Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Setting the stage

Human geography is that part of social theory concerned to explain the spatial patterns and processes that enable and constrain the structures and actions of everyday life. It provides an account of the ways in which complex sociocultural, economic and political act through time and space. What are the main precepts of such an inquiry?

Human landscapes are created by knowledgeable actors (or agents) operating within a specific social context (or structure). The linkage between the two, the structure-agency relationship, is conceived as being mediated by a series of institutional arrangements, which both enable and constrain human action. Hence, three "levels of analysis" can be identified: structures, institutions, and agents. To make sure this is clear, let us define:

- **structures** (S) as the long-term, deep-seated social practices that govern daily life, such as law, state, and family (these are often taken for granted, and may even be hidden from consciousness);

- **institutions** (I) the phenomenal forms of structures, including (for example) the apparatus of government; and

- **human agents** (A) the voluntaristic actions of individuals and groups in determining the observable outcomes of social process.

In the simplest terms, social relations are:

- **constituted** through space (as in the industrial organization of extraction and production in resource based environments);
• constrained by space (such as the inertia imposed by the built environment, or the limits imposed by natural hazards);
• mediated through space (including the development of ideology and belief systems within geographically confined regions or locales.

In general terms, the processes of social life operate at macro, meso, or micro scales. In concrete terms, we could observe such scalar differences becomes manifest as local, regional, and national effects. The structure-institution-agency triad will be replicated (in different ways) at each scale. So, for instance, national urban structure may be the result of the interaction between global capital and labour relations (e.g., the rise of Pacific Rim cities); but local outcomes may also be influenced by labor relations operating in peculiar ways at the community level (as, for instance, in the specific patterns of plant closures, or traditions governing single-industry communities).

Any locale is, therefore, at once a complex synthesis of objects, patterns, and processes, derived from the simultaneous interaction of different levels of social process operating at varying geographical scales. Many levels and scales of process are distilled or crystallized into a single locale; it is as through a multi-tiered sequence of multiply determined events had been telescoped onto a single plane. Just as importantly, over time, the various horizons of each locale accumulate like sediments over earlier planes of human activity. The locale is thus a complex amalgam of past, present, and newly forming archaeologies that coexist simultaneously in the landscape. The intellectual challenge posed by what we refer to as the "geographical puzzle" is to unravel a locale's complexity into its constitutive elements. Therefore, in a most fundamental sense, the focal concern in human geography is to understand the simultaneity of time and space in structuring social behaviors. Human geography is
the study of the contemporaneity of social process and spatial pattern over time and space. So far we have discussed, we have come to know that the question of space plays an important role. The concept of space is understood with respect to the culture.

This dissertation works at the interface of postcoloniality and land relations. In other words, this research would try to produce a space which is postcolonial. This sentence begs a few questions. First, what is meant by postcolonial space? What kind of methodology requires for producing postcolonial space? This dissertation has taken up the land relations as a site of analysis and it is also trying to set up a relation between postcoloniality and the land relations. The question remains why we have selected land relations as a unit of analysis? What is meant by postcolonial social formation with respect to the land relations? How one can mark out the specificity of postcoloniality with respect to the land relations?

1.2 Meaning of postcoloniality

Postcolonial denotes such a space which is beyond Orientalism and Capitalocentrism. Second, postcoloniality signifies the question of difference (from the Ideal of the ‘West) with respect to the cultural, political and economic processes. The question remains what we mean by Orientalism and Capitalocentrism?

1.2A Orientalism

Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between “the Orient” and (most of the time) “the Occident”.

Orientalism is … a collective notion identifying “us” Europeans against all “those” non-Europeans … the idea of European identity as a superior
one in comparison with all the [backwardness of] non-European peoples and cultures.

Orientalism … as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient …

Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.

(Said 1985 [1978]: 2-3, 7)

For Said, Orientalism is a “style of thought” as also a “corporate institution” that, on the one hand, has to assert universality for the Occident, that is to say, the Occident cannot be limited by time, space or other cultures or traditions [in other words, “one has to de-Occidentalize the Occident and hypothesize the Universal – an Universal that in turn Occidentalizes the Orient – Occidentalizes the Orient in terms of a ‘shared telos’ and a ‘shared worldview’ ” (Chakrabarti and Dhar, 2009:12)]. On the other hand, Orientalism has to at the same time retain the exclusivity and particularity of the Occident – an exclusivity and particularity maintained through a positing of the Occident as an advanced Order of Things in the shared telos, as a step or two higher in the ladder of linear history (Dhareshwar, 1996). Taking off from such a posited Universal, the Occident first alters the Orient into an image (albeit lacking) of itself and then displays that the Orient is the same as the Occident, but not quite. “Thus, Orientalism is that which at the same time produces sameness as also a certain difference and distinction between the Occident and the Orient; on the one hand, it homogenizes and on the other, it hierarchies the Occident and the Orient” (Chakrabarti and Dhar, 2009:12). Based on the “Orient’s special place in European Western experience” (Said 1985 [1978]: 1), Orientalism is “a way of coming to terms with the Orient,” coming to terms with the Orient in terms of Occidental categories, where the ‘Orient’ is also one of the “deepest and most recurring” image of the
“Other”. “The Orient as an European invention – invention in terms of extant European categories; the Orient that has thus helped to define Europe (and the West) as its same but contrasting image, idea(l), personality, experience; the Orient as an integral part of European material civilization, culture and self-description/definition” (Chakrabarti and Dhar, 2009:14).

At a more ordinary level, Orientalism is a style of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles. Thus a very large group of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, anthropologists “ have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborating theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, “mind”, destiny, and so on” (Said 1978[1985]).

The concept or idea[l] of the West can be seen to function in the following ways:

First, it allows us to characterize and classify societies into different categories – i.e. ‘western’, ‘non-western’. It is a tool to think with. It sets a certain structure of thought and knowledge in motion.

Secondly, it is an image, or set of images. It condenses a number of different characteristics into one picture. It calls up in our mind’s eye – it represents in verbal and visual language – a composite picture of what different societies, cultures, peoples and places are like. It functions as part of a language, a ‘system of representation’.

… [for example, ‘western’ = urban = developed = rational-progressive-ordered; or ‘non-western’ = non-industrial = rural = agriculture = under-
developed = irrational = antiquated = womanly = native-like/savage = infantile.] …

Thirdly, it provides a standard or model of comparison. It allows us to compare to what extent different societies resemble, or differ from, one another. Non-western societies can accordingly be said to ‘close to’ or ‘far away from’ or ‘catching up with’ the West. It helps to explain difference [as also to set up a hierarchy].

Fourthly, it provides [a Universal] criteria of evaluation against which all other societies are ranked and around which powerful positive and negative feelings cluster. (For example, the ‘West’ = developed = good = desirable; or the ‘non-West’ = under-developed = bad = undesirable). (Hall 1992: 277)

“Orientalism has evolved into a dualistic perspective in which one aspect of the whole is presented as inferior in order to posit the superiority of the other aspect; and such a move entails epistemic violence of the worst order” (Chakrabarti and Dhar, 2009:14).

1.2B Capitalocentrism

If Orientalism has given stressed upon the question of culture and politics with respect to the ‘non-western’ societies, “Capitalocentrism is a specific rendition of economy understood from the centricity of the CAPITAL (Chakrabarti and Dhar, 2009:15). Mainstream renditions of economy are Capitalocentric, in the sense that they operate with a “centering notion of capitalism” (Gibson-Graham, Ruccio 2001: 164). Capitalocentrism, in contrast to the presence of noncapitalism\(^1\), was seen as “either

\(^1\) One when reads social context from the synchronic approach he identifies the opposite of the capitalism as noncapital. But one who reads social context from the diachronic approach, he considers the opposite of the capitalism as precapital.
(a) the same as, (b) the opposite of, (c) the complement to, or (d) located inside capitalism itself”\(^2\) (Gibson-Graham, Ruccio 2001: 164). They said that sometimes noncapitalist types of economy “are frequently considered to be the same as or indistinguishable from capitalism. Thus independent commodity producers who have effective possession of (by owning or renting) the means of production, who appropriate and distribute their own surplus, and buy and sell commodities on markets are often considered to be either the same as capitalists, or the same as proletarians” (Gibson-Graham, Ruccio 2001: 164). Noncapitalist performances are often described as “being the opposite of capitalism as, for example, when they are seen to be ‘primitive’ or traditional, stagnant, marginal, residual … weak” (Gibson-Graham, Ruccio 2001: 165). “Mainstream economists conceived them as the signs of underdevelopment or as the barrier of the forces of production. They intend to show that the center i.e. Capitalism is advanced and is responsible for the underdevelopment of the periphery. Because they did not take any substantial initiative to eliminating the barrier of the forces of production and their lacking of such initiative forces them (Marxists) to complete the unfinished agenda” (Chakrabarti and Dhar, 2009:15). Sometimes noncapitalism is portrayed “in terms of its ‘articulation’ with capitalism, it is often understood to play a complementary role. This is the case, for example, when rural activities are seen as providing the conditions of existence of capitalist activity elsewhere” (Gibson-Graham, Ruccio, 2001: 165).

“The Orientalist gaze works in tandem with the Capitalocentric gaze, to produce the de-valued space ‘third world’ as against the overvalued space Western Modernity. Through the overdetermination of Capitalocentrism and Orientalism, the space of non-capitalism is displaced into the derogatory other pre-capitalist where pre-

\(^2\) Rawal and Mishra hold the view of number (a) and (b).
capitalist is not simply a subordinate space in relation to the capitalist space” (Chakrabarti and Dhar, 2009:18). It is also constitutionally pathological reflective of and in turn reflecting the pathology of the space named ‘third world’. Thus, the category non-capitalism appears in third world contexts as pre-capitalism. “The lacking underside ‘Traditional-pre-Capitalist-Orient’ comes to symbolize a signpost of economic backwardness; agriculture and informal sector emerge as traditional sites of backwardness; peasant families, adivasis, dalits, informal sector workers, poor, poor women and poor children emerge as harbingers of pathology, as figures of backwardness; as ‘third worldliness’ as a whole” (Chakrabarti and Dhar, 2009:18).

1.3 Methodology requires for producing postcolonial space

Science works by maintaining a detachment from all sorts of attachment. Upon this maintenance of detachment is depended the success or failure of scientific knowledge. At the very outset, Dhurjati Prasad Mukerji (here after DP) has said NO to this given condition of science. He talks of attachment. Without proper contact, we can achieve knowledge, and that may be termed research or scholarship, but not Vidya. The reader must have realized that DP uses the term Vidya, and not science. He also creates a distinction between the two words. Vidya calls for activity. And this activity means establishing attachment. Attachment here does not mean to get bound within certain limits. Through close attachment is to be realized the several prints being textured by the threads of multiple colours. All these demand patience. Nothing can be achieved in a hurry. There cannot be fast arrival at some conclusion. Nor can there be any presumptions. This complexity cannot be assessed if everything is performed from a safe, detached distance. Attachment makes us learn the touch of the complex situation. And, detachment teaches us to view a reductionist shape of complexity. By Vidya is meant not only an understanding of the several colored prints of several
threads, but the technique of undoing those knots as well. It implies reception of the complexity as well as deciding on the proper direction from a particular standpoint. *Vidya*, to DP, means patience, *Vidya* means the technique of undoing the knot, of assimilating the power of deciding on the right direction.

DP mentions two types of researchers. One such group subscribes to scientism. Their research is marked by maintenance of a distance of detachment. Another group’s work is exercising *Vidya*. DP does not provide any generalized assumption about researchers. There are several types of researchers and intellectuals, and neither does DP talk of any homogenized entity. There are certain epistemo-ontological differences. DP is trying to assess the roles played by researchers and intellectuals in context of a particular standpoint. DP’s take on intellectuals (such intellectual researcher who understands revolution in terms of *Vidya*) in context of revolution is:

So far intellectuals have been born in the class of those who have rights to speak for others (*Adhikari*). Not that they are always the first to have felt dissatisfaction about something, but the articulated expression of such dissatisfaction, which you can call as speech reactions, is possible only by them. For the other group, the dissatisfaction only is their reality, but they do not possess a language for this. Revolution begins at the confluence of two streams – language and activity – and thus is created a new myth which, in turn, is received by the common people. … It is never easy for such people to sustain a revolution who live by words only. They need to create new symbol, interpret them and bestow them with life (Mukhopadhyay, 2009: 92).

It is the task of the intellectuals to create new ‘myths’ and ‘symbols’. The ruling class creates a specific kind of myth and symbol in the society. People start believing them
as real and natural. Again, a section of these very commoners gradually starts understanding the ploy behind such myths and symbols. They realize these to be tools for maintaining the exploitation and division in the society, and protest against those myths and symbols. But it requires the engagement of intellectuals for creation of newer myths and symbols to give this protest of commoners the shape of a counter-hegemonic. Intellectuals’ turnaround from the given hegemonic social formation. Intellectuals create these newer myths from the protests and grievances of the common mass. It may now be questioned if DP, then, sees the role of the intellectuals (irrespective of the qualitative differences he sees among the intellectuals) to be bigger than that of the common mass? DP writes:

The upper stratum of the society is dead. But, it seems, some are trying to push them to come to the top. Their cries reach our ears. Is this the sound for which Rabindranath Tagore waited all his life? Yes, I want to be one among the rescue-party, but that should never mean that I will expect their gratitude. May the pride of providing help never touch me. May they come out and take control of their own lives and, in the process, also change our courses of lives (Mukhopadhyay, 2009: 97).

DP is talking about the ‘bottom/below’ level. He makes this call to the intellectuals to keep their ears open. He asks them to do away with habits such as self-pride, and arrogance. Just as he mentions particular type of intellectuals in the previous quote (who will engage in exercising Vidya), here he says something else. People from the ‘below’ will change the intellectuals. At this point one might find DP guilty of inconsistency in what he says. Now he is for the importance of intellectuals and the next moment he says that people from the ‘below’ will change the intellectuals. What exactly does he want to say? Does DP’s approach become, on the one hand, a method
of streamlining intellectuals through contact with the people from below and on the other, of restructuring the people from below through interaction with intellectuals? Does the researcher adopt top-down approach? Does he/she take off from the people from below?

These methodological issues have been discussed in chapter two. This chapter problematizes the two given alternatives of knowledge production: Positivism and Hermeneutic. Besides, it shows the limits of these two schools of thought. This chapter is a foray into a particular methodological/philosophical problem that haunts both sociology and Marxism and where D.P. Mukerji’s perspective is seen as relevant. The chapter is taking shape against the backdrop of a paper written by Andre Beteille (1997). Beteille argues that the debate on Hermeneutic and Positivist approaches and the ‘insiders’ versus outsiders’ perspectives’ has hardly made any theoretical advancement in the last thirty years. He sees an impasse in so far as this debate is concerned. This chapter would like to introduce a theoretical insight developed by D.P Mukerji so as to find a way out of this stalemate. A particular rendition of Marxian dialectic, developed by D.P Mukerji is forwarded as the ‘third’ avenue in this paper. D.P Mukerji’s interpretation of dialectic offers a way out of the entrenched part-whole debate.

1.4 Selection of land relations as a unit of analysis

Going by present trends, by 2030, at least 60 per cent of the population in India is likely to live in rural settings (UN, 2007). This statistics demonstrates that the large populations in non-western societies are living in rural areas. Against this backdrop, this research has decided to take up the land question as an area of research.

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1.5 Postcolonial social formation with respect to the land relations

This dissertation is trying to point out three features. First, the experience of the peasant, organization of the agriculture, and habitus of the peasant not only portrays a different cultural description from ideal of the West and Capitalism but also it foregrounds a different philosophy of life that has hitherto been unexplored by the social scientists. Second, we would try to produce a theorization (philosophy) of the land relations which is beyond Orientalism and Capitalocentrism. Third, we shall review/examine/evaluate existing literature on land relations to find out whether these literatures are Orientalist and Capitalocentric or are these literatures going beyond Orientalism and Capitalocentrism? The crucial point here is the notion of difference but the rendition of difference is not understood with respect to the empirical experience; it is understood with respect to the philosophy. This research is proposing here a different philosophy of land relations.

1.6 Review of literature

There is no dearth of literature on ‘land reforms’ in West Bengal. Many scholars have put down their views on the effects of land reforms – effects, both on general productivity (this being understood as the realm primarily of the ‘economic’ – it relates also to the question of development in a post-colonial/neo-colonial world) as well as on the lives of the ‘beneficiaries’ (life understood in terms of the economic: per capita income; life understood in terms of socio-psychological categories: well being; quality of life; capabilities;)\(^4\). Some have highlighted the failures or limitations

\(^4\) Some have highlighted the benefits derived from land reforms – benefits at the level of general productivity (Rawal and Swaminathan,1998; Bandyopadhyay,2001; Banerjee, Gertler and Ghatak,2002; Liiten,1994, 1996a, 1996b.; Bhaumick,1993; Hanstad and Brown,2001; Mishra and Rawal,2002) and benefits at the level of beneficiaries (Sengupta,1981; Ghosh,1981;
of land reforms – limitations at the level of beneficiaries (Khasnabis and Chakravarty, 1982; Westergaard, 1986; Bhaumick, 1993; Mallick, 1993; Mukherji and Bandyopadhyay, 1993; Khasnabis, 1981; Mukhopadhyay, 1994; Bandyopadhyay, 2001). Some have argued: would not the same benefits flow from ‘developments’ flowing from processes other than ‘land reforms’ (Harris, 1993; Dasgupta, 1998; Rogaly, Harris-White and Bose, 1999; Bose, 2001). These different researchers basically wanted to show how far the program of land reforms has been successful in reducing or even putting an end to the process of exploitation. Then, why take up the oft-discussed issue of land reforms once again? One might presume in this regard that we would follow the methodology of our predecessors. It is my understanding that if the methodology of our predecessors is really followed once again there is very little scope for pointing out other possible imaginations of the land relations. The conceptual and methodological issues play the important role in this research. The important question remains what is the methodology of our predecessors?

Surjya Kanta Mishra and Vikas Rawal (2002) did not claim that the land reform in West Bengal is synonymous with Marxist revolution. Instead, they considered it as the successful example of democratic revolution. Their rendition of land reform program is based on certain presuppositions. Firstly, they considered that concentration of land in a few hands only helps to perpetuate poverty, exploitation and agricultural cessation. If land monopoly is broken and land is distributed to landless poor peasants, it will create solidarity among the peasants and helps them to strengthen bargaining power and in breaking the feudal ties, which as a result largely reduces poverty and exploitation. Secondly, the landlord–moneylender combines need
to be eliminated since they can act as a barrier to the development of the forces of production. Thirdly, rural contending classes are defined with respect to either the ownership of the means of production singly or in combination with another factor viz. Power. Those who own the means of production have more power over others. Redistribution of assets is therefore necessary. Apart from these presuppositions, they said that the land reform program “did not completely do away with the baggage of precapitalist relations of production. The limitations of the legal provisions in the Indian constitution and the restricted capabilities of state government in a federal polity posed obstacles to the implementation of a more radical program of agrarian reform” (Mishra and Rawal, 2002: 334). But methodologically they have no doubt in mind that precapitalist production relations “can not be resolved without radical agrarian reform, which can only be accomplished through agrarian revolution” (Mishra and Rawal, 2002: 353). After reading of their whole article, on a prima foci ground, it would seem that they are much more concerned with the existing developmental issues. Though in their article, they showed that West Bengal in all the aspects of development such as poverty elimination, literacy rate, employment, daily wages etc, attained significant achievements. But if we consider their presuppositions, we would perhaps notice that they basically follow the general tenets of the CPI (M) party program which states that “the first and foremost task … is to carry out radical agrarian reform in the interest of the peasantry so as to sweep away all the remnants of feudal and semi-feudal fetters on our productive forces of agriculture as well as industries” [italics mine].

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5 C.P.I (M) party Program, adopted at the 7th Congress, Calcutta, 2000.
Mishra and Rawal (2002) methodologically accepted the thesis – anti-thesis – synthesis logic. The traditional Marxist discourse of historical materialism is based on such Hegelian logical triad. The basic framework in historical materialism is that at times the forces of production in particular historical phase comes into conflict with existing relations of production. In effect, crisis takes place and this crisis is resolved by revolution, which gives birth to a new social formation. The combination of the forces and the relations of production are considered as the independent causal force of history. History accomplishes its telos through this process. Could we then say, if land reform has achieved its goal then it is theoretically tenable (from the view point of Economics) that capitalist mode of production has taken place and capitalist mode of production, following this logic, signifies the absence of pre-capitalist mode of production or pre-capitalist class processes. Basically, this logical face of Marx is compatible with the Marx of Communist Manifesto where he clearly assumed that capitalism “creates a world after its own image”. The land relations, according to these authors, are precapitalist which are also known as semi-feudal or feudal land relations. This representation of land relations is organized around the ideal of capitalism. Historically (following Historical Materialism) feudalism is a prior stage of Capitalism. These authors values capitalist stage, that’s why the prior stage of Capitalism theorizes as feudal or semi-feudal.

In his famous work, Atul Kohli (1987) highlights the ideological standpoint of Left Front Government and considers that this Government is deviated from the path of revolution. In our opinion, Kohli tries to mention that the Left Front Government is failure to changing the social totality, which they have rigorously mentioned in their political programme. Ross Mallick (1993) empirically evaluates development policy of the Left Front Government and rejects the claim of success made by Left Front
Government in the post – 1977 phase. Both these authors follow the logic of *Historical Materialism*. According to them, Left Front Government was failed to carry out the bourgeois democratic revolution. These authors also value the ethos of Capitalism (private ownership, competition etc). Their line of thinking follows the linear History of Feudalism-Capitalism-Socialism where Capitalism is placed at the *centre* stage.

G.K. Lieten (1996a) noted social scientist in this field, is much more sensitive to Left Front Government. Though, he critically examines the programme of the Left Front Government but he has not mentioned any strong criticism, as compared with the Ross Mallick, to Left Front Government. The way, through which he has gone through his work, deserves special attention. Because he tries to examine all of the aspects comprising within social totality. Economic, political, cultural — all of these aspects are taken into consideration. But G.K. Lieten (1996a) is trying to draw a positive relation between private ownership over the land and empowerment. According to him, empowerment of the peasants flow from the private ownership over the land. He is also valuing the capitalist ethos of private ownership.

*Sonar Bangla: Agricultural growth and Agrarian Change in West Bengal and Bangladesh*, edited by Rogaly, Barbara-Harris-White and Bose (1999) deserves special mention. This book creates a tremendous impetus within the discourse of agrarian studies. The Authors of this book discard the claim, made by Left Front Government, of direct correlation between private ownership and productivity. They opine that the new HYV seeds of *Boro* rice and the ground water irrigation system play crucial role so far the increased productivity of rice is concerned. Theoretically, they are valuing the notion of private ownership over the land.
Khasnabis (1981) accused the Left Front government by asserting that “the intermediary interests on the soil being the legacy of feudal property rights, the program of *abolition of the intermediaries* has an anti-feudal content. It was therefore a part of the classic bourgeois democratic revolution against the feudal interests. In this sense, ‘land to the tiller’ is a bourgeoisie call” (Khasnabis, 1981: 43) (italics mine). He did not understand “why a ‘Marxist’ party with peoples’ democratic revolution in agenda is so conservative on this issue” (Khasnabis, 1981: 44). Conservative in the sense that the Left Front government was never so ambitious to change the rearrangement of property relations adequately. “Instead, the Left Front government, said Khasnabis, is trying to create an atmosphere for the perpetuation of the tenancy which assures the perpetuation of intermediate interests on the soil at the same time” (1981: 44). “Operation Barga (OB) which tries to record the rights of the tenants approves the intermediary rights of the landowners, too. Thus rent earning authority of the non-cultivators, condemned by the bourgeois democratic revolution, gets a communist sanction” (Khasnabis, 1981: 44). Hence Khasnabis draws his conclusion by saying, “this reduces an erstwhile revolutionary to an ordinary reformist one” (Khasnabis, 1981: 44).

In reply to these criticisms, Biplab Dasgupta (1984a) said, “one should make a clear distinction between the long-term and short-term objectives. The long-term objective is very much related to the question of state power at the national level. The objective is to carry out what is known as ‘people democratic revolution’, … the main objective of which would be to abolish landlordism, and to place the land in the hands of those who actually till the land” (Dasgupta, 1984a: 89). The short-turn objective, on the other hand, said Dasgupta, is operating at the state level within the confinement of the bourgeois-landlord constitution. Therefore it “can not be equated with what can only
be attained at the national level in the long term after the transformation of political power to the working class and peasantry” (Dasgupta, 1984a: 89). Moreover, Dasgupta identified transformation, which is gradually taking place after land reforms, as transition towards capitalism but Khasnabis designated it as transition towards semi-feudalism.

The debate between Khasnabis (1981) and Dasgupta (1984b) is property relation centric. Khasnabis (1981) accused the Left Front Government for not fully changing [which in other words, is abolition of] the property relations. In response to these criticisms, Dasgupta (1984b) replied that the Left Front Government is not unwilling to change these property relations but since they are working within the constitutional framework, they have made certain compromises with the existing structure and the present land reform program is in actuality a short-term project. In the long-term project they will change the property relation in accordance with their party agenda. From this discussion could we draw the conclusion that they both agree on the fact that the Marxist project relies heavily on changing property relations? Secondly, they both read the social text in relation to capitalism. Khasnabis assumed that feudalism plays a complementary role to capitalism whereas Dasgupta argued that the social condition moving towards capitalism. Then could we say that they both hold a Capitalocentric vision?

These views presumed that relations of production, understood in terms of the criterion of ownership, play a determining role in the success of the program of land reforms. Therefore existing relations of production needed to be changed. It needed to be changed also to increase productivity as well as ‘quality of life’ of the people. It worked on the presumption that this much needed change in relations of production would bring about an end to exploitation. In addition, these different perspectives are
related to a certain extent with a particular version of Marxism; a version that primarily gives importance to the question of productivity and the redistribution of assets through the abolition of private property, in the long run. At present when Marxism as a theory and an ethico-politics is in crisis, West Bengal remains an exceptional case where a Marxist government had been in power through participation in electoral democracy over a period of nearly 34 years. Naturally, this persistence of the left in power creates an attraction among the researchers. They have therefore analyzed the different programs of the Left Front Government and have tried to pinpoint how far these programs have fulfilled the goal of ‘Marxism’, a given form of Marxism. Land reforms, as one major program of the Left Front Government, fall in this category. Recent studies (Bandyopadhyay, 2001) show that the beneficiaries who got land and tenancy rights, are now struggling with different problems.

In all of these literatures, it has been found that the authors are valuing private ownership over the land. They are also following the logic of land relations taking place at the Western society. What is valid and true for the West is valid for the rest is the logic that structures the mindset of the authors. So far we have come across different literatures on land relation; we have found three thinkers who have posed serious questions against the Capitalocentrism and Orientalism, relating with land relations. They are Radhakamal Mukerjee, Dhurjati Prasad Mukerji and P.C. Joshi.

Radhakamal Mukerjee was repeatedly emphasizing the need for recognizing the specificities of the land relations and for reevaluating Western theories and categories in the light of these specificities. He said in his book “Fields and Farmers of Oudh”, “Nowhere has there been a greater neglect of the realities of economic life than in the curriculum of economics in Indian Universities. The Indian student can hardly find in
his text-book a description of the economic environment in which he lives. The systems which are built up for him are castles in the air.' When he comes out of the University, his theories instead of helping him towards interpretation and concrete achievement are a handicap to him” (1929: V). Mukerjee’s research on the land relations — “Land Problems of India” (1935), “Democracies of the East” (1923), “Fields and Farmers of Oudh” (1929), and “The Borderlands of Economics” (1925) are all important as critical studies and graceful interpretations of his philosophy of rural ways of life in the context of the making of a new culture and civilization. He also sets up the mutual constitutive relation between macro rural situation and the specificities of the micro experience. These studies are also crucial for considering land relations as an inter-disciplinary problem, entailing the help of economics, sociology, human geography, history, political philosophy and ethics. Mukerjee’s analysis thus brings to the fore the value of ‘non-individualist-communitarian ethics. He has given emphasis upon the question of ‘rural communalism’ instead of individualistic institutions based upon the notion bourgeois private ownership. The colleague of Radhakamal Mukerjee, Dhurjati Prasad Mukerji (1987) reviewed two books written by Sachin Sen (“Studies in the Land Economics of Bengal”) and Radhakamal Mukerjee (“Land Problems of India”). DP does agree with the authors that the Permanent Settlement has had two negative factors on land relations. First, it destroys the collective ownership over the land and imports instead an individual property right over the land. Second. It produces intermediaries in the land relations. P.C. Joshi, students of both Radhakamal Mukerjee and D.P. Mukerji, says in his book “Land Reforms in India” (1975), “The dangers of any construction of concepts and theories unrelated to fact-finding [empirical] and of fact-finding unrelated to matrix of concepts and theories. … social has grown through ‘implantation’ and where
indiscriminate borrowing of concepts and theories has occurred without sufficient empirical exploration of one’s own society” (Joshi, 1975: 4). Joshi has made objection against the uncritical acceptance of the given Western theories. It would cause the mismatch between thinking and being. Side by Side, Joshi has also raised an important question, he says, “One of the basic gaps in land reform studies in India is that professional social scientists have devoted most of their attention to the evaluation of land reforms legislation and its implementation” (Joshi, 1975: 89). Joshi explains that the professional social scientists have confined themselves in the closed circle of bourgeois institutional legality. This reductionist confinement acts as a barrier to the development of a new research on land relations.

1.7 Marking out the specificity of postcoloniality with respect to the land relations

This research is proposing that the specificity of land relation in non-western societies is run by the philosophy of Svatva. It has been discussed in detail in chapter four. The question remains what is meant by Svatva? As per the smritis, there are two types of objects – Swakiya (one’s own possession) and parakiya (belonging to other). As per the smritis, we do not have any possessedness whatsoever over the parakiya objects. This smriti shastra says that the meaning of possessedness or Svatva is fitness for use or fit to be used or useful or serviceable or usable. Eating, donation, selling, etc. have usefulness. For instance, it is because rice or bread can be eaten that they have some usefulness. And this usability changes with the difference in svakiya and parakiya. At least, the smritis think so. Hence, although rice or bread can be eaten (that means,  

6 It should be mentioned in this context that the British administrators read the smriti shastras very minutely. But, the question remains, why did they read these texts with such attention?
they have some usability), we do not have any possessedness over parakiya rice. The equation formulated by the smriti shastra, hence, is:

\[
Svatva \text{ (possessedness)} = \text{fitness for use/usability} = \text{recognition of the difference between swakiya and parakiya.}
\]

Raghunath’s question is: If Svatva is based on usability, then how can the Svatva of rice differ on basis of the distinction as recognized by the swakiya and parakiya? (Bandyopadhyay, 2006). Absence of Svatva or usability, or difference between the swakiya and parakiya is possible only when there is claiming done by application of force or private ownership may be established in bourgeois sense of the term. It means that there is no relation between the concept of Svatva and the distinction between the swakiya and parakiya. Therefore, Raghunath reminds us that the equation: Svatva (possessedness) = fitness for use/usability = recognition of the distinction between swakiya and parakiya, is, in actuality, a non-equation. Potter and Bhattacharya edited (1993) Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies deals with the issue of possessedness in this manner:

Another new category is possessedness (Svatva).

Objection: That is nothing but being fit for use as one wishes.

Answer: Not precisely, for one may “use” food, i.e., eat it, even when it belongs to others.

Objector: One is enjoined not to eat food belonging to others.

Raghunatha: You see, you must already understand possessedness in order to understand such an injunction. Possessedness is a property that belongs
to people when they receive gifts and that they lose when they give things away (1993: 533).

In this context, we may also recall Nrisinghaprasad Bhaduri (2009 [1416]). He writes that the one who is the sovereign king, who has domination over the entire world; he can give away his entire kingdom. Svabarswami answers – how can he? An ordinary person too can enjoy exactly the same amount of land that a sovereign king enjoys. In this respect, the two are similar. Land has its fitness for use, and, because of this, both the king and the common people can enjoy this land. But it is an entirely different thing if the king applies force to capture the land. In that case, only the king can enjoy that particular piece of land. If we agree with the logic of ‘fitness for use’, the question of ownership upon land becomes meaningless and does not call for any discussion. Professor Bhaduri (2009 [1416]) further states that in a Brahmana as ancient as the Satapatha Brahmana, we find that when Bisvakarma expresses his desire to donate land to the Bhoubana Yajnika Purohita as honorarium, then Mother-Earth herself arrives to warn the king and she says – no mortal human has the right to give me away. You are behaving like a fool. From this conversation, we come to know that the ruling king, on one hand, is trying to establish his administrative right, and, on the other hand, those who consider land to be the origin and sustainer of everything animate and inanimate, are creating obstruction to this aggression.

There is no swakiya-parakiya distinction whatsoever between the ruler and the ruled in matters related to use of land. This difference may arise only when the ruler tries to capture/control land by applying his administrative power. The question of private ownership of land, thus, holds no importance in this regard. As per Sundar Sarukkai, “ownership cannot be restricted to a simple binary of the owner and the owned, nor can it be understood entirely in terms of freedom to do what one wants with the
owned. Instead, there are social obligations which restrict our sense of [bourgeois] ownership” (2008: 286).

Subhendu Dasgupta (2005) has written: If the dominance of market really takes over these places, if all elements and all people are brought within the ambit of market, then a large portion of the village people will no more be able to sustain themselves any further. We could re-write it in this manner: If capital really starts dominating this space, if all elements and all people are brought within the ambit of capital, then a large portion of the village people cannot sustain themselves any more. Legal control of bourgeois private ownership would no more allow stray use of the land; rather it would earn money from it by virtue of its control. “In fact, the process of acquiring control over markets can be seen, theoretically, as a part of PCA [Primitive Capital Accumulation]. The market constitutes a territory as much as land. On the basis of control over markets, capital appropriates rent, which is concealed as profit” (Basu, 2008: 42).

1.8 Impact of History

This research asks:

- Why the demand of the crop sharing is displaced into the private ownership over the land?
- Why the historiography of the peasant movement gets displaced into the private ownership over the land?
- Why the historians of the peasant movement invoke the subject of the peasant who desires the private ownership over the land?

The above mentioned questions have been discussed in chapter three. In this particular chapter, it has been claimed that the History is not an innocent process. It shapes the conceptual structure of a particular incident. Two major incidents
shapes/structures the land relations thinking in West Bengal. In other words, Permanent Settlement and Land Reform Programme structure the conceptual mapping of the land relations. We are trying to narrate theses two histories briefly. Before the arrival of the British large parts of present day India was ruled by the Mughals. In the Mughal period, peasants enjoyed customary rights over land. But this customary right changed when the land of Bengal was taken over by the East India Company and later by the British. British Governor Lord Cornwallis introduced and implemented the Permanent settlement Act in 1793. This act took away the customary rights of the peasant over land and made the land lord the owner of these lands albeit with a condition. The Permanent Settlement Act introduced bourgeois private ownership over the land. Zamindars, under the Permanent Settlement Act, had to pay a fixed rent within a stipulated time. The British government over the times determined and revised this rent. In case of the failure to pay rent, the land was taken away from the zamindar and sold by auction. The zamindar, thus became more of a rent collector and acted as a middleman between peasants and Governments. As a result, Zamindars constantly enhanced the rent to be paid by the peasants against the ‘fixed revenue’ they themselves had to pay to the British. Thereby they constantly increased their own collection and profit. Most of the time peasants failed to pay the increasing amount of rent, which in turn led to their eviction from their land. Large numbers of peasants were evicted from their own land during this period. As a result widespread unrest took place and the British sought to stabilize the situation through legislated tenancy

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7 The land undisputedly owned by the original cultivators, the question of formal property rights over land did not arise (Bhaumick, 1993).

8 Zamindars became de facto owners of the land. The British institutionalized a pervasive dichotomy in this region between rent receivers and actual tillers of the soil. (Saha, 2002).
reform (1859, 1885, and 1938). The Bengal Rent Act of 1859 put restrictions on the power of landlords’ to enhance rent or evicts tenants. The act only safeguarded fixed-rent tenants and did not defend sharecroppers and agricultural laborers. The Bengal Tenancy Act (BT Act hereafter) of 1885 was settled after a series of peasant uprising from the middle of the 19th century. The Santhal Rebellion (1855-57), the Blue Mutiny (1859-61), and the peasant revolt in Sirajgange (1872-73) were the more serious among the other peasant movements. “The Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 tried to control the greed, rapacity and cruelty of Zamindars and tenure holders to protect tenants by giving them rights regarding security of tenure, fairness of rent, legal process for ejectment and the like” (Bandyopadhyay, 2001). The BT Act also sought to protect long-standing fixed-rent peasants and was similarly unsuccessful (Bhaumick, 1993). Under pressure from peasant movements, the British Government in 1938 was compelled to set up a land revenue commission under the chairmanship of Francis Floud (Bandyopadhyay, 2001). The commission was popularly known as Floud Commission. The commission recommended abolition of the zamindari system and the giving of tenancy right to the sharecroppers.\(^9\)

On the eve of independence the agrarian scene of the West Bengal was following:

There were Zamindars at the apex and a rackrented peasantry at the bottom. There were many layers of intermediaries between these two categories. Whereas the Zamindars were an absentee owner the jotedars were at the top and held large blocks of land with full occupancy rights. They always cultivated land by hired agricultural laborers (Eashvaraiah, 1993).

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\(^9\) The report of the Floud Commission assessed in 1940 that there were five million sharecroppers in undivided Bengal province (Bandyopadhyay, 2001).
In order to transform the existing agrarian structure, the Bargadari Act of 1950 was enacted but this act failed to protect the interest of the bargadars primarily because it did not provide security of tenure and there was no possibility of making the bargadars the owners of the lands they cultivated in spite of their long standing status as tenants (Eashvaraiah, 1993; Bhaumick, 1993).

The first comprehensive law to deal with the basic structural problems arising out of colonial land laws was the West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act of 1953. The Act of 1953 tried to eliminate the interests of the intermediaries (Zamindars and ryots) by state acquisition on payment of compensation. It fixed a ceiling on land holdings and brought intermediary holders under direct state control. The ceiling fixed was 25 acres on the *Khas* possession of agricultural land\(^{10}\) and was 20 acres of non-agricultural and homestead lands. The West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act of 1953 was limited in the sense that there was no restriction on the possession of land under plantations, orchards, and tank fisheries. Zamindars and rayots used successfully these exemptions to retain their control on land.

The countryside as a result was boiling with social unrest and militant peasant movement (the Naxalbari uprising). In 1967, left-wing non-congress parties formed a coalition government known as the United Front government. The United Front government tried to point out the underlying concerns of the peasants “by improving the position of the *bargadars* and distributing more surplus land” (Hanstad and Brown, 2001). These programs, while groundbreaking, were not adequately implemented by the time the United Front government collapsed due to the imposition

\(^{10}\) Self-cultivated-land by using hired agricultural laborers.
of President rule in 1970. The frustration of the early 70s in West Bengal was overcome by the ushering a left force — a Marxist force, called the CPI (M). But this does not mean that this force came to power naturally. Rather social conditions\textsuperscript{11} played a constitutive role in creating circumstances favourable to their coming to power.

The CPI (M)-led Left Front, came to power in 1977, and decided to go ahead with a Land Reforms Program, within the framework of the Indian Constitutional system. Aware of the urgency of agrarian restructuring, the Left Front Government gave the highest priority to recording the names of sharecroppers and recovering the ceiling surplus lands for distribution among the rural poor [changing property relation]. As far as the question of land is concerned the C.P.I (M)’s party program holds the following ideological position\textsuperscript{12}:

\begin{quote}
The first and foremost task … is to carry out radical agrarian reform in the interest of the peasantry so as to sweep away all the remnants of feudal and semi-feudal fetters on our productive forces of agriculture as well as industries. [italics mine]
\end{quote}

In order to unleash the productive forces in agriculture, “the reform aimed at providing land and other forms of support to the landless and security of tenure to sharecroppers. In this way, land reform aimed at redistribution of assets and wealth” [changing property relation] (Mishra and Rawal, 2002). In other words, it was hoped that “the distribution of land, even of unlivable mini-plots, was seen as crucial to

\textsuperscript{11} Social conditions designate the constitutive moment of the economic, political and cultural aspects.

\textsuperscript{12} CPI (M) party program 2000, updated by the special conference of the CPI (M), held at Thiruvananthapuram, October 20-23).
strengthening bargaining power and breaking the feudal bind … the policy of land distribution was to ensure that small plots of land were made available to as many families as possible to give them some degree of independence: the security of land and food income from it, would enable them to press for higher agricultural wages” [changing property relation] (Lieten, 1996b). Against this background, Operation Barga was launched in the later part of 1978. The main objectives of this program are as follows:

a) Quick recording of the names of the sharecroppers … and thereby securing to them the legal rights that they are entitled to.

b) Distribution of already available ceiling surplus vested lands among the landless and the land poor rural workers with the active cooperation of the Panchayati raj institution.

c) Drive to detect and vest more ceiling surplus lands through quasi-judicial investigative machinery with the help of rural workers organisations and Panchayati raj institutions.

d) Giving institutional credit cover to the sharecroppers and the assignees of vested land to irreversibly snap the ties of bondage they have with the landlords and money-lenders.

e) Assigning permanent title for homestead purpose to all the landless agricultural workers (including sharecroppers).

f) Giving financial assistance in the form of subsidies to the assignees of vested land for development of their lands (Bandyopadhyay, 1981).

Under the program, it is claimed that “1.4 million bargadars (sharecroppers) were registered and given permanent and heritable rights to cultivate sharecropped land” (Mishra and Rawal, 2002). Besides, “1.04 million acres were distributed to around 2.5 million landless and marginal-cultivators households. This constitutes about 20 per
cent of the total land distributed in all the states of India under land reform” (Mishra and Rawal, 2002).

From the above discussion, it has been seen that the land reforms program of the Left Front Government is focused on the issue of productivity and end exploitation through a change in relations of property. This program hoped that the change in the property relation [or relations of production] might minimize the process of exploitation and in turn increase productivity. This kind of assumption is substantiated by the different researchers. They (Rawal and Swaminathan, 1998; Banerjee, Gertler and Ghatak, 2002; and Lieten, 1994, 1996b) showed that a direct correlation, a one to one causal relation, exists between ‘land reforms’ [changing property relation] and ‘productivity’. However, a number of other studies (Byres, 2002; Rogaly et al., 1999; Bose, 2001) have tried to show that productivity has indeed increased without undertaking the program of land reforms or in other words there is no direct correlation between productivity and the redistribution of assets. Others (Dasgupta, 1998; Bandyopadhyay, 2001) have showed that the beneficiaries, who got land and tenancy right, are now struggling with different problems. The fact of reverse tenancies and lack of control over the patta land are the examples of such problems.

This is evident that the two major events – permanent settlement and land reforms programme – structure the mindset of the peasant. It has been assumed that the property right over the land is the *natural* as well as *organic* demand of the peasant. But it has become clear that the *natural* is historically constructed fact. It seems that the ‘social’ is totally dominated by the logic of property right. As if the land relation is constituted by the logic of property relations. Peasants are performing as a profit maximizing agents. Peasants are transforming themselves as ‘capitalist’ subject.
1.9 Land relations in reality

Chapter four has discussed the socio-economic and physical characteristics of the two districts which have been selected as the study area.

Chapter five describes the empirical results. The empirical study was conducted in the state of West Bengal as because this state has been considered as one of the state in which land reforms have been implemented effectively. The state distributed confiscated land known as vested land among landless labourers, identified as pattadars. Now the landless labourers become a property-owner, enjoying bourgeois property right over the land. They have become a ‘bourgeois subject’ but the question remains are their everyday life run by the bourgeois logic?

South 24 parganas and Barddhaman districts have been selected for this research. One block from each district has been selected. Kakdwip block was chosen from South 24 parganas district and Memari I block was selected from Barddhaman district. From each block 50 respondents consist of pattadars (also known as marginal peasant by the official definition of census), share-croppers landless labourers, poor villagers, landowners, and relatives of land owners were selected through the non-probability purposive sampling.

One major criticism against this sampling method is that the sample size is too small for making any kind of generalization. This research is not trying to make any kind of generalization premised upon sampling method. The generalization technique is putting the notion of the average. The average is a part that represents the entire social totality. In other words, following Durkheim, it acts as a social fact. The average description of the social has failed to acknowledge the differences that exist in the society. The materialization of the average is possible through the excluding minority forms of life. The only objective behind carrying out this survey is to show
the limits of bourgeois property right. Though the ideal of the bourgeois property right does enjoy the dominant status but it does not succeed to annihilate other forms of practices. This survey is going to disclose that the peasant personality represents an ambiguous self. He/she sometimes performs as a profit maximizing agents, favouring capitalism but the same peasant violates the logic he/she upholds earlier. Is it not possible to draw a straight-line that the economy is run by the logic of capitalism? The idea of deconstructing CAPITALISM was influenced by the work of two geographers: J.K Gibson-Graham (1996, 2006). A representation of the ECONOMY as essentially CAPITALIST is dependent on the exclusion of many types of economic activities. Is the dominant discourse on land relations propertycentric? A representation of ‘land’ as essentially Capitalist is reliant upon on the exclusion other types of social relation related with the land.

1.10 Postcolonial Peasant Society in India in the 21st Century

Chapter six begins with an ambitious statement: What passes off as a social problem is not a social problem at all. Though it is an ambitious statement, yet we have uncritically accepted what has been given to us as social problem. As if social problem is given. It has never been questioned the apparent neutral representation of social problem. However, the major theme of this chapter is to revisit the issue of peasant as social problem. This chapter is going to argue that the whenever the peasants defy the capitalist order, they are considered as social problem. Their resistance translated as social pathology and understood as the marker of underdevelopment. This chapter on the other hand puts forward the argument that the Capitalism though represents itself as the marker of development but it produces poverty and inequality in the society. Capitalism claims that it would eliminate poverty via the logic development but it creates poverty in the name of development.
This chapter is going to propose that the time has come to treat Capitalism as a social problem. Citing the case of Nandigram incidence took place in West Bengal, this chapter shows Peasants of Nandigram, though temporarily, have halted the process of capitalist development. If we review the history of development in India, we may conclude that the received model of Capitalist Development enhances economic inequality in all respect. Nevertheless, we have accepted the model of Capitalist Development as a Historical compulsion. Capitalist Development claims that it will eliminate poverty, but we have noticed that it produces poverty and economic inequality. History of Capitalism proves that its basis is premised on exploitation, plundering, destruction and colonization. The question remains: Why have we not yet considered Capitalism as a social problem? The ‘ignorant’ people of Nandigram have expressed their desire to disagree to the capitalist history of exploitation, plundering, destruction and colonization. In lieu of their lives, their bodily violation, they have succeeded in opening a window for the imagination of an alternative model of development.

Peasants of Nandigram put to question the naturalized History driven understanding of Capitalist development. Perhaps they wanted to uphold their mode of being-in-the-world. They were not willing to judge themselves as per the standards set by others (read standards set by the political leaders and intellectuals). They could not agree to identify/classify/categorize themselves as ‘underdeveloped’-'backward'-’third world’ subject imposed from above. They wanted to resist the violence of naming, enforced from above. The chapter six asks few questions:

- What is social idea(l). Does it exist objectively (structurally given)? Or, is it culturally constructed?
- Is there any continuum between the idea(l) of the social (approved norms of the society) and power-ideology?
- Does it mean that there are 'multiple synchronic realities'? Is 'multiple synchronic realities understood in Historical sense of 'pre' and 'post'? Is 'multiple synchronic realities’ hierarchically ordered?
- If there are 'multiple synchronic realities’, why do we then come to believe that the understanding of social reality is singular or monolithic, or why do we cherish the idea(l) of the centrism (such as Capitalocentrism)?
- If antagonisms/contradiction is constitutive in social reality, why do we then (mis)recognize that social reality is the ONE? Does power-ideology continuum mask constitutive antagonisms/contradiction of social reality?
- Does power-ideology continuum repress/suppress constitutive antagonisms/contradiction of social reality and signify the image of social reality as the only ONE? Is violence constitutive in making social reality as the ONE?
- Do repressed social realities reterritorialize themselves as a social problem?
- Why do we consider other forms of social reality as pathological?
- Does social problem legitimize existing dominant social order? Or, does the existing dominant social order create/raise social problem so that it can represent itself as the Idea(l) ONE.
- Could we say that the naming/labeling of social problem, imposed by the existing dominant social order, is necessary because it functions as a resistant category?
- Does the generalized norm of the society have a specific class, caste, sexual, gender character? Is it exploitative?
But the question remains why this section is trying to deal with the issues of Nandigram incident. This chapter would try to show how this particular incident structures the mind set-up of the peasants of the other parts. In other words, peasants of the Nandigram have problematized the naturalized legitimacy of the Capitalism. The peasants who put to question the normal order of the Capitalism are considered as social problem. This chapter on the other hand would try to question the very idea of social problem, premised upon the logic of normal order.

Chapter seven is going to take off from the two supposedly contradictory positions: one which believes that ‘peasant’ as a marker of different spatio-temporality has been made to vanish from the landscape of the social; while the other position puts forth the specificity of the postcolonial transition where ‘corporate capital’ can live with ‘pre-capital’. Moreover, Capitalism, claim Sanyal and Chatterjee (2007) preserves the culture of pre-capitalism through governmental apparatus. Otherwise, the legitimacy of capitalism will be threatened/challenged. Capitalism needs to rethink its earlier position when it did not provide any protection to the evicted or displaced peasant. The situation has changed now; capitalism is, as if, under the compulsion of addressing the evicted/displaced peasant. This description carries two important connotations: first, it highlights the active agency of the peasant. Peasant activism seemingly compels capitalism to address the loss they incur as a result of the capitalist development. In addition, it also highlights the success story of peasant activism that hinders the materialization of full-blown capitalism. Second, it agrees with the view that governmentality can really address the loss of the peasant caused by the capitalist development. Moreover, it also homogenizes the contradictory shades of peasant subjectivity; as if, all peasants are aspiring for the governmental apparatus to realize their loss caused by capitalism induced primitive accumulation (known as
development program). In addition, this analysis presumes that if governmental apparatus functions well, all peasants will then say ‘yes’ to development program. The entire analysis, as put forth by Sanyal and Chatterjee (2007) fails to theorize the ‘subject’ who says ‘no’ to capitalism induced development program and governmentality. The question remains: why do Sanyal and Chatterjee (2007) overestimate the (metaphysical?) presence of Capitalism? ‘Other’ still exists in the face of global capitalism.

Sociologist Dipankar Gupta (2005) is of the opinion that globalization and the increasing pressure of market force has resulted in almost total erasure of the existence of the small peasants’ society. Peasant’s son no more wants to be a peasant; they are rather reluctant about farming and see no plausible future as small peasants. In other words, they desire capitalism induced forms of life. Employment in works outside agriculture is increasing in the villages. Instead of engaging in agricultural works, small peasants are shifting towards cities – “vanishing village” – the rural society is fast vanishing. It reminds us of the situation in Saratchandra’s story “Mahesh”.

Hardt-Negri (2004), Sanyal and Chatterjee (2007) and Chatterjee (2008) opine that the capitalism-governmentality continuum is creating such a structure where there may be coexistence of capitalist and non-capitalist system. They have produced an elaborate sketch of this structure. For instance, Partha Chatterjee’s reading of the peasant community in postcolonial society is indeed significant. Professor Chatterjee thinks that the uniqueness of 21st century capitalist system lies in its ability to coexist with peasant culture; global capital can live with non-capital. Orthodox Marxist position identifies the transformation of peasants into labors as one of the chief features of the process of translation from pre-capitalist society to capitalist society. In
Professor Chatterjee’s (2008) language, *growth of capitalist industry inevitably leads to the destruction of peasant community and turn them into proletariat wage-labors* (translation mine). Professor Chatterjee (2008), however, notices something rather opposite in today’s world – not a solely capitalist system, rather, peaceful (?) coexistence of capitalism and pre-capitalism. He would rather say that the twenty-first century models of industrial development in big agro-based countries like China, India and the South-East Asian countries could aid in further development and preservation of the peasant culture. Professor Chatterjee wants to problematise the much used notion of primitive accumulation in orthodox Marxism. Orthodox Marxism has so far viewed primitive accumulation as a necessary step in ascent from feudalism to capitalism. Professor Chatterjee wants to question this very view. The theoretical understanding of primitive accumulation falls inadequate today in explaining the social reality of the postcolonial society. A gap is being noticed between theory and reality. In his words, analysis of the emergent modes in postcolonial capitalism demands new viewpoints.

Professor Chatterjee (2008) attempts at an understanding of the tension between global capital and non-corporate capital in the postcolonial society; just as in West Europe – “inevitable extinction of peasant society as a result of initial accumulation of capital”. But the scenario is different in postcolonial society. In this society, the existence of the peasant society can still be felt; an important reason behind this, in words of Professor Chatterjee, is the governmental and public enterprises that perform the governmental duties, along with the NGOs, are no more distant objects for the peasant society. It bears several significances. First, numerous public-welfare and development related programs aimed at the poor people, including a substantial part of the peasantry, have today been accepted as necessary tasks on part of the
government. Peasants therefore pray to the governmental organizations for what they consider as their legitimate demands, such as health, education, supply for agricultural produce and basic requirements of life. That means that the government officials and political representatives in rural areas constantly remain surrounded by demands for different welfare and development-related programs. It further implies that peasants learn the techniques of governmental systems so that they may succeed in their demands through discussions or by creating pressure at the right places. Second, the governmental bodies exhibit a rather moderate attitude in the debit-credit accounts in meeting such demands. In most cases, the people with demands are divided into smaller groups on basis of their social features, etc. so that it is possible to undertake a moderate policy. Instead of considering the entire populace of the village as some homogenous entity, they are divided into smaller groups as target population.

Although the peasant-society is compelled to come within the ever-approaching (aggressive?) boundary of global capital, it seems that peasants, once again, are getting back their “lost” “land”. It seems that they are getting back what they had ‘lost’ or their ‘sense of loss’, which in its turn is a resultant of the expansion of globalised capital, through this ‘public-welfare and developmental works’. This new reality has been termed by Sanyal and Chatterjee (2007) as the reversal of the consequences of primitive accumulation. Even if the peasants lose their land or whatever loss they have to incur because of the collaboration with multinational capitalist enterprises contract-farming, they are getting back all these, through the ‘compensation’ packages. Sanyal and Chatterjee (2007) have accepted that it is possible to address the problems and needs of peasants through the developmental programs of the governmental agencies. The governmental agencies, with their multifarious development-oriented programs, have reached deep inside the everyday
life of the peasant society. Not only that these peasants are depended upon the governmental bodies for such services, they have also well adopted the techniques to get their demands met through application of pressure or clever acts. Success of the governmental agencies lies in the fact that they have been able to realize the worries and woes of the peasants.

Subaltern studies had something different to say about peasants. Peasants could conceive of a different reality even while posited against capitalist aggression; a reality which could never be realized because of capitalist domination. On the other hand, peasants tried to realize their dreams. Despite innumerable attempts, that imagined space of the peasants remained outside the scope of capitalism. Historians from the subaltern group tried to move beyond capitalism in order to understand the utopias of the peasants. They had debunked a different language (possibility of different knowledge?) within the lived experiences of the peasants, though Partha Chatterjee (2008) comments that such an explanation is no more appropriate today. The once subaltern theoretician has freed himself off the old theoretical stance.

Against this backdrop, chapter seven puts forward few questions:

- Does the corporate capitalism dictate the position of the other peasant culture?
- Do these two purportedly different positions remain same?
- Can welfare programs heal/address the wound and pain caused by separation, alienation and displacement?
- Is there the possibility of peasants experiencing the pain of alienation/displacement even if they are not uprooted from their land and livelihood? To put it differently, even while they remain connected
with peasantry, can the peasants be made to face the violence of primitive accumulation?

- Do the lived experiences of the peasants offer different language?
- Do the lived experiences of the peasants offer different knowledge?
- Why Kalyan Sanyal–Partha Chatterjee have failed to notice the different language-knowledge systems of the peasants?
- Are their imagination trapped in the capitalocentric language?
- Have they overemphasized the (metaphysical?) presence of Capitalism?
- According to Sanyal and Chatterjee, there is no ‘outside’ beyond Capitalism; agency beyond capitalism is not possible; in other words, the only option is to negotiate with the Capitalist structure. Do the day to day practices of the peasant offer an-other imagination that goes beyond Capitalism?
- Does the materialization of the Capitalism is secured only through the exclusion-foreclosure-repression of that an-other imagination, practiced by the peasants?
- Why the claim of knowledge/language over their practiced is not possible in the Capitalism?

It is now evident that the questions which have been put up specify the objectives of research. The research has twofold orientations. This research is going to question the given dominant discourse of land relations which is premised upon the logic of private ownership over the land. Second, it tries to point out the limits of Capitalism and also puts forward the alternative possibilities of land relations. This research is trying to go beyond the capitalist imagination prevail in the land relations.