989 June 7	Khidpura	PU	CPI (ML) activists (5)
15.	1990, March 26	Lakhawar	Lorik Sena of Yadav	Dalits (5)
16.	1991 Jan 26	Golakpur	Sabarna Liberation front of Bhumihar	Dalit (4)
17.	1991, Sep 21	Sawanbigha	Sabarna Liberation front of Bhumihar	PU supporters, Dalits (7)
18.	1991, October	Menbersingha	Sabarna Liberation front of Bhumihar	Dalits (9)
19.	1991 Dec. 22	Rampur Chai	Sabarna Liberation front of Bhumihar	Dalit (2)
20.	1994 July 22	Amarpura	PU	(5)

21.	1995 April 26	Aira (Karpi)	PU	Barat Party (5)
22.	1997 Sep. 2	Kharasin	MCC	PU supporters (8)
23.	1997 Nov. 22	Kateshar	MCC	PU supporters (6)
24.	1997 Dec. 1/2	Laxmanpur-Bathe	Ranbeer Sena of Bhumihar	Dalit labourers and Sharecroppers (61)
25.	1998 Jan 10	Rampur Chauram	CPI (ML) Liberation	Upper Caste/Landlords (Bhumihar) (9)
26.	1998	Kherasingh		Dalits (9)
27.	1998 June 2	Mahadeo Bigha	Police (CRPF)	MCC Caders (9)
28.	1998 July 26	Rampur Aiyara	Ranbeer Sena of Bhumihar	Scheduled/Caste/Agricultural Labourers (3)
29.	1998 Nov. 9	Rampur-Aiyara	PWG	PW supporters, Bhumihar (7)
30.	1999 Jan 25	Shankargibha	Ranbeer Sena of Bhumihar	Scheduled Caste/ Agricultural Landlords (23)
31.	1999 Jan 27	Khaira	PWG	Upper caste (2)
32.	1999 Feb 10	Narayanpur	Ranbeer Sena of Bhumihar	Schduled Caste/ Agricultural Landlords (12)
33.	1999 Feb 14	Usri Bazar	CP (ML)	Upper Caste Landlords Bhumihar (4)+(3) Schedule caste
34.	1999 March 3	Bheempura	PWG	Upper Caste Landlords Bhumihar (4)
35.	1999 March 18	Senari	MCC	Upper Caste Landlords Bhumihar (35)
36.	2000 March 3	Kaiknawan	Police	PWG Activists (13)
37.	2000 May 18	Telpa Kaspi	PWG	Persons (2)

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Aurangabad District (Bihar)

No.	Date	Place	**Assailants**	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1982 June 1	Mainibigha	Rajput	Labourers and Sharecroppers (6)
2.	1984	Ambari	Upper caste/ Landlords (Rajput)	Scheduled caste/ Agricultural labourers (3)
3.	1984	Kharakpura	Upper caste (Rajput)	Scheduled caste/ Agricultural labourers (6)
4.	1985 Jan. 1	Kaithi bigha	Landlord-Police	Scheduled caste (11)
5.	1985 Oct. 6	Kachpa	V.D. Singh gang (Rajput)	Scheduled caste (4)
6.	1986	Gaini	Upper caste/ Landlords (Rajput)	Scheduled caste/ Agricultural labourers (12)
7.	1986 Nov. 20	Parasdih	Upper caste/ Satyendra Sena (Rajput)	Scheduled caste/ Agricultural labourers MCC suporter (5)
8.	1986 Dec. 7	Darmia	MCC	Upper caste/ Landlords (Rajput) (11)
9.	1987 Apr. 19	Chhechani	Satyendra Sena (Rajput)	Yadav (7)
10.	1987 May 29	Dalelchak- Baghaura	MCC (mainly Yadavs)	Rajputs (56)
11.	1987 Sep. 26	Koiria-Chatar	Landlords (Yadavs)	PU supporters mainly SC labourers (6)
12.	1992 Jan 5	Main Begha	MCC	(6)
13.	1995	Gulzarbigha	Police	PU caders (4)
14.	1996 Jan 22	Mathanibigha	Police	MCC caders (7)
15.	1999 Sep. 10	Obra	MCC	CPI (ML)
16.	2000 June 17	Mianpur	Ranbir Sena	Yadav (26), Paswan (6), Carpenter (2)

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Gaya District (Bihar)

No.	Date	Place	**Assailants**	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1982 Aug. 18	Tarari	Landlord	Labourers and Sharecroppers (5)
2.	1983	Panania	Police	MCC caders (5)
3.	1986	Neelampur	Haare Ram group/ Lorik Sena (Yadav)	Scheduled caste/ Agricultural labourers (5)
4.	1989 March	Sidhugadh	Devnandan Yadava Gang	Lower caste labourers (5)
5.	1989 April 11	Bardad	Police	MCC activists (11)
6.	1990 April 3	Kumi	MCC	(5)
7.	1991 March 9	Pakarideh	MCC	Muslims of Sunlight Sena (5)
8.	1991 April 11	Belaganj	JD Suporter	Dalit (3)
9.	1991 Sep 30 (night)	Tin Diha	Sunlight Sena (Rajput)	MCC activists (7)
10.	1991 Dec. 23 (night)	Mein-Barasimha	Sunlight Sena (Rajput)	Dalits (10)
11.	1992	Ashabigha	Police	MCC caders (6)
12.	1992 Feb. 12	Bara	MCC	Bhumihar land-owners and peasants (39)
13.	1992 April 6	Mahuat	Police	MCC activists (6)
14.	1992 Sep 21	Minatand Bigha (Singha Pokhar)	MCC	Yadavs (5)
15.	1994 April 12	Matgharha	Police	MCC (11)
16.	1996 Jan 20	Tekari	MCC	Police (7)
17.	1998 Jan 22	Sanda	MCC	Bhumihars (2)
18.	1998	Sigori	Police	MCC (6)
19.	1998 Sep. 17	Pretsila Pahar	MCC	Killed Police Personnel (2) and looted 16 rifals
20.	1999 April 24	Sandani	Bhumihar	Backward Caste & Scheduled Caste (12)

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Palamu District (now Jharkhand)

No.	Date	Place	Assailants	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1989 Nov 22	Banudih	PU	Sunlight Sena (6)
2.	1991 May 17	Bharatpur	Sunlight Sena	MCC activists (6)
3.	1991 June 4	Malwaria	Sunlight Sena (Rajput)	Dalit (11)
4.	1992 April 4	Kita	PU	Rajput Landlord (8)
5.	1992 Oct 10	Samharia	PU	Sunlight Sena (5)
6.	1993 Dec 25	Pachrukhia	PU vs CPI(ML)	PU (2) and CPI(ML) (8)
7.	1994 Jan 8	KulKuhu Tola	MCC	(5)
8.	1994 April 29	Belhara	Sunlight Sena	JMP/ PU supporters (5)
9.	1997 March 28	Ladhup Senha	MCC	SJMM (5)
10.	1997 Aug 19/20	Parshan	MCC	(5)
11.	1997 Aug 22	Chapi	MCC	PU (13)
12.	1999 July 24	Baresandh	MCC	Homeguard – 4 Police – 1
13.	1999 Nov. 16	Loto	BJP Supporters	MCC Supporters (10)
14.	2000 May 7	Balumath	MCC	Persons (4)

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Bhojpur District (Bihar)

No.	Date	Place	**Assailants**	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1976	Akodhi	Upper backward/ Landlords	Scheduled caste/ Agricultural labourers (3)
2.	1977	Dharmpura	Mainly Rajputs	Dalits (4)
3.	1977	Brahmpur	Rajputs	Dalits (4)
4.	1979	Bajitpur	Upper caste/ Landlords	Scheduled caste/ Agricultural albourers (3)
5.	1981	Mathila	Police	Liberation caders (3)
6.	1984	Danwar-Bihta	Upper caste/ Landlords (Rajput)	Scheduled caste/ Agricultural labourers (22)
7.	1989 Nov 24	Danwar-Bihta	Naxaellite	Rajputs (5)
8.	1989 Nov 24	Danwar-Bihta	Jwala Singh Gang	CP)ML) activists mainly dalit (22)
9.	1991 Jan 23	Deosahiyara	Jwala Singh Gang	CP (ML) activists (14)
10.	1991 June 22	Deochand-Saharia	Kisan Sangh	Dalits (14)
11.	1993	Echri (Jagdishpur)	Naxellite CPI (ML)	Lower caste Koeri (5)
12.	1993 March 29	Atapur	CPI (ML)	Rajputs (5)
13.	1993, Sep	Ekbari	Naxellite CPI (ML)	Landlords (Bhumihar) (4)
14.	1993	Ekwari	Upper caste/ Landlords (Bhumihar)	Scheduled caste/ Agricultural labourers (4)
15.	1994, Mar 17	Narhi	Police	CP (ML) activists (7)
16.	1995 April 4	Khopira	Upper caste/ Landlords (Bhumihar)	Scheduled caste/ Agricultural labourers (3)
17.	1995 July 25	Sarathua	Ranbeer Sena (Bhumihars)	CP (ML) activists mainly dalit
18.	1995, Aug 5	Noorpur (Barhara)	By Gang Sena mainly Bhumihar	Fishermen (6) of Malha caste
19.	1996, Feb 7	Karnaul Chandi (Charpokhri)	Ranbir Sena (Bhumihar)	CP (ML) activists (4)
20.	1996 Feb 7	Chandi	Bhumihar landlords	Scheduled caste/ Agricultural lab. (4)

21.	1996, March 5	Patalpura Chauri	Ranveer Sena (Bhumihar)	CP (ML) activists (3)
22.	1996, April 6	Nonaur	Ranbeer Sena of Bhumihar	CPI(ML) Liberation (5)
23.	1996 April 22	Nonaur	Ranbeer Sena (Bhumihars)	Attack a Barat CP (ML) activists (5)
24.	1996 May 5	Narhi	Ranbeer Sena of Bhumihar	CP (ML) activists (4)
25.	1996 May 22	Narhi	Ranbeer Sena of Bhumihar	CP (ML) activists (4)
26.	1996, May 25	Morath udmant nagar	Ranveen Sena (Bhumihar)	CP (ML) activists (Mushahar) (3)
27.	1996 July 10	Balhari Tola	Ranbeer Sena of Bhumihar	11 (women) + 9 (children) of dalit caste
28.	1996 July 11	Bathani tola	Ranbeer Sena (Bhumihars/ Rajputs)	Dalits (15) Muslims (6)
29.	1996, Nov 25	Purkhara	Ranveer Sena (Bhumihar)	CP (ML) activists (4)
30.	1996 Nov. 25	Purhara Chauri	Ranbeer Sena of Bhumihar	CP (ML) activists (4)
31.	1996 Dec. 12	Khanet	Ranbeer Sena (Bhumihars, Rajputs)	Dalit labourers Mushars (5)
32.	1996 Dec. 24	Ekwari	Ranbeer Sena of Bhumihar	CP (ML) activists (6)
33.	1997, Jan 10	Bagan	Ranbeer Sena of Bhumihar	CP (ML) activists (3)
34.	1997 March 24	Nadhi	Ranbeer Sena of Bhumihar	Backward Caste workers (2)
35.	1997 April 1	Ekwari	Ranbeer Sena of Bhumihar	Dalit women (4)
36.	1997 Apr. 10	Ekwari	Ranbeer Sena of Bhumihar	Dalit and back-ward Caste labourers (10)
37.	1998, May 11	Nagri	Ranbeer Sena of Bhumihar	Scheduled/Caste Agri. Labourers (10)
38.	1998, May 30	Sonbarsa	PU	Ranbeer Sena, Bhumihars (3)
39.	1998, July 8	Kurnuri	**Ranbeer Sena**	Lib supporters (2)
40.	2000 March 27	Haripur Charpokhri	**Ranveer Sena**	CPI-ML (3)

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Buxar District (Bihar)

No.	Date	Place	**Assailants**	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1999	Sujathpur	Police	Liberation Caders (16)
2.	2000 April 14	Jadpura	Police	Suraj Rajhor Gang

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Siwan District (Bihar)

No.	Date	Place	Assailants	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1993 Dec 22	Jiradei	Shahabuddin supporter	Dalit (4)
2.	1995 July 6	Karmoul Babhan Toli	Bhumihar	Dalit (6)
3.	1996 Sep 14	Bhavrajpur	Shahabuddin supporter	CPI (ML) activists (3)
4.	1996 Dec. 11	Maniya	Shahabuddin supporter	5
5.	1999 Aug 4	Marwan Bazar	Satish Pandey & Suresh Choudhary gang	CPI (ML) activists (4)
6.	2000 Feb. 18	Darauli	Samta Party supporter	CPI-ML (2)
7.	2000 March 24	Darauli (Bhanauti)	Satish Pandey Gang (Bhumihar)	CPI-ML (2)

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Hazaribagh District (now Jharkhand)

No.	Date	Place	Assailants	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1995 Jan 15	Bandu	MCC	Persons(6)+(1)Police
2.	1995 April 21-22	Salga (Keraderi Block)	MCC	Gram Raksha Bahini (5) villages
3.	1996 Dec. 18	Gondalitand	MCC	CPI(ML) activists (6)
4.	1999 Dec. 23	Jharpo hat	MCC	ST (6)

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Bhabhua District (Bihar)

No.	Date	Place	Assailants	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1994 Jan 13	Bargaon	Police	CPI (ML) activists (5)
2.	1998 Sep. 9	Chor Lohra	PWG	Villagers (9)

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Chatra District (now Jharkhand)

No.	Date	Place	Assailants	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1997 Sep. 6	Amkodar	MCC	CPI(ML) activists (10)
2.	1999 April 24	Malay	MCC	Police Personal (3)
3.	1999 Dec. 23	Kanda Pratapur	MCC	Killed BMP (6) and 7 insured
4.	2000 May 19	Chatra	MCC	Robbers (2)

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Giridih District (now Jharkhand)

No.	Date	Place	**Assailants**	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1991 April 13	Khukhara	**MCC**	Sunlight Sena (6)
2.	1995 Aug. 8	Bendunga	**MCC**	Persons (5)
3.	1998 July 7	Atka (Bagadar)	**MCC**	Persons (10)

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Banka District (Bihar)

No.	Date	Place	Assailants	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1993 March 9	Amjhera	Shantipal Group	Persons (7)

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Gopalganj District (Bihar)

No.	Date	Place	Assailants	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1993 June 30	Chainpur	Villagers Landlords	CPI(ML) activists (5)

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Garhwa District (now Jharkhand)

No.	Date	Place	Assailants	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1994 Dec. 27-28	Bhagidih	Sunlight Sena	SC (8)
2.	1997 July 9-10	Kundi Op	PU	Police (4)+(1) persons

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Koderma District (now Jharkhand)

No.	Date	Place	Assailants	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	1997 May 12	Noori Pahari	MCC	Villagers (10)

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Lohardaga District (now Jharkhand)

No.	Date	Place	Assailants	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	2000 Feb. 1	Manik	MCC	CPI-ML (2)

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Bhagalpur District (Bihar)

No.	Date	Place	Assailants	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	2000 March 8	Phulkiya Diyara	Rash Bihari and Naga Mandal Gang	Fisher (7)
2.	2000 May 2000	Kishampur Diyara	Dina Nath Gang	Rash Behari Mandal Galg (4)

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Nawada District (Bihar)

No.	Date	Place	Assailants	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	2000 May 21	Kamakal (Vachamba)	MCC	Person (1)
2.	2000 June 5	Rajo Begha	Bhumihar (Akhilesh Singh Gang)	Yadavs (5)
3.	2000 June 12	Afsar	Gang (Yadavs)	Bhumihar (12)

An Illustrative Catalogue of Massacres in Lakhisarai District (Bihar)

No.	Date	Place	Assailants	Class/Caste/ Community of the Victims
1.	2000 May 11	Hasanpur	Yadavs (Gang)	Labourers (SC & OBC) (15)

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