Indian Agriculture In A Steep Crisis
Its Cause Lies In
New Delhi's Corporate Capitalist Agricultural Policy
Only Wayout Today Is Empowerment Of Farmers By Organising Agriculture On People-Environment-Led Cooperative Basis

1. Main Features Of India's Agricultural Crisis

(i)

Agriculture, comprising crop and animal husbandry, forestry, agro-forestry, agro-processing and fisheries, is the biggest and the largest occupation in India, providing livelihood to over 24 crore people. It contributes 22 percent of India's GDP and enables society to make food products available to the entire Indian population. It supplies raw materials, like cotton, jute, sugar-cane, etc., for industrial use. Agro-industries, such as food and fruit processing are gaining in importance, especially as export products. India's external trade also has a substantial agricultural component in the form of rice, cotton, textiles, tea, jute, cashew, tabacco, coffee, etc.

The traditional Indian agriculture had always striven for raising its productivity through area expansion. But the post-ecological crisis agriculture needs to shift its direction to a 5-pronged objective—i.e., environmental sustainability, equity, productivity, democracy and transparency.

(a) India shares about 2.4 percent of the world's geographical area, but it has to support about 16 percent of the world's population and over 20 percent of the worlds' livestock. This shows that there is much disproportion in land and human/ animal ratio in India. But this is only one side of reality. The other side is that India has a very high percentage of arable land as compared to many bigger and developed countries. For instance, Canada, Australia and China are nearly three times the size of India and Russia is nearly six times larger, but they are behind India in the matter of arable Iand. China has about 100 million hectare of arable Iand, Australia 46.3 million hectare, Canada 45.8 million hectare, Russia 130 million hectare, while the USA has 180 million hectare as against 166 million hectare for India. India has a land size of only 329 million hectare. Therefore, percent-wise, it has got the highest percentage of 50.5. India has got an edge in geographical location as well. With so much sunlight year round, it can go in for double or even multiple cropping system.

(b) Turning to the 58 year long agricultural process, one finds that the country has overcome the food shortages witnessed in the 1950s and 1960s, culminating in the two serious food shortages in 1965-66 and 1966-67. Following the green revolution, the country has increased its foodgrains production from 54.92 million tonnes in 1949 to about 194 million tonnes in 1997-98, with the per capita availability going up from 395 gram in 1951 to nearly 500 gram in 1980s. It has also ended the country's dependence on food imports. Apart from foodgrains, there has also been an increase in other food materials other than foodgrains—e.g., edible oils, milk, meat, fruits, vegetables, etc. During this period, india's irrigation facility increased from 20 million hectare in 1947 to 55 million hectare today.

(c) Viewing the overall growth rate of the Indian agriculture, it can be seen that, while India's agricultural process has grown by 2.1 percent between 1970-95, the corresponding figure for China had been 6 percent, for Malaysia 7 percent, for Thailand 4.6 percent and for lndonesia 3.7 percent. India's rice yield per hectare, i.e., 2,576 kg, has been the lowest in Asia, while the world average yield has been 3,581 kg and China's 5,859 kg. India's per hectare yield in maize stands at 1,474 kg against the world average yeild of 3,257 kg per hectare. In sunflower, China's productivity is 3 times higher. While the per hectare yield of wheat in India is 2,420 kg, it is 3,318 kg in China. In cotton, the per hectare yield in India is 246 kg, while in Australia, it is 1,510 kg and in Israel 783 kg.

In 1947-48, India's share in total world agricultural production was 11 percent but today it has declined to 9 percent.

(d) Since 1990, a crisis is growing in agriculture. The agricultural growth rate has actually been falling behind the population growth. Today, while the former remains at 1.66 percent per annum, the latter stands at 1.9 percent. Thus the foodgrains buffer stock has been declining year by year. The

annual per capita availability of foodgrains has come down from a peak of 180 kg in 1995 to 176.5 kg in 2001. Although official data on poverty suggest a reduction in poverty, there is reason for presuming that the incidence of hunger is increasing, says the national commission on farmers in its second report (August 2005), page 37.

(ii)

Looking at the management process of the agricultural products, it is causing a huge loss to the country. The poor transport and storage facilities are resulting in a loss around 20 percent of foodgrains every year, amounting to Rs 55,000 crore. India today is world's largest producer of fruits and vegetables, yet its share in the Rs 30,000 crore global trade in processed food is no more than one percent, as about 40 percent of its produce worth Rs 23,000 crore is wasted away every year. Only 2 percent of the total fruits and vegetables produced in the country are processed as against 40 percent for some developing countries and 70 percent in the developed countries.

In North-East India, there is ample production of pine apples which also offers an excellent opportunity for its processing, but this becomes difficult because of the non-availabilty of effective transport system. Further, the processed food industry in India has not yet been organised on modern scientific lines with integration from the production of raw materials to the marketing stage. Methods of production are by and large traditional and this affects the efficiency of production.

Market accessibility is also an equally important problem. Gaining of competitive advantage demands an efficient processing chain, high quality demand-led production and reduction in the number of market intermediaries. A number of studies show how processing has reduced waste and improved yields through better farm practices in many countries. According to them, the experience of the rest of the world shows that food processing is one of the more profitable industries.

(iii)

Coming to the sustainability of natural resources, i.e., land, water, forests and bio-diversity, etc. (which are a pre-requisite for crop and animal/human productivity), all of them have got further degraded.

As regards India's land resources, they spread over an area of 329 million hectare, with a reporting area of 305 million hectare. These are broadly classified into three uses.

a) Agricultural sector—comprising net cultivated area, current fallows, other fallows and cultivable wastes—forms about 180 million hectare. In this sector, the net sown area of 143 million hectare has remained constant for the last three decades.

b) Ecological sector—consisting of forests, miscellaneous tree crops and groves, grazing and barren lands—equals about 102 million hectare.

c) Non-agricultural sector, including lands under non-agricultural pursuits, makes up 22 million hectare. Current estimates show that 60 percent of the cultivable land suffers from soil erosion, water-logging and salinity. Another 16 million hectare is afflicted with ravines and rivulets. Such a massive land degradation shows the gravity of the problem.

Due to water and wind erosion, the country loses nearly 1,200 crore tonnes of top soil annually which has the capacity to produce about 50 million tonnes of foodgrains every year. Nearly 18 million hectares of land is water-logged and saline. Compared with 60 percent of pasture lands in other parts of the world, lndia's 40 percent grazing lands have, with over 20 percent of the world's cattle, become overgrazed and barren. The population of 450 million heads of cattle, the largest anywhere in the world, far exceeds the carrying capacity of the country's natural resources. Also, there is no check on the diversion of prime farm land for non-farming uses. Wasteland and watershed development programmes, designed to arrest soil degradation, are yet to make widespread impact.

The problem of water is even more serious. From rainfall, India annually receives an equivalent of 400 million hectare metres of water (one million hectare metre of water weighs approximately 100 tonnes). Of the 400 million hectare meters of availability (or the average annual river flow) is 187 million hectare metres. Of this, around 70 meters are available ground water. Thus barely 20 percent of the annual precipitation is utilisable, the rest running off to sea. Tapping just 20 percent more of the rainfall will offer India 80 million hectare metres of additional water.

Despite an estimated availability of 2,400 cubic meters water per person per year, its procurement is uneven both among states and between seasons. There is an acute shortage of water in certain states, like Rajasthan, Meghalaya, etc.

Another disturbing feature is the massive shift of irrigation from surface water to ground water. The proportion of cultivated area irrigated by ground water has risen from about one-third in 1965-66 to over 50 percent today. The water level is going down steadily.

Most worrisome problem is that more and more water is getting polluted in many areas through the overuse of agricultural chemicals or the mixing up of effluents produced by the chemical factories.

The forests have been the worst sufferers during the past 58 years. Their size has been cut to half in this period. Still human and commercial pressures on them are growing. Although India is regarded as an area of rich bio-diversity, hot spots (containing valuable genes)—i.e., the Eastern Himalayan Region and the Western Ghats—are present in our country.

Bio-diversity provides the basic feedstock for the development of bio-technology (i.e., plant genetic resources).

Thus, it is by addressing to the problems of shrinking land, water, forests and plant genetic resources that India's agricultural policy can be made sustainable. The fact that the carrying capacity of our environmental factors is not un-limited should never be overlooked.

(iv)

Observing the agrarian aspect of the crisis, it is no less serious. The rental value of land, due to fall in agricultural profitability, has gone down. The constant increase in the family size is getting the land-holdings constantly divided, creating unviable units. Thus over 15 percent of rural population is landless. Seventy-eight percent of the land-holdings in India are below two hectares and about two-third of these are marginal holdings below one hectare. Overtime, the proportion of such holdings and the area they operate are increasing. This means that more and more average and middle farms are becoming marginal. According to a distinguished agricultural economist, the family income on a marginal farm in Punjab is less than one month salary of a class IV employee in the state government service and that a two hectare small farm is below the monthly salary of an assistant in the government service. Thus, the landless, marginal and smalI farmers constitute about 85 percent of the rural human resources. It is by addressing to the problems of this huge rural human resource that the Indian agriculture can be based on equity.

(v)

The human-related aspect of the crisis is very very serious. Population growth continues unabated, poverty goes on increasing, unemployment is on the rise, education (especially at the primary level), health-care and infrastructure are in a bad condition and a discouraging atmosphere prevails in rural areas due to poverty, unemployment, ignorance, and superstition. The condition of agricultural workers and the marginal and small farmers is getting worse.

(vi)

As regards the social and economic aspect of the crisis, agriculture has ceased to be a remunerative profession. Agricultural productivity is falling, while the cost of inputs is constantly rising. Indebtedness is fastly growing.

Finding no wayout of this desperate situation and driven to despaire, the farmers generally take the extreme step of suicides.

Thus, over 10,000 suicides of the farmers have taken place (between 1995-2005) in those states which are relatively more advanced and are front-runners in commercial agriculture. In majority of the cases, the suicide victim farmers have used loans for investment in agriculture and they belong to the category of small and marginal farmers who are resource poor. The resource poor farmers' suicides indicate that there is breakdown of the community sense and social support mechanism in areas of highly commercialised and competitive agriculture.

A 2005 NSSO survey shows that 40 percent of farmers want to quit this profession. No wonder, the mass media has started focusing attention on hunger and farmers' distress hotspots. For example, the July 4, 2005 issue of *Outlook* magazine contains a cover page article on "The death of the Indian

Farmer", to highlight the fact that "trapped in a vicous cycle of crop failure, high debt and penury", the Indian farmers' future is an endless night.

2. Official Version Of India's Agricultural Crisis

Comments Made By National Commission
On Farmers In Its Second Report

"Our agriculture is in a state of serious crisis. The rate of growth in food production has fallen below population growth rate. To achieve a 4 percent growth rate in agriculture, we must aim at a 8 percent growth rate in horticulture and animal husbandry. This calls for higher investment in irrigation, animal husbandry, fisheries, post-harvest technology, rural energy supply and communication. The investment in agriculture has stagnated at 13 percent of GNP during the last three five year plans. If we place faces behind figures, over 400 million children, women and men belonging to families with small and marginal holdings, as well as landless labour families are in deep distress. (August 2005)

Points Made At The Meeting Of
5th National Development Council
by Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister

"A particularly disturbing aspect of our performance over the past several years is that agricultural growth has decelerated after the mid-1990s. Agriculture had grown at 3.2 percent from 1980 to 1996. It decelerated to 2.1 percent during the ninth plan. The cornerstone of the tenth plan strategy was a reversal of the declining trend in the growth rate of agriculture and with a target for agricultural growth at 4 percent. Unfortunately, actual performance of agriculture appears to have deteriorated even further and will possibly not exceed 1.5 percent during the first three years of the plan. Correcting this must be accorded the highest priority…We must have the ambition to double our agricultural production in ten years." (27-28 June, 2005)

Says Shri Sharad Pawar,
Union Food & Agriculture Minister

"The tragic incidents of farmers' suicides in some of the states have been a matter of serious concern...crop losses, consecutive failure of monsoon, recurrent droughts, mounting debts, monocropping, land tenancy, etc., seem to be some of the main causes….76 percent of the victims were dependant on rainfed agriculture and 78 percent were small and marginal farmers…76 percent and 82 percent of the victim households had borrowed from non-institutional sources in 2000-01 and 2002-03 respectively. The interest rates charged on such debts ranged from 24 to 36 percent, as compared to 9-12 percent on institutional credit."

"The livestock sector is extremely important for providing supplemental income to the farmers. Studies have shown that farmers' suicide is practically non-existent in areas where the farmers have opportunity to earn income by activities like dairying...But the fact remains that our cattle productivity is one of the lowest in the world."

"Agriculture sector is covered in the State List of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution. Hence, it is the primary responsibility of the state governments to develop and promote agriculture and increase its production and productivity…The share of agriculture and allied activities in the total allocation of all State/UTs taken together is a meagre 6.46 percent for the 10th five year plan and 5.62 percent for the annual plan of 2003-04."

Says Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia,
Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission

"Agricultural growth has decelerated from 3.2 percent in the period 1980-81 to 1995-96 to an average of below 2 percent subsequently...Employment generation in the economy is not upto expectations. Organised sector employment has fallen in absolute terms in the last three years. The situation regarding groundwater use is also very disturbing. There is excessive drawal of groundwater leading to an alarming lowering of the water table in many areas. Rainfed areas account for two-

thirds of the cultivable area at present and it is necessary to develop a coherent strategy for water conservation and management for these areas."

Thus, our agriculture is in a state of crisis. The rate of growth in food production has fallen below population growth rate. To achieve a 4 percent growth rate in agriculture, we must aim at a 8 percent growth rate in horticulture and animal husbandry. How are we going to achieve these goals? This calls for a higher investment in irrigation, animal husbandry, fisheries, post-harvest technology, rural energy supply and communication. The investment in agriculture has stagnated at 13 percent of GNP during the last three five-year plans.

Remedies Suggested By PM and Others Concerning The Agrarian Crisis

Without identifying the specific cause of the agricultural crisis the Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Food have both suggested several measures to overcome the agrarian crisis. The Prime Minister has emphasised the need for increasing investments in the entire chain of activities related to agriculture and for promoting water efficient technologies. He has called for a sharper focus on strategic research and extension for overcoming the current technology fatigue.

The Agriculture and Food Minister has advocated a greater focus on the development of marketing infrastructure and the introduction of marketing laws conducive to direct marketing and contract farming. He has also pleaded for making the National Horticulture Mission which has a plan outlay of Rs. 2,300 crores during the remaining part of the tenth plan period, a success.

The agricultural crisis should be viewed not just in terms of growth rates. If we place faces behind figures, over 400 million children, women and men belonging to families with small and marginal holdings, as well as landless labour families, are in deep distress. This explains why we are off-track in achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals in the areas of reducing poverty induced hunger or under-nutrition, infant and maternal mortality rates and control of major diseases.

Obviously the vision of the three leaders of present government to overcome the ongoing agricultural crisis is that "we will overcome this crisis through the magic of second green revolution based on genetic engineering." No doubt, the new seeds advanced by the first green revolution, have increased agricultural production. But its strategy has, in the long-term, harmed both the environmental and human resources. Surely, the present increase in food production and even more could have been achieved if huge amount spent on chemical technology had been invested in enriching the organic technology. Whether the green revolution or any other technology will provide us an effective strategy to make agriculture viable and beneficial option both in environment and human society depends on what kind of social system the people had established. Does it work for a few privileged individuals or the mankind as a whole.

3. Cause Of India's Agricultural Crisis

(A) Short-Term Cause

The short-term cause of the above crisis lies in the prevalent corporate monopolised chemical-based agricultural technology. The basic agricultural inputs of this technology, i.e., fertilisers, pesticides and insecticides, are highly chemicalised which, on the one hand, destroy all the organic nutrients contained in the soil and kill the whole lot of the crop-friendly pests, thus resulting in the degradation of soil and finally turning it into a barren land, and, on the other, deplete the water resources through their high water consumption. In the 40-years (1964-2004) of its operation, this chemicalised agricultural technology has harmed all the main agricultural components, i.e., environmental resources, human health, crop-productivity, financial-growth, agrarian structure, etc. Similar types of negative effects have appeared practically in all those countries, using the chemical-oriented agricultural technology. This highly negative performance by the chemical-based agricultural technology has brought it to a dead end in the very beginning of the 21st century. However, the whole lot of the top controllers of the existing world corporate capitalist order has, instead of admitting the entirely negative concept and role of their much-touted chemicalised agricultural policy, zealously undertaken to cover up the reality by propagating that all the existing

agricultural lapses of the chemicalised agricultural technology will be set right by the newly-discovered technique of genetic modification (GM) or transgenic changes.

It is worth-noting that the entire architecture of the chemicalised agriculture was conceived and produced by the philanthropic associations (like the Rockfeller Foundation, Ford Foundation, etc.) connected with the agriculture-related leading MNCs who continue to hold its (i.e.,chemical-related agricultural technology) monopoly from its very start to this day. The corporate capitalist-led governments all over the world have since adopted this agricultural technology as the very foundation of their respective national agricultural sectors and policies.

From the very beginning of the chemicalised technology, the corporate capitalist government and business leaders have been calling and publicising it as the emergence of the 20th century "green revolution". They continued to characterise it as the liberator of humanity from hunger and a corner-stone of food security for all times to come. But all these high-sounding claims have proved a flop. Nearly 40 years after the practice of this miraculous agricultural technology, the world is confronted with more deadly problems in the domain of agriculture.

Another equally important reason behind the Indian agricultural crisis rests with the unviable and unjust pattern of its land-holdings which have been putting a damper on its agricultural growth and social equity, while providing an opportunity to the government to lure the farmers into its corporate capitalist farming net through its tricky corporate capitalist devices, like contract farming, financial and market facilities, etc.

(B) Long-Term Cause

The long-term cause of the Indian agricultural crisis resides in India's existing corporate capitalist system which, in its development agenda, gives first priority to IT, manufacturing, services and infrastructure, relegating agriculture to the third position, treats Indian farmers in a step-motherly way on all agricultural issues, e.g., finance, agro-industries, agricultural infrastructure, exports, research, ignoring the diminishing size of land-holdings, and is now desperately trying to transform the diffused agricultural system into a corporate enterprise through various deceptive moves.

4. Solution Of Indian Agricultural Crisis

The solution of Indian agricultural crisis is embedded in adopting the organic way of farming and the empowerment of Indian farmers through the people-environment based cooperativisation of agricultue.

(A) Short-Term Solution

The short-term solution lies in adopting the organic technology (i.e., seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, insecticides, etc.) in place of chemical-based technology as well as the newly arisen GM or transgenic technology.

(B) Long-Term Solution

The long-term solution of Indian agricultural crisis rests with the empowerment of Indian farmers by organising agriculture on people-environment led cooperative basis, comprising two stages. The difference between the two is that, while in the first stage, the shares of different members of any cooperative farm are decided on the basis of their respective land-holdings, in the second stage, they will be based on the equitable income principle (with a maximum income difference of 1:2), and not on equal basis.

In our view, the following people-environment led cooperatisation of agricultural model can provide us an immediate as well as long-term wayout of the Indian agricultural crisis.

(a) India's agricultural sector naturally comprises two inter-connected parts, i. e., the social human factor of the farming community and the agriculture's mode of production. Both are inter-related. Study of the one without the other does not give a realistic picture anywhere.

(b) Social organisation of India's farming community should be based on the pro-people-pro-environment cooperative principle according to which all existing farming units can unite and participate in the process of farming on a people-environment led cooperative basis, without any change in their respective owned farming units.

(c) The mode of Indian agriculture should be firstly classified on the agro-regional (or agro-ecological) basis. Such a classification may comprise the following agro-regional (or agro-ecological) spheres: (1) Hill agro-region, (2) Arid agro-region, (3) Coastal agro-region, (4) Irrigated agro-region (5) Degraded or waste agro-region, and (6) Fisheries, both inland and marine, sector.

(d) Every agro-region may then be divided into various agro-climatic zones each of which is naturally suitable for the production of one or two specific crops. The existing system of enforced crop-growing against the nature of soil brings forth poor quality crops with lower yields. Most of such zones or areas have already been demarcated in the records of agriculture and horticulture departments. The remaining can be immediately assessed through inter-action with agriculture experts and by sharing the experiences of local farmers. Such a mode will give best performance in terms of quality and productivity.

(e) In each agri-climate zone, a crop specific cooperative farming society should be formed consisting of all the farmers (big and small) owning lands from the lowest unit to the highest one who will get their shares in accordance with the size of their respective land units.

(f) Each crop specific zonal cooperative farming society should establish a relevant agro-processing industry in its agro-climatic zone for value addition to the related raw one or two specific crops. It will provide required quantity of good quality and low cost produce with minimal transportation cost. Agro-industry will strengthen the economy of the concerned zone and provide employment to its unemployed.

(g) Each crop specific zonal cooperative farming society should develop market infrastructure with cold storage centres for safe preservation of product in the concerned zone to attract buyers from the other parts of India and abroad.

(h) Each crop specific zonal cooperative farming society will, as a rule, employ the necessary labour from within its zone as required by the various farming operations. Besides, it will make an appeal to the government to fulfil the following just demands of the agricultural workers (1) each agricultural worker to be ensured for Rs 50,000, with equal contribution from concerned state and the centre, (2) old age pension scheme for agricultural workers, (3) implementation of a rural house site-cum-house construction scheme, and (4) social security for drinking water, educational and health services.

(i) Each crop specific zonal cooperative farming society should make an appeal to the government to take the following measures for democratising the rural structure:

* To improve the quality of education, health services and infrastructure in rural areas;

* To develop the knowledge and skill of the rural masses;

* To ensure a stable price policy, fair national market, long-term credit, export facilities, etc., to the crop specific zonal cooperative farming societies;

* To authorise the village elected committees to supervise the proper utilisation of funds earmarked and spent on their village development under various schemes, i. e., IRDP, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, Indira Awas Yojana, etc.;

* To fully democratise the cooperative movement now based on a bureaucratic law and its policy by a people-environment oriented law and its policy;

* To make women co-owners of their respective husbands belongings, including land, and give them 50 percent reservation in all elective bodies; and

*To make every panchayat (i.e., all of its members) accountable to its electors by placing a legal obligation on its each member to visit his constituency after every six months (i.e., twice a year) and present his six monthly record before the electors general meeting for the latter's discussion and remarks.

(j) Each crop specific zonal cooperative farming society should set up its own farmer-centric market mechanism (i.e., management system) for the sale of its surplus products at the appropriate time and the purchase of its required farming inputs. In both these transactions, it will hold increased bargaining power enhancing the profit margin of the concerned farm. Each market mechanism will establish its market research and investigating wing.

(k) Each crop specific zonal cooperative society should appeal to the government to set up a professional committee comprising the zonal expert of the crop, zonal scientist of the crop, representative of farmers and representative of the market wing. The committee should meet as per

requirement to discuss the problems of the said crop. The area specific-crop specific committee of experts will be more capable to sort out problems concerning the specific crop.

(l) Each crop specific zonal cooperative society should appeal to the state and central governments to increase their respective budgetary allocations to agriculture sector.

(m) To make indian Agriculture human and environmental friendly, every crop specific zonal cooperative society should in the beginning undertake farming on the basis of two types of technologies, organic and integrated, i.e., a technology using both the organic technology and the chemical based technology. In the latter case, a part of the area will be cultivated on the organic basis and the other on the integrated technological way.

(n) To maximise the water use efficiency, the water withdrawal/recharge ratio should be maintained at the proper level. Every effort should be made to promote all environmental resources, i.e., air, water, land, bio-diversity and forests.

(o) Next to its specific crop, each crop specific zonal cooperative society should undertake dairy development as its next most important activity. Apart from the sale of milk, it will engage in its processing and the export of milk and milk products. Besides dairy farming, other agriculture-friendly schemes, like bee-keeping, fisheries, khandsari and gur-making from suger-cane, agro-forestry in arid regions, medicinal and oil bearing plants (like senna, guggal, isabgol, henna, etc.) and sheep-breeding in waste lands (e.g., Rajasthan) should be immediately implemented—thus supplementing the farmers' meagre incomes.

(p) To insure certain minimum level of income to the farming community in any part during the period of crop failure, each cooperative farming society should demand of the government to arrange the launching of an effective crop insurance scheme.

(q) To stop all sorts of WTO's unapproved, i.e., illegal subsidies or grants to agriculture (as is being done by the US and EU) and to prepare a level playing field for world trade, all the crop specific cooperative zonal farming societies in India should stand for fair trade in India as well as world.

(r) Contract farming methodology is only a corporate capitalist device to corporatise the agriculture of the under-developed countries. With this understanding, however, if any such contract seems to be beneficial to any cooperative farming society, there is no harm in entering into such a deal, provided it is accompanied by two precautionary steps. One is to get such a contract whetted by a legal expert. And the other is whether the state does undertake the responsibility to get the contract executed fairly and justly.

(s) Lastly, but more importantly, taking into account the question of the acute indebtedness of Indian farmers which has resulted in 10,000 suicides of farmers in India, all the crop specific zonal cooperative farming societies in India should appeal to the central and the state governments to fulfil the below noted three demands: (1) To remit the entire pre-2006 debt, whether institutional or non-institutional, due from the farmers (including the rural landless) living in India; (2) to make a provision for providing cheap credit to farmers through 30 percent of the whole institutional (official or semi-official) lending and 10 percent to rural landless and urban poor, while prohibiting all non-institutional lending; and (3) to restructure agriculture in India on the cooperative basis (which will not disturb the existing land-holding units in India and prove far superior in quality, productivity and profitability than the corporate farming that will, within a short time, lead to the dispossession of all the farmers, small or big, from their lands and transform them into a group of unemployed workers. Further, the cooperative farming will establish the vitality of its democratic, equalitarian and creative principles in contrast to the Soviet collective farming which even denied trade union rights to its workers.

5. Present Task

The above analysis calls upon all those who agree with its orientation and agenda to carry out a three-sided task. That is, to create awareness and generate motivation among the farmers about the steep crisis facing the Indian agriculture, its cause and solution.

6. Social Need To Change

Present Corporate Capitalist System

To accord a proper place to agriculture in human society, it is necessary to change the capital (i.e., money and wealth)-oriented corporate capitalist system (whose only priorty is to help capital owners in the maximisation of their profit by following its (i.e., corporate system's) pet double-dealing style, i.e., saying one thing and doing another) and to replace it by a nature-human directed social system [which stands for two top priorities, i.e., environment and man, which follows five basic principles, i.e., environmental promotion, fair equality (i.e., empowerment of the people in place of corporate capital supported political parties and business circles, social security to every deprived and needy person and the rationalisation of irrational income differences in the proportion of 1:5), productivity (or growth rate), peoples-led democracy and all-sided transparency and which, taking into account the highly important position of agriculture—concerned with human food and health, on the one hand, and with the proper development of all environmental resources, i.e., land, water, climate, bio-diversity, forests, etc, on the other—accords first place to agriculture in the social development model].

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