Chapter-II

KISAN STRUGGLES IN INDIA
Cultivation has been in existence in India from ancient times – since Indus valley civilisation, it is the belief of the people that it is a part of their cultural pride. At present, they adopt agriculture not because it is profitable but because they have no other alternative and they can feed themselves at least for a few months from the yield they are getting.¹

Economic experts (pandits) also agree that the kisan goes for cultivation knowing fully well that he has to suffer losses. This fact is also stated and agreed upon in the “Statutory Report on Agricultural Credit” by the Reserve Bank of India. If anybody wants profit in his business, the cost of the manufacturing material (goods) should be cheaper. The system of exploiting their labour also is an extra burden for the farmers.²

The process of proletarianisation of agricultural labourers has increased during the last few decades and they are more dependent on wage labour while losing the extra-economic relations with their employers which govern the conditions of their work and life. Barrington Moore Jr. in his celebrated work Social Origins Dictatorship and Democracy; Lord and peasant in the making of the modern world questions the revolutionary potential of the Indian peasantry. He observes that the landed upper classes and the peasants played an important role in the bourgeois revolutions leading to capitalist societies in England and France, the abortive bourgeois revolutions leading to fascism in the Germany and Italy and the peasant revolutions, leading to communism in Russia and China. But peasant rebellions in pre-modern India were relatively rare and completely ineffective and where modernisation impoverished the peasants at least as

much as in China and over as long a period of time. The Indian peasant to Moore, is traditionally docile and passive.³

British Colonial rule and plundering the labour of the farmers are the chief reasons for the farmers’ movement in India. The methods the British adopted towards the farmers turned their lives most miserable. The British introduced the permanent land Revenue system in the beginning in Bengal and Bihar later it was extended to all the regions. This system was upgraded the position of zamindars and tax collectors into land lords and degraded the position of farmers into tenant. Farmers lost many of their rights owing to this system. The Raitwari system introduced in Bombay & Madras Presidencies also had its defects and subjected the farmers to a number of untold sufferings. As per this system, the land tax was high and the farmers were forced to pay it off even when there was most unexpected natural catastrophies. In this system only one zamindar was placed instead of many zamindars and it made him (the Government) the foe of the farmers.⁴

The defects in the Revenue or Tax collecting system pushed the farmers into object poverty. He is forced to borrow money from money lenders at high interest. As there was no other sources of income, often he sold the land to the same money lender since he could not repay the amount taken. Thus the lands which do not have any protection, went into the grip of the money lenders. The social status of the farmers got down one step and as a result of this a vast majority of such farmers turned into tenants and finally became labourers. It is not inappropriate to mention that the British

government also sided the money lenders who never bothered to think of the welfare of
the farmers.\textsuperscript{5}

We may or may not call the British regime anarchic, but it was undoubtedly a
period of most unfortunate times. The hardships faced by our formers were narrated by
many historians from the west. The contractor of the tax-collection dreampt of his
becoming a rich man, but never thought the poor farmers welfare nor loses they suffer
from. It was immaterial for him whether the farmer lived or died. The beginning of the
19\textsuperscript{th} century witnessed the extremes of the farmers poverty which drove them to leave
their homes and villages. The cause of this exodus took place because of the zamindars
who acted as the agents of the British officials the atrocities to which the farmers were
subjected to can be seen in the “Fifth report circuit committee” which was later
abbreviated to 36 charges and progenated by the Prakasam committee.\textsuperscript{6}

PEASANT STRUGGLES

In the second half of the nineteenth century, there was a beginning of a new kind
of peasant struggle in India. The peasants rose in struggles against enhancement of rent,
evictions and exactions of landlords who were often moneylenders. Apparently, the
peasants wanted to loosen the bonds of feudal exploitation. Particularly conscious of
feudal exploitation where the rich peasants had developed a distinct category in both
zamindary and ryotwari areas. What is sometimes overlooked is that commercial
agriculture had been extended in some regions and the rich peasant often linked with
merchant and money-lending capital. The peasant movements in mid-nineteenth century

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., pp.247, 248.
were intermittent and remained confined to a few regions. What is remarkable is that these movements were becoming secular, cutting across caste and communal barriers. In Chotanagpur the old communal system disintegrated towards the close of the nineteenth century. In Ranchi district, for instance, the Munda and Oraon chiefs were replaced by “Hindu farmers”, who were settled in the villages by the new non-tribal landlords. There was large-scale land alienation among the tribal peasants; their best land often passed into the hands of outsiders.7

**Tribal Rebellions**

The Santal rebellion of 1855-56, which spread to Birbhum, Bankura, Singbhum, Hazaribagh, Bhagalpur and Monghyr was mainly directed against the moneylenders, although the rent question also stirred the Santals. Sidu, the Santal leader, declared that the moneylenders committed “heramis (treachery), pap (sin) and all have acted unjustly.” As a contemporary newspaper noted, the “zamindar the police, the revenue and court amlas have exercised a combined system of extortions, oppressive exactions, forcible dispossession of property”. The Santal “saw bitsarops, his cattle, even himself and family appropriated for a debt which ten times repaid remained an incubus upon him still.”

On 30 June 1855, about 10,000 Santals met at Bhagnadihi and decided to address letters to the Officers, darogas and zamindars, in which they express, ‘their determination to fight the Bengali and bania money lenders, and to “take possession of the country and set up a government of their own.” Sidu and Kanhu, two brothers of a poor peasant

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family, claimed that they had received divine message and were accepted by the Santals as their leaders. One of the first casualties of the Santal rebellion was Mahesh Datta, who worked as a suzawal (Collector of rent) for twenty one years. As the revolt spread, a few moneylenders were killed and the Barhait market place, which was the residence of the moneylenders, was raided. Railway communications between Bhagalpur and Rajmahal were suspended. The Santals proceeded to Pakur in Murshidabad district; the house of Rahamdi Mandal, a Muslim land-owner, was burnt, and as Dindayal Roy, the richest moneylender, was killed by the Santals. On 14 July, the Santals plundered the house of the Raja of Maheshpur. On 28th July, the Commissioner of Bhagalpur reported that “the Santals are let on and incited to acts of oppression” by milkmen, oilmen and other castes who “supply them with intelligence, beat their drums, direct their proceedings and act as spies.” On 11 August 1855, the Commissioner of Bhagalpur wrote to the Magistrate of Monghyr that the Santals were “openly at war with our troops in this district and in those of Murshidabad and Birbhum.” On 24th September, the Magistrate of Birbhum reported that “the whole of the country from Lorajore, four miles west of Nagore, to within a shore distance of Deoghar, is in their hands. The lats (mail) are stopped, and the inhabitants deserted their villages and fled.9

**Indigo Revolt**

Meanwhile, the Indigo growers’ revolt had flared up in Bengal in the autumn of 1859. On the one hand, this revolt was directed against the indigo planters; on the other, it grew into a rent strike against the planter-zamindars. We shall refer briefly to the system of indigo cultivation in order to comprehend the issues involved in this peasant

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uprising, which was a landmark in the history of peasant movement in Bengal. The British merchants embarked upon indigo cultivation in Bengal and built factories in Malda, Pabna, Nadia, Jessore, Midnapore, Rangpore, Rajsahi and Purnea. There is a great deal of evidence to show that the planters had to pay high rent to the Bengal zamindars to get land for indigo cultivation. Some of them, notably Dwarkanath Tagore, chose to be planters. The value of land increased in the villages where indigo cultivation had extended. Apparently, the Bengal zamindars had a stake in indigo cultivation.\textsuperscript{10}

In the autumn of 1860, the indigo growers’ revolt merged with rent disturbances that came in the wake of the Rent Act of 1859. As Hunter tells us, the operation of the Act “has resulted in enhancement of rents and this increase has been most marked in those parts where the indigo planters are landlords.” A new phase of the revolt started as the ryots resisted the payment of rent charged by the planter-Zamindars. The fact is that power still remained with the zamindars, who wanted to teach the sahib planters a lesson. In the decade following the indigo revolt which surely radicalised the peasants, rent disturbances continued to occur in a few regions and snowballed into an uprising in 1873.\textsuperscript{11}

**Peasant Revolt in Pabna**

Now it was the rent disturbances which were directed against the Bengal zamindars. The Tenancy act of 1859 was primarily designed to safeguard the interests of the rising class of jotedars and rich peasants. All the evidence confirms that enhancement of rent proceeded after 1859. Hunter refers to the high increase in rent in Hooghly,

Mymensingh and Dacca. The Pabna zamindars, as Campbell noted in 1873, “served no notices of enhancement, and “attempted in the present year to make both further enhancement and a consolidation of the irregular cesses with the rent by illegal and improper means." Meanwhile, jute cultivation had extended to East Bengal districts and also to Murshidabad, Nadia and 24-Parganas in West Bengal; the area under jute cultivation was about 850,000 acres in 1874. Rich peasants benefited from jute cultivation and appeared to be ‘sufficiently well-to-do to offer an effective resistance to the zamindars."

Maratha Peasants’ Uprising

This was the peasant uprising in Maharashtra which was mainly directed against the Marwari and Gujarati moneylenders. In Maharashtra moneylending was mostly in the hands of the Marwari and Gujarati moneylenders. Usurious rates of interest were common. For crop loans, one and a half maunds had to be repaid for every maund borrowed. Loans were advanced on mortgage of Land and the common practice was to resettle the debtor on the land on condition that he would pay half of gross produce as rent. Over the years, there had grown a category of tenants who had no occupancy right. In Poona and Ahmadnagar there was a considerable increase in sales and mortgages between 1869 and 1874. In 1873, the Bombay courts disposed of about 4 lakh suits; peasants seldom opposed a suit, since they did not want to alienate the sowcars. In

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Ahmednagar about an eighth of the occupancies had “on an average been transferred to sowcars.”

The Deccan disturbances seemed to be spontaneous. On 12 May, 1875 the sowcars houses and shops at Supa, a small market town in Poona, were attacked and burnt. Within twenty four hours the house of the leading Marwari money-lender of Khoirgaon village was burnt down. The disturbances spread to four villages. In Sirur taluk the Marwari moneylenders were the main targets of attack. Almost simultaneously similar outbreaks occurred in Ahmadnagar, where twenty-two villages were affected. For a few weeks the revolt was in full swing. It seems that the main object of the peasants was “to disarm the enemy” by destroying the bonds, decrees and accounts. The Deccan Riots Commission referred to “wholesale plunder of property,” “murderous assault on the moneylenders,” burning of stocks of produce belonging to the money-lenders.” The Marwari moneylenders mostly left the village and moved to the towns. There was a great deal of repression; in Poona and Ahmadnagar 951 persons were arrested, of which 501 were convicted. The last incident occurred on 22 July when the nose of a moneylender at Nimbal was cut off.

Gandhi and Peasant Satyagraha

In the summer of 1917 Gandhi embarked upon the mobilisation of ryots in Champaran. In this district, the landlords had leased out their estates to the British planters. The ryots’ discontent became intense as the planters enhanced rent under the tinkathia system. As indigo trade rapidly declined in the beginning of the present

15 Ibid., p.56.
century, the planters resorted to sharabeshi (rent enhancement). The District Magistrate of Muzaffarpur reported on wholesale execution of ‘Kabulyats’ from the ‘ryots’ by “nothing less than an organised system of oppression by the factory servants.” Furthermore, the planters who held tenure, collected abwabs in addition to rent: Gandhi described the planters as “rajas” and summed up the main grievances of the ryots: “It is inconceivable that the ryots would agree to an enormous increase in their rents against freedom from liability to grow indigo . . . Under the tinkathia system, the ryot has been obliged to give his best land for the landlord’s crops; in some cases, the land in front of this house has been so used, he has been obliged to give his best time and energy also to it, so that very little time has been left for growing his own crops.17

The campaign started in April 1917, Gandhi moved from one village to another collecting evidence of the ryots: a novel method of establishing direct contact with the peasants. As Rajendra Prasad tells us: “The statements of tenants continued to be recorded the whole day. There was such a continuous stream of these tenants that there was not a minute’s break between 6.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.” in June, the Government appointed an enquiry committee with Gandhi as one of its members. On 16th July about 10,000 peasants collected to have “a darshan” of Gandhi at the meeting place of the Committee.” Under the Champaran Agrarian Act (1917), Tinkathia, which had already become a nuisance, was made illegal; Sharabeshi was reduced by 20 per cent in the case of Turkanlia and 26 per cent in the case of other factories. Gandhi agreed to a

compromise as he felt that “peasants and planters had still to live together”. But the ryots were not keen to pay enhanced rent and litigation considerably increased.\textsuperscript{18}

In 1922, Gandhi personally visited Bardoli and permitted the launching of the movement for non-payment of revenue. Presumably, it was intended to mobilise the land-owning peasantry that paid land revenue to the government; the rent-paying tenants were left out. Throughout Bardoli the taluk meetings were held, and an ultimatum to the government was sent. But the movement, alas, was suspended after the Chauri Chaura incident. Nevertheless, the leaders did not fail to understand the mood of the ryots and launched the famous satyagraha of 1928 which was hailed as a model of Gandhian technique. Gandhi consistently advocated mobilisation of the land-owning peasantry who paid taxes and revenue to the government. The Gandhian view was reflected in the resolution of the Congress Working Committee adopted at Bardoli on 12 February 1922, which advised Congress organisations “to inform the ryots that withholding of rent payment to the zamindars is contrary to the Congress resolutions and injurious to the best interests of the country.” The Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928, which was confined to a taluk, hardly violated the spirit of this resolution.\textsuperscript{19}

**Tenant Struggles**

It was in Uttar Pradesh that the struggles of rent-paying tenants flared up in the 1920s and in the 1930s. The situation in Oudh deserves particular notice. After the 1857 rebellion, the ruling class showed a tendency to appease the Oudh talukdars who resembled the Bengal zamindars and collected rent from the tenants. In the Oudh Rent

Act of 1868, even the twelve years rule about occupancy right was denied to the tenants. After the Rent Act of 1886 was passed, the landlords often evicted the tenants in order to get nazara
ta from new tenants; eviction was also a device of the talukdars to make it difficult for old tenants to become occupancy tenants. In 1899-1900, non-occupancy tenants formed 82 per cent of all tenants in Oudh.20 Eviction of tenants continued unabated. In Pratapgarh, for instance, 936 notices of eviction were served on the tenants in 1906-7; this figure rose to 2593 in 1919-20. The Deputy Commissioner of Pratapgarh reported in 1920: “Fathers have sold their daughters for nazara
ta money to husbands of advanced years.”21 The tenants knew that failure to pay nazara
ta could lead to their bedakhil. The problem of indebtedness had become acute in the United Provinces. This could be partly related to the enhancement of rent undertaken by the landlords. Whitcombe notes that money lending was “the most profitable area for investment of local capital,” partly because the revenue system created “further incentive to borrow.” Besides seed and food loans the peasants had to borrow to pay rents, buy cattle or to fulfil social obligations. For grain loans they had to “pay back two or three times the amount of grain originally loaned in order to arrive at its cash value at the time of borrowing.”22

What is significant is that the landlords formed the most important source of rural credit. According to the estimate of the Banking Enquiry Committee of 1929, about 40 per cent of the loans were supplied by the landlords, while moneylenders supplied 28.3 per cent. Since the landlords in eastern U.P. could make an easy fortune in usury,

they hardly invested capital in agricultural development. This partly explains why eastern U.P. remained sunk in stagnation while western U.P. showed signs of growth, thanks to the extension of commercial agriculture. It was in eastern U.P. that the peasant movement was intense in the 1920s and 1930s. The most remarkable is that peasants became organised, though in a loose manner, in the Kisan Sabha.

In January 1921, the peasant movement rapidly spread from Pratapgarh to Rae Bareli, Fyzabad and Sultanpur. Crops on the lands of talukdars were destroyed; the houses of merchants and money lenders were raided; talukdars’ store godowns were destroyed or looted. The tenants also demonstrated against evictions and often assembled in the bazar. It seems that the peasant struggle was intense in Rae Bareli. On 6 January, the peasants, armed with lathis, axes spears and bricks, gathered at Fursatganj bazar. The behaviour of the peasants is revealed in a report of the Subdivisional Magistrate.

Agrarian Movements in Bengal

This was already pointed out how agrarian disturbances in 1873-75 brought to the fore the problem of the rent-paying tenants in Bengal. Although the ryots benefited from the Bengal Tenancy Act, 1885, the bargadars who paid 50 per cent of the produce as rent to the landlords remained unprotected. It seems that land transfer continued unabated, and the dispossessed peasants were being resettled on the land as bargadars in the Bengal districts. The Collector of Dacca reported in 1913: “The increase in barga lands and khas lands of proprietors and tenure holders is largely due to the indebtedness of the ryot,

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25 Ibid., p. 83.
many of the landlords gradually acquire holdings, keeping them in their own possession or letting them out on barga”.26 The Settlement Officer of Midnapore wrote in 1917: “. . . far from bhag rent showing any tendency to disappear in favour of money rent it seems to be on the increase.”27

In Dinajpur, Bell found that “adhi is more than three years on kabuliyaat, notably when a khai khalasi is made, that is, the mortgage settles the mortgazor as adhiar”.28 In Jalpaiguri, the ryots who lost their holdings during the depression in the 1930s “have been allowed to cultivate the lands as bargadars.” The Land Revenue Commission, 1940 reported that 21.1 per cent of land was cultivated by the bargadars. Along with the extension of the barga system the jotedar emerged as a new category of landlord who sublet his land to the bargadars and exacted 50 per cent of the produce as rent from the tenants, without bearing the expenses of cultivation. In Jessore the Jotedar, described as a ryot, “never cultivates with his own hands” but employed tenants or servants to cultivate his fields.29 In Rangpur, many of the jotedars, who were formerly cultivators, “have become middlemen and have sublet their lands to ryots at rates which are often double or more than double the rates paid by themselves to the zamindars.”30 In Jalpaiguri, the jotedars were often drawn from lawyers and Marwari traders, who had purchased land and sublet it to the bargadars.31 Hunter writes on the barga system in the 24-Parganas: “Barga tenure is chiefly granted by Brahmins, Kayasthas, and others of the

28 F.O. Bell Collection, “Miscellaneous Papers, 1931-41”. In his tour diary Bell Writes on the purchase of land by the Jotedars during the depression.
30 Rangapur District Gazeteer (1908). West Bengal, Calcutta.
31 Jalpaiguri District Gazetteer 1908, West Bengal, Calcutta.
upper caste.”32 Bell vividly describes the jotedars in Dinajpur, who “may hold several or thousands of acres of land in their own possession”; in most of the Union boards the presidents came from “the jotedar class with 30 to 300 acres of land”; the Shah Choudhuris of Porshah village built two-storied houses and received 60,000 maunds of paddy into their granaries. The jotedar offered paddy loan to the bargadars at *derhi* interest, i.e., 1½ maunds had to be repaid for every maund borrowed.33 The crop loan supplied by the jotedar at *derhi* interest could be related to the continuous expansion of usury. Since usury was a profitable field of investment the jotedar had little interest in reshaping the mode of production. In fact, he had an interest in retaining precapitalist relations in production. Over the years the jotedar class became extremely powerful in rural Bengal, partly because the *bhadraloks* who had turned the land over to bargadars cultivation stubbornly defended the system. The *bhadraloks*, mostly absentees, viewed land as a secure form of investment; this category often created strong pressure against the tenancy legislation. In 1920, the Muslim lawyers that included Fazlul Huq formed the Jotedar and Ryots Association to protect the interest of “Jotedars and ryots.” As we shall see, the Krishak Praja Party was also based mainly on the jotedars. While the zamindars were mostly Hindus, the jotedars included both Hindus and Muslims.34

**Mopplla Rebellion**

In Malabar, Mopplas who are moslems by religion are mostly either agricultural

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workers, or tenants or the most depressed section of intermediary landholders with or without personal cultivation. They were then being exploited mercilessly by the Nambudris who were the virtual owners of the land and who had the absolute right of electing any intermediary peasant, known as Kanamdar or any of the actual cultivators. In fact these Nambudris, who were Brahmins were often aided by Kanamdars, most of whom were Nairs and they were freely exercising their right to evict peasants from their homesteads and raising the rents at their will and pleasure. No wonder an agitation sprang up in the wake of the Religion, Revivalist movement which later on was constituted by the Justice Party. Its leaders were the late Sir M. Krishnan Nair and M.P. Narayana Menan. One joined the Justice Party and rose to be an executive Councillor of the Madras Government and the other entered the Congress and came to be condemned for transportation for life for the alleged crime of having incited Mopplas to wage war against His Majesty’s Government to be released only in 1936.35

Agrarian Disturbances in Madras

When Malabar was in the throes of the Moplah rebellion, agrarian disturbances occurred in parts of Madras where politics had come to the village in the wake of the nationalist movement. It seems that agrarian disturbances became intense with the onset of the great depression and were often led by the rich peasant who had become, as Washbrook tells us, the “local boss”. Some of the main features of the agrarian system may be noted in passing. In Madras, the ryots with whom the settlement was made always represented “the high-caste elite, the leaders of the village”; the labouring peasants continued to work on the lands of these ryots. As in the zamindary areas inter-

mediaries grew between the *kisans* and the government. Agriculture was over crowded, and there was a great deal of migration of the Madrasis mainly to Malaya, Burma and Ceylon. With the extension of commercial agriculture the ryot-moneylender became a rising category. The problem of rural credit was acute. As the Inspector of Registration offices told the Banking Enquiry Committee, about 95 per cent of the rural population was indebted. The peasants turned to the ryot moneylenders during agricultural operations, who took interest in kind and wanted to grab the peasants' produce. Sitaram Raju told the Banking Enquiry Committee: “It is usually the sowcar (moneylender) who buys the crop and sometimes specific conditions are entered by which the cultivator is bound to measure the crop to the sowcar in kind for the discharge of the loan.” The ryot-moneylender took interest in kind, bought the poor peasants' crop at harvest prices and sold it in the local market when prices rose. Gradually the ryot-moneylender emerged as “the local boss” in rural Madras. It was on the ryot-moneylender that the Congress generally relied during the nationalist movement.36

In rural Madras, the non-Brahmin, Reddis and Kammas formed important agricultural castes. Since the Brahmins enjoyed considerable prestige and authority and were the allies of the ruling Justice Party, the Congress tried to woo the Reddis and Kammas, who entered politics, formed caste association, set up schools and hostels, and agitated for tenancy legislation. There is an element of truth in Elliot’s contention that the early peasant movement was based on the support of the Reddis and Kammas on

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whom N.G. Ranga relied.\textsuperscript{37} What is significant is that Ranga focussed attention on the condition of zamindary ryots and directed his attack on the zamindars. Although Madras was a ryotwari area, a large proportion of the rural area, particularly in the Andhra coastal districts, was under zamindary tenure in 1911, the area under ryotvari was 61.5 million acres, under inam 4.4 million acres, and under zamindary 24.7 million acres.\textsuperscript{38}

The Andhra Zamindary Ryots Association whose undisputed leader was N.G. Ranga took up the demands of the tenants. The principal demands of this Association were as follows: rents paid by zamindary ryots should not exceed ryotwari rates rents should be remitted or suspended in case of failure of crops, the major portion of the home farm land of zamindars should be declared ryoti land.\textsuperscript{39} By 1933 conferences were held in many districts of Madras. In the Nellore conference held in 1933, the demand for abolition of the zamindary system was raised. Meanwhile, peasant struggles had broken out. Baker writes that rich peasants were in the forefront of these struggles. The zamindars had agreed to commute rent payments from kind to cash, which were not resented so long as agricultural prices were high. As prices sharply fell from 1931 onwards, the value of commuted rent payments soared, and peasants found it difficult to make these payments in cash, in a period when the problem of credit had become acute. The “rich tenants” rose against the zamindars in the early 1930s. Agrarian disturbances occurred in Tirupati and Maniyachi estates in 1931. In Mamandur, the tenants resorted to incendiariism in 1933. As prices fell the peasants also launched a campaign against land

\textsuperscript{37} Elliot, C.M. “Casteand Faction Among the Dominant Caste. The Reddis and Kammas of Andhra Pradesh, Kothari, p.152.
\textsuperscript{39} Economics Conditions of the Zamindary Ryots, Andhra Zamindary Reports Association 1933.
revenue. The policy of the Madras government which remitted only 2 per cent of land revenue in 1931-32 gave an impetus to the peasant agitation. Throughout Krishna and Godavari deltas meetings and demonstrations were held, in which the demand of withholding revenue payments was discussed. By 1933 prices fell substantially, and the agitation against land revenue spread to Tanjore, Chingaleput, Vizagapatam, Madura and Salem.\(^40\)

Apparently, these agitations centred on the land-owning peasants who paid revenue to the government. Broadly speaking, the entire movement was directed against the government and the zamindars. The zamindary system, which was already tottering, got a jolt. It is worth noting that the zamindars who generally lived in towns relied on village officers to collect rent from the tenants; powerful ryots hardly paid rents regularly. An officer in the court of Wards vividly described the condition of the zamindars: “Often the affairs of the estates were in hopeless confusion--boxes of unlisted jewels, rooms full of records, villages unlawfully alienated to concubines, irrigation works in ruins, trust funds misappropriated and so on.”\(^41\)

Ranga warned that peasants were forced to cherish “ideas of violent rising against the Sahukars and Banks as well as Government.” At the Peasants Protection Conference he pleaded for a moratorium on debt. In 1935, the Debtors Protection Act imposed a ceiling on interest rates, and the Agriculturists Loans Act provided funds to wipe off small holders’ debts. Since moratorium on debt was not conceded, the conditions of small peasants and agricultural labourers hardly improved. Nevertheless, the attacks on


\(^{41}\) Ibid., pp.176 & 177.
the money lenders, though sporadic, represented a new type of peasant struggle, which the land owning class surely dreaded. As prices continued to rise, *albeit* slowly, from 1936 onwards, the rich peasant gradually recovered from the shack of the depression and played his cards well to remain the “local bass”. Meanwhile, the rich peasants who could rely on the support of the Congress had become a powerful group in local politics.\footnote{Ibid., p.177.}

**Peasant Movements in India**

There were a number of peasant uprisings and movements in India during the period of British rule. Reviewing Indian peasant uprisings, Kathleen Gough noted that for more than 200 years, peasants in all the major regions have risen repeatedly against landlords, revenue agents and other bureaucrats, moneylenders, police and military forces. These uprisings have generally fallen into the categories of restorative movements, religious movements, social banditry, terrorist acts for vengeance and justice, mass insurrections and politically oriented uprisings. The politically oriented uprisings were closely related with the activities of the Communist Party of India.\footnote{Gough, Kathleen. “Peasant Uprisings”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 9 (Special number), August 1974, pp.1391-1412.}

**Peasant Movements in South India**

In South India, there have been strong peasant movements in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. On the eve of India’s Independence, the Communist Party mobilised the peasantry in Telugu-speaking areas of then Hyderabad state, primarily as a part of India’s independence movement. The majority of the people were Hindus under the rule of a notorious Muslim king (The Nizam), who was not willing to move with the
political current in accepting the democratic rights of the people or joining the Indian union. This reluctance facilitated the mobilisation of the vast majority of peasants under the leadership of the Communist Party which received sanctuary for its activities in the neighbouring Indian territory. The course of the struggle covered 2,000 villages and an area of 15,000 square miles, with a population of four million and a peasant army of 5,000.44 Even though this movement was originally organised to fight the Nizam, it did not cease its operations after Hyderabad was occupied by Indian army—which essentially met the primary demand of the movement; rather it carried on its war of liberation, this time directing its forces against the Indian government. By 1951, these activities were completely suppressed, and the CPI had to revise its policies. According to Rajeswar Rao, the leader of the movement, factors like the relative level of economic development, a fairly well developed communications system, a centralised and well organised administrative system and the existence of a strong bourgeois party with immense popularity, made the success of insurgency difficult in India.45

In Tamil Nadu, the main centre of peasant activity is Thanjavur district. Even though the CPI has been making efforts to carve out a following in all parts of the state, some measure of success has bee achieved only in East Thanjavur where it was able to organise sharecroppers and agricultural labourers. Homogeneity in the caste background of agricultural labourers was an important condition that facilitated unionisation in Thanjavur. Since the thirties, agricultural labourers unions and tenants associations have

carried out a number of agitations in Thanjavur for advancing wage rates, improving working conditions, regulating tenancy, and other benefits; and they have led to many favourable legislations. The widespread activities of agricultural labourers unions, tenants associations, and farmers organisations in Kerala have drawn the attention of many scholars.46

Strong organisation of agricultural labourers have emerged in Palghat and Alleppy, and tenants are strongly organised in the districts of Cannanore, Kozhikode, and Palghat, which cover the former Malabar district of Madras Presidency. Farmers organisations have emerged as a reaction of labour unions. There have been not many reports of peasant movements in the states of Karnataka, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Orissa. Reviewing the status of peasants organisations in India, Seth points out that “the membership of all the peasant associations in India, taken together, would be slightly less than five per cent of the estimated number of the rural poor. This shows how weak the organisation is in rural India. Even this small membership is distributed very unevenly. Much of it is concentrated in the states of West Bengal, Punjab and Kerala. In other states, it is distributed over small pockets such as Tanjore (Thanjavur) in Tamil Nadu. In large areas of India there is hardly any peasant association.” The examination of peasant movements in India thus reveals two things. On the one hand it indicates the limited progress that has been achieved in organising the peasantry even in more than four decades of effort. On the other hand, the development of peasant groups in some areas implies that organising the peasantry, although difficult, is not impossible.47

Peasant Struggle in Telangana

In the peasant movements in Bengal, Bihar, United Provinces and other regions, land to the tiller, though a popular slogan, seemed to be a remote ideal; the peasants did not try to seize land. It was in Telangana region in modern Andhra Pradesh that the Kisan Sabha gave its blessing to the expropriation of the landlords by a peasant revolution. All the evidence points to the emergence of the Kisan Sabha as a powerful force in the countryside in 1946-47. It seems that the circumstances were favourable for the rapid advance of the Kisan Sabha in this region.48

Hyderabad, one of the largest native states, had three linguistic regions: Telangana, comprising nine districts of Telugu-speaking people; Marathawada, where the majority of the people spoke Marathi; and the three districts of Kannada-speaking people. Urdu was the language of the administration, and the Hindus who formed the majority of the population hardly found employment in superior government service. The Nizam had maintained a monarchical system based mainly on the support of the feudal landlords. During 1930s, the Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen grew up as a communal organisation which proclaimed its vow to “fight to the last to maintain the supremacy of the Muslim power in the Deccan”. In 1930, the Andhra Mahasabha was formed which gradually developed as the political platform of the rising middle class. The prominent leaders of the Mahasabha was Ravi Narayan Reddi and Baddam Yella Reddy, who came from opulent landlord families, took a prominent part in developing the Mahasabha as a radical organisation; these leaders along with the progressive elements joined the communist movement

during 1940-42. At the eleventh session of the Mahasabha held at Bhongir in 1944, the Mahasabha virtually passed under the control of the radical elements. Ravi Narayan Reddy writes that the Bhongir conference “demoralised the rightists,” and created a great deal of enthusiasm among the youth.\textsuperscript{49} Indeed, the Mahasabha played a crucial role in shaping the democratic movement in Hyderabad. In 1938, the State Congress, in which Govinda Rao Nanal and Ramananda Tirth were active, launched a satyagraha when the Nizam banned the singing of Vande mataram. It seems that the State Congress came to the fore in Hyderabad politics in 1947.\textsuperscript{50}

**Maratta Peasant Awakening**

With equal fury and fervour rose the Maratta peasants in the same generation, against the oppressions of moneylenders. They could not brook the idea of obedience to the new laws which gave such coercive powers to moneylenders that any moneylender could with impunity move a court to imprison anyone of his peasant debtors. So they revolted, burnt down the houses, destroyed other properties of moneylenders, killed a good many such oppressors and even attacked those Government officials who were supporting their oppressors.\textsuperscript{51}

**South India in Ferment**

Similarly, the Krishna and Godavari Delta peasants and the Karnataka and Rayalaseema peasants too revolted several times from the beginning of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century to protest against the exorbitant land revenue exactions, the neglect of irrigation facilities.

and the extortionate method of tax collections. G.Lakshminarasu Chetti organised a grand constitutional agitation against the Madras Tortures Act and succeeded in getting it repealed and this saved the South Indian peasants from being put to several cruel and inhuman tortures for failure to pay taxes. The South Indian peasants resorted to their ancestral method of *satyagraha* by abandoning their lands and villages (a method of satyagraha adopted by the Lohara peasants in 1936, and by those of the Orissa States in 1939 with much less success) and migrating to the neighbouring Indian States or even British districts. Since peasant solidarity was so great in those days and also since the cultivation of land under the then prevailing tax burdens was such an unwelcome task none would go and occupy their lands and houses and Government had to climb down and agree to a reduction of their tax burdens in order to persuade them to return to their lands and villages.\(^{52}\)

**Farmers’ movements in India**

The farmers in India had to undergo great struggle in all the states to stop exploitation by the Jagirdars and Zamindars. Some of the movements were successful, but others failed. The Kisan Sabha movement started in Bihar under the leadership of Swami Sahajanand Saraswati who had formed in 1929 the Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha (BPKS) in order to mobilise peasant grievances against the zamindary attacks on their occupancy rights. Gradually the peasant movement intensified and spread across the rest of India. All these radical developments on the peasant front culminated in the formation of the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) at the Lucknow session for the Indian National Congress in April 1936 with Swami Sahajanand Saraswati elected as its first President.

The farmer movements also started in 1907 under the leadership of Sardar Ajit Singh and in 1921 under Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel were successes, both others, such as the revolts in Chauri Chaura, Avadh and Mopla, were great losses.\textsuperscript{53}

**Farmer movements in Punjab**

It was in Punjab that India’s first farmers’ movement emerged. The role played by Ghadar party, led by Raja Mahendra Pratap, in the political awakening of India was an important step. The Sikhs of Punjab were the first to migrate to the United States and Canada in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. They financed and helped the formation of Ghadar party which when gave the call to Indians abroad to return home and fight British imperialism, had its call immediately heeded to. The majority of those who did return, 8000 of them comprised Punjab’s Sikhs. Despite its apparent failure, the Ghadar Movement was to have a powerful impact on Punjab politics and especially on the peasants. It established a tradition of militant and secular anti-imperialism, enriched in subsequent years by social radicalism, which was to continue to inspire subsequent generations. The peasant conferences were held in Lahore, Faisalabad, Lyallpur and other places of West Punjab-the most famous of them being 1938-39 Long Morcha in Lahore when peasants from all over Punjab courted arrests for nine months in front of the assembly building. The slogan of Pagri Sambhal O jatta (Hold your head high, O peasant) was first raised at a mass gathering in Lyallpur in 1907. Ten Thousand people-the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs alike-attended this gathering.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{53} Kosambi, D.D. and Sharma, R.S., together with Daniel Thorner, brought peasants into the study of Indian history for the first time.
**Punjab Discontent**

Similarly, the Punjab peasants too agitated and threatened to revolt to prevent the rapid alienation of their lands to the urban moneylenders for failure to repay debts. The British Government could not await a similar rebellion as had taken place in Bengal and Maharashtra since the armed and martial Sikhs might make a formidable enemy. So it hastened to pass the Punjab Land Alienation Act to prevent the alienation of peasants’ lands to non-agricultural sections.\(^{55}\)

**Farmer movements in Rajasthan**

Rajasthan is known as the land of kings and palaces and whose history is replete with encomium of their kings, the land known for “Sati”, the land known for its vast tracts of deserts was to witness a history in making, the successful agitation of farmers and peasants for their right to livelihood. Justice Kan Singh Parihar, the retired Judge of High Court of Rajasthan, has written about exploitation of farmers by Jagirdars prior to Independence as under:

“Every thing that the Kisan had, never treated as his own. In Jagir areas all cultivators were really landless. There was not tenancy law and one could be thrown away from the land one cultivated at the pleasure of Jagirdar, his “malik”. In most of the Jagirs a Jagirdar would in the first instance be taking fifty percent of the produce. This would be taken by actual division of the produce on the thrashing floor or by appraisal of the standing crop. Then over and above the share of the produce the Kisan had to pay numerous “lags” or cesses. Together with the share of the produce known as “Hasil” these cesses meant that the Kisans had to part with more than eighty percent of their

\(^{55}\) Ibid. p. 70.
produce. The findings of the Sukhdeonarain Committee in the years 1940-42 bear this out. If a Kisan had to marry his daughter he had to pay “Chavri Lag”, if he held a dinner then a “Kansa Lag”; if members of the family separated then “Dhunwa Lag” and so on. If the Jagirdar had a guest then fodder for his mount had to be supplied. Then there was “beggar” that is forced labour, for tilling the personal lands of the Jagirdar. The homestead in which the Kisan lived in the Abadi had to be vacated in case he ceased cultivating the land. He could not alienate the plot to anyone.”

Kan Singh Parihar played a great role in drafting and enactment of marwar Tenancy Act of 1949 and Marwar Land Revenue Act of 1949, Parihar’s idea of fixing all tenants in cultivatory possession as Khatedars thus making all of them almost the proprietors of all their fields, wells etc. Without paying any premium or compensation and further being relieved from paying any lag bag (Cesses) etc., impacted these documents. This Marwar Tenancy Act of 1949 and Marwar Land Revenue Act of 1949 became a role model for the Rajasthan Assembly in 1955 and similar laws were passed based on these Acts, thus greatly benefiting the farmers of Rajasthan.

Shekhawati farmers’ movement

The farmers of the Sekhawati region are considered to be the most advanced in the state of Rajasthan. The Shekhawati region has the highest literacy in the state. The most dominating farmer community in the rural areas of Shekhawati is Jat. The Jats are politically and economically very sound. The major land holdings in the present times are with Jats. Then comes the Rajput community who were the jagirdars before

56. www.google.net – Kisan movements in India
57. Ibid.
The farmers of the region have done great struggle to come to the present status. Before independence, the conditions of the farmers were worst. The farmers of the Shekhawati region were exploited and oppressed by the Jagirdars during British Raj. They were deprived of fundamental rights. They were given inhuman treatment when the Jagirdars did not get cesses known as lag (tax) or begar (unpaid work) in time, they were given hard punishments and their crop used to be destroyed. There were 37 kinds of begars (work without pay) prevalent in Shekhawati. A newly married bride was forced to go first to Jagirdar.58

The Shekhawati Jat farmers’ movement had its genesis in the Jat Praja Pati Maha-Yagna a socio-religious festival held in January, 1934. It lasted ten days and was the biggest of its kind in Rajputana. It facilitated a widespread involvement of Jats in a community festival. Each Jat household attending it was to contribute some cash and an unspecified quantity of ghee. A total of two hundred maunds of ghee were used in the sacrificial flame. The function concluded with a triumphal elephant ride hitherto prohibited by the rules of Sikar Thikana. The success of this movement encouraged the Jats to hold more meetings on local levels and print literature to glorify Jat history. The Yagna became a dominant symbol of folklore which glorified it as beginning of an anti-feudal struggle. The peasants demanded remissions in taxes and finally a Jat-Sikar Thikana Agreement was signed on August 23, 1934, by which the Thikana authorities abolished various tags (taxes) and agreed to provide a mobile dispensary. The following year, the Kisan Sabha formally came into existence and under its aegis the famous Sikar Andolan of 1935 was launched. With outside mediation efforts of Jamnalal Bajaj, Sir

58 Ibid.
Chhotu Ram – a renowned Jat leader of Punjab and Ratan Singh of All India Jat Mahasabha, a settlement was arrived at and the Jats were promised remissions of rent, abolition of internal cesses and an introduction of fixed rent tenure. The Jats were also promised equal opportunities in Thikana administration and were permitted to ride elephants and horses and to construct schools for their children. The formation of a Jat Kisan Panchayat was officially sanctioned and the right to agitate for redressal of grievances in non-Khalsa areas was conceded. Much however, could not be made out of these agreements for two reasons.59

First, the subordinate Thikanedars of Sikar did not fully co-operate with Sikar authorities to ensure compliance with the terms of these agreements. Secondly, the beginning of settlements operations and reform of revenue administration was a time-consuming process which entailed enormous delay. This was interpreted by the Jats as a breach of agreement and hence, they indulged in acts of disorder and violence, which were perceived by Thikana authorities as signs of bad faith. In the meanwhile two unsavoury incidents led to a termination of agreements. The first, occurred at Khudi village, where the sight of Jat bridegroom riding a horse incensed the local Rajputs and the two sides prepared themselves for an armed combat. The state authorities asked the two parties to disperse but the Jats refused. The state police charged and in the melee that followed, several people were injured. The second incident took place at Kudan village, where about one hundred armed Jats attacked Sikar revenue officials. The police fired upon the armed mob, which resulted in several casualties and injuries. A total of 104 Jats were arrested.60

59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
Farmers of the Shekhawati, mainly the Jats, united against oppression of Jagirdars by forming ‘Sikar Jat-Kisan-panchayat' and stopped giving “lags” or cesses to the Jagirdars. The ‘Jaipur Praja-Mandal’ also supported the Shekhawati farmers' movement against abolition of Jagirdari system. The leaders of ‘Bijoria-Kisan-Movement’ of 1922, 1931 and 1932 supported the movement of Shekhawati farmers. The Jagirdars tried to suppress the movement in many ways. Many farmers were killed and a large number were sent to jail. A Jat farmer was beaten to death in the market of Sikar town; his dead body was thrown and insulted. This movement got support from famous Kisan leaders like, Baldev Ram Mirdha, Nathuram Mirdha and Kumbharam Arya. After a long struggle the farmers got rid of oppression and got the ownership right over the land they were cultivating. The leading Jat farmers of Shekhawati region, who played important role in the movement for abolition of the Jagirdari system, were:

- Sardar Har Lal Singh, Mandasi
- Iswar Singh Bhamu Bhairupura,
- Hari Singh Burdak and Hardeva Palthana,
- Prithvi Singh Gothra,
- Ganeshram Kudan,
- Panne Singh Bataranau,
- Goru Singh Katrathal,
- Deva Singh Bochalya,
- Chandrabhan Singh,
- Hardev Singh Nehra Harsawa.
Shekhawati farmers’ movement against abolition of Jagirs got great support from outside Kisan leaders like Sir Chhotu Ram from Haryana, Kunwar Ratan Singh and Thakur Deshraj from Bharatpur, Kunwar Hukum Singh from Aangai.61

Marwar farmers’ movement

The farmers of the Marwar region are considered to be the most simple in the state of Rajasthan. The most dominating farmer community in the rural areas of Marwar is Jat. The Jats are politically and economically very sound. The major land holdings in the present times are with Jats. Though the position of Kisan (farmer) in what was Khalsa (under the direct control of the state) was better in comparison to a Kisan of the jagir areas, he was only a little above a beast of burden. In Jagir areas of Marwar state before independence all cultivators were really landless. There was no tenancy Law and one could be thrown away from the land one cultivated at the pleasure of Jagirdar, his “malik”. In most of the Jagirs a Jagirdar would in the first instance be taking fifty per cent of the produce. This would be taken by actual division of the produce on the thrashing floor or by appraisal of the standing crop (kunta). The latter method proved at times more onerous as the appraisal depended on the whims of the Kamdar. Then over and above the share of the produce the farmer had to pay numerous “lags” or cesses. There were 64 kinds of begars (work without pay) prevalent in Marwar. Then the bigger Jagirdars had judicial powers including magisterial powers. Further they had their own police force besides the revenue staff. This enabled them to keep their stronghold on the farmers. Over and above, this policy of divide and rule was fully practiced. By offering

the temptation of giving better land for cultivation one farmer would be set against another. There were no schools worth the name in rural areas and the masses were steeped in ignorance.62

The oppression of the public by traditional *samantas* (chiefs) and *Jagirdars* (feudatories) of Marwar state made their life difficult, which led to a class war. In urban areas, Jaynarayan Vyas started agitation against oppression, under the banner of “Marwar Lok Parishad” founded on 16 May 1938. This movement was supported by National Congress. The persons who played important role in “Marwar Lok Parishad” were: Shiv Dayal Dave and Jorawar Singh Oswal of Nagaur, Rajpurohit Manji Jagarwal of Bagra, Marwar (Jalore District), Kishanlal Sahu, Manak Chand Konari and Sari Mal of Kuchaman City, Tuliram of Didwana, Srikishan Pandit of Kolia and Sukhdev Dipankar of Ladnu. Rural masses of Marwar were united by Kisan Kesari-Baldev Ram Mirdha under the banner of “Marwar Kisan Sabha” founded in 1940. After the formation of Rajasthan, Baldev Ram Mirdha who had by then retired from Government service formed the “Rajasthan Kisan Sabha” and unified the Kisans of Rajasthan under its banner. He was its first president. Since the broad objectives of the Kisan Sabha and the congress were identical the congress leaders approached Baldev Ram Mirdha to unite the Rajasthan Kisan Sabha with the Congress. Baldev Ram Mirdha was a visionary and he realised that the two could not and should not remain separate. Therefore, he just made one demand from the national leaders that the Jagirs be abolished forthwith in Rajasthan. This was agreed to by the Congress high command with the result that the Jagirs were

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soon abolished. A tenancy law was passed and the cultivating farmers were made the owners of the land.\textsuperscript{63}

**Peasant Movement TEVAGA in West Bengal**

Just before Independence, 1946, farmers of Nandigram, Sutahat and Mahishadal of South Midnapore District revolted against Zamindary Pratha. They demand Adi nay Tevaga ($\frac{1}{3}$ cultivated crops would get Zamindar and $\frac{2}{3}$ is their share. Bimala Majee, Ananta Majee and Bhupal Panda were the leaders of Tevaga in South Midnapore. Hindu and Muslim peasants unitedly fought against Zaminders, Zotedars. Participation of Hindu and Muslim women were significant in Tevaga. Tevatga continues till 1949.\textsuperscript{64}

**Some Theories of Peasant Movements**

An attempt to understand why peasant organisations emerged in some parts of South India and did not develop in other areas can benefit by drawing upon the findings of scholars who have studied peasant movements, uprising, and revolutions in different societies. In many parts of the world, peasant movements were initiated and led by communist workers. However, the main tradition of Marxist theory until the turn of the century ignored the revolutionary potential of the peasantry. Karl Marx did not believe that the peasantry could provide the basis for the formation of a class-conscious proletariat. He stated that the small peasants form a vast mass, the members of which live in similar conditions, but without entering into manifold relations with one another, instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse. In so far as, there is merely a local interconnection among these small peasants, and the identity of interests begets no unity,

\textsuperscript{63} Kisan Movement in India, google.net.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
no national union, and no political organisation, they do not form a class.” 65 There is, therefore, no potential for revolution. Though Lenin’s concept of an alliance between the working class and the peasantry broke with this orthodox tradition, the revolutionary potential of the peasantry was still not fully appreciated. It was the role played by peasantry in the revolutions of China, Vietnam, and Cambodia which completely demolished this orthodox approach and established that, in appropriate circumstances, the peasantry can be the source and the means of revolution in agrarian societies. The problem is one of identifying these “appropriate circumstances and characteristics,” and moulding them into a revolutionary channel. While many practitioners have tried, and are trying, with varying degrees of success to direct the peasantry into a revolutionary channel, scholars have identified several characteristics of agrarian societies which can facilitate or retard such movements. 66

In examining background of peasant wars in Mexico, Russia, and China, Eric R. Wolf found that though peasants are especially handicapped in passing from passive recognition of wrongs to political action as a means of setting them right, occasions when they rose in revolt and brought about revolutionary changes are not few. 67

Examining the role of different segments of peasant society in revolutionary upheavals, Wolf pointed out that during the Russian and Chinese revolutions, the middle peasantry were its promoters in rural areas, rather than the poor. He believed that the

66 Ibid., p. 11.
decisive factor in making a peasant rebellion possible was the relation of the peasantry to the surrounding field of power. The poor peasants, or the landless labourers who depended on a landlord for their livelihood, had no tactical power and were not in a position to pursue the course of rebellion unless they were able to rely on some external power. The rich peasant was not interested in the rebellion as he was already in a privileged position. The section of the peasantry which lacked internal leverage in the traditional political context was the land-owning middle peasantry or the peasantry located in a peripheral area outside the domain of landlord control. Further, middle peasants were often the worst victims of the economic changes brought on by commercialism and they were also exposed to the influence of the developing proletariat. These circumstances led the middle peasantry to be on the vanguard of peasant upheavals.

However, Wolf believed that the transition from peasant rebellion to revolution cannot be achieved by peasants alone, without outside leadership. Even though the peasantry could reshape the social structure of certain areas, it could not lay hold of the state, of the cities which house the centres of control, or of the strategic non-agricultural resources of the society. Thus, a peasant rebellion in a complex society tends to be self-limiting.

**Kisan struggles in Andhra Pradesh**

As the kisan movements in India spread throughout the country and they had their hay day in Andhra Pradesh too. The Kisan struggles in Andhra had long history of one

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69 Ibid., p.292.  
70 Ibid., p.294.
and half centuries. The tribals had revolted against the British Government in the very beginning when they (The British) tried to impose some limits on them. They also revolted against police officials, contractors, money-lenders and landlords. The Government manuals and gazetteers recorded their revolt against Estate manager at one place and against police troops at another. Thus the taluk and District level kisan movements taken up by some individuals finally helped in establishing the Kisan Organisation. The Kisan Sangh of 1922 in Andhra State, the Andhra State Zameen Rytu of 1929, the Andhra State Agricultural Labourers Organisation of 1937, belonged to this category. The agricultural labourers organisations established in 1937 and come into the fold of the communist party by the year 1945.\textsuperscript{71}

N.G. Ranga, Maganti Bapineedu, Narsimha Devara Satyanarayna are some of the prominent leaders who assisted a lot, in founding the A.P. Farmer Association. By 1936, it became a registered body through a special clause. In 1936, A.P. Farmer Association was merged into the all India Kisan Congress. Later, disputes have developed during the Quit India Movement. All India Kisan Congress body declared the second world war as peoples war when Hitler invaded over Soviet Union. Hence, N.G. Ranga had to leave the Kisan Sabha and founded the Andhra Pradesh Kisan Congress in 1943. The All India Kisan Sabha continued to be under the leadership of communists.\textsuperscript{72}

Under such circumstances, the farmers in the zamindary areas tried to protest for their own rights. As result of this, the Andhra state Zamindary Farmers Association came

\textsuperscript{71} Chinnaiah Suri, K. “\textit{Andhralo Rytu Vudyamam}”, Vijayawada, 1986, p.27.
into existence in August 1929 in Eluru, West Godavari District. Rebba Pragada Mandeswara Sarma clearly explained the evil effects of the zamindary system. The meeting was convened to explain how the farmers were facing untold sufferings and the need for an Association of farmers. The first President of the A.P. Kisan was Bhupathi Raju Venkatapathi Raju and Mandeswara Sarma was its Secretary. But the Association in the beginning could not rouse the much expected inspiration among the political circles of Andhra and also among the Telugu news papers of those days.

Thus the Kisan Movement as a part of the fight against the zamindars began in Andhra Pradesh. The details of the income of zamindars who amassed their wealth by leaps and bounds can be seen in the Madras Presidency a book issued by the Madras Government in 1928. The table 1 shows that the details of income of the Zamindar of the day. One could not forget that their wealth was nothing but fruits of the labour of the farmers. In this thesis, it was taken up the kisan struggles against the Rajas of Munagala and Challapalli only.73

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73 Ibid., p. 21.
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<th>District</th>
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<th>The actual amount collected by the Zamindar in Rupees</th>
<th>How many folds was the collected amount greater than the amount be paid as peshcus</th>
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