

ENCOUNTERING PEASANT'S EXPLOITATION IN SINDH THROUGH TRANS-LOCAL AND TRANSNATIONAL AGRARIAN CITIZENSHIP

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ABSTRACT: *This article will look into the ways ideological and political clashes are negotiated by peasant activists in Sindh, in relation to the existing and possible local peasantivist trends towards creating a space for themselves through trans-local and transnational networking. Effort has been made to trace the formation of peasantivist agendas and strategies in Sindh, the nature of networking and forming peasantivist-ethnic alliances. The tendency of feudal and capitalist elements to bring about capital-intensive 'agrarian reform' instead of pro-peasant 'land reforms', has been critiqued in the light of post-developmental notion of 'agrarian citizenship'. It was found that peasant activists in Sindh have yet to devise their own contextually compatible plan of the level and strength that could penetrate the feudal regime and break it from within to create space for the marginalized. Peasant activists of Sindh are hereby suggested to remain informed about the theoretical and ideological positioning of trans-local peasant communities, and to streamline and adapt their peasantivist agendas in accordance with transnational peasant movements through sustained activism.*

Key words: *Agrarian Citizenship, Sustained Activism, NGO-ising, Trans-localization*

INTRODUCTION

Peasant movements, that have been launched in Sindh, despite their apparent failure to achieve their avowed goals, have sustained their activism to bring about a gradual reformation of peasant society. That sustained activism, at least, served as the experimental venture to test Marxist, Maoist, reformist and developmentalist solutions, but none could live up to the contextual realities and lived experiences of local peasant communities. Keeping these failed experiments in perspective, and by juxtaposing agrarian reforms, corporate farming, food security and neo-liberal capitalist NGO-ising against the land reforms, cooperative farming, food autonomy, and the trans-local moral global economy, the possibility of the formation of trans-local link in Sindh in the form of Sufi-socialist drifting of peasant activism, has been predicted in this study.

METHODOLOGY

This research study has been derived from the fieldwork and from the secondary qualitative data analysis of historical documents and the literature produced by and for peasant activists in Sindh. In-depth interviews with some of the prominent peasant activists have also been relied upon. Primary ethnographic data has, then, been triangulated with the documentary analysis of literature on the history of peasant movements in Sindh. Hence, historical analysis of peasant movements and activism in Sindh has been done to predict the direction of peasant activism in Sindh in the light of some modern and post-developmental notions, particularly the possibilities of the establishment in Sindh of viable trans-local agrarian regimes interlinked with the global moral economy.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The analytic framework evolved by subaltern theorists from India, such as Guha [1], Sarkar [2], Kapoor [3], Zibechi & Ryan [4], has been resorted to drawing parallels between indigenous Dalit peasant activists of India and Sindh. Much of development discourse on peasant communities of lower Sindh and their peasantist and ethnic resistances, has been analyzed in relation to the theoretical literature of NGOs, and

the Sindhi civil society thinker. In the end, post-developmental global trends, particularly in the light of theoretical analysis of Philip McMichael [5], Arturo Escobar [6,7] and Eduardo Gudynas [8,9], have been linked to, or the links have been explored between transnational peasant movements and Sindhi peasant activism. To understand the peasantry in its global and international context, Philip Mc Michael's post-developmental critique of neo-liberal globalization, provides, probably, the most plausible explanations of the status and identity of the peasantry. Taking the lead from Philip Mc Michael, peasant activism has been explored through the peasant discourse and practices generated by peasant activists of Sindh and peasant leaders to understand, not only contemporary and historical peasant movements in lower Sindh, but the whole spectrum of political and social movements which somehow have involved peasants and the peasant activists of Sindh. Possibilities of Sindhi peasant activists to become the active and integrated part of the highly diversified global peasant movement have been predicted on the basis of their assumed, expected activism for 'food sovereignty' and 'food autonomy' for peasants, and against developmentalists, and 'corporate farming'. Arturo Escobar's [6] emphasis on the 'place' and the de-emphasis on 'space' have served as the ontological as well as epistemological departing point in this study.

Agrarian Citizenship and Trans-local Peasant Organization

Post-developmental social scientists maintain that capitalism is not only about accumulation of surplus and power. It is also about the dispossession and the elimination of alternative practices, variety of life-worlds, life projects of peasants and alternative futures. Capitalist and Socialist theories or ontologies, being based in economism and the universal evolutionary stage models, aim at the removal of peasants from the epistemology of science and history. Agriculture and peasants that practice it, are no longer seen as problems, as existing living entities or meaningful realities by the capitalist modernity. [5]

Agrarian relations are being transformed beyond the scope of modernity theories or the Marxist stages of evolutionary development. Philip Mc Michael explains the inapplicability of class analysis to the problematic of peasant communities. He says, "In a sense, a mobilized peasantry is making its own history. It is 'mobilized' precisely because it cannot do this just as it pleases – its political intervention is conditioned by the historical political-economic conjuncture through which it is emboldened to act. And it is emboldened precisely because neoliberal capitalism's violent imposition of market relations, with severe social and ecological consequences across the world, is catastrophic. Capitalism is evidently deepening its internal contradictions, but this process is complicated by a politics of dispossession that complicates and/or transcends class analysis. The commodification of natural and intellectual (social labour) relations crystallizes material and cultural values distinct from those of the dominant economic discourse. Such values are fundamentally ecological, and concern how humans construct, understand and experience their relations of social reproduction." (ibid)

Hence the life-world and the Praxis and local people's world views are valued over abstract outside-community's speculations and economism. Looking from the Marxist perspective, "capital precedes landed property as the proper methodological" and analytic point of departure, "but this does not mean that its subordination of landed property is ecologically, or even socially, appropriate, even in advancing the socialist ideal. (ibid)

The urban-poor and the lower middle class, particularly in Latin American countries, and to some extent in India and other South Asian countries, are siding themselves with the indigenous peasant communities in rural ecologies in the South to the contest, by forming the collective front against postcolonial colonization [1-4]. They are struggling to achieve that through the re-articulation of new and old traditions, amalgamation of democracy and collective interests, and by their...

Simultaneous deployment of reform, insurgency and rebellion... This is what Peruvian Marxist Jose Carlos Mariategui described in the 1920s "as the fruit of confluence between socialist objectives and indigenous political traditions and struggles" and Anibal Quijano references as the "anti-colonial ideological flags (of the indigenous communities) vis-a-vis both the national problem and democracy. [3]

Yet place-based trans-local struggles, despite their leftist tilt, differ and contradict the western-Marxist or western-leftist ways of looking into the structural inequalities, and the notions of the communes and commons. These are the ontological and epistemological differences that must be understood and acknowledged while critiquing the post-developmental anti-imperialist trans-local movements. By not acknowledging these fundamental differences in standpoints, and by letting it be viewed from...

Within leftist and European logics, we perpetuate forms of violence and coloniality that indigenous movements have been fighting against.... [Hence] The Indigenous Revolution wherein the indigenous revolution is against western civilization as such, including the left which originated in the west, while Marxist revolution confronts the bourgeoisie

from the perspective and interests of the working class and proposes a struggle within western civilization...[they recognize]... the complicity of the European working class with the bourgeoisie "in their support of racism, imperialism and colonialism." (ibid)

The type of agrarianism that is practiced by localized and transnational peasant organizations such as La Via Campesina aims at the de-fitishisation of capitalist trend towards accumulation, for whom agriculture means something more than just money having intrinsic value with serious ecological and environmental implications. Transnational peasant movement, no more holds defensive or self-protecting stance in the global political scene. It has radically questioned the western neoliberal project of 'food security' which essentially aims at the commodification of global food regime controlled by the corporations situated in the rich western countries. [5,7,10] La Via Campesina wants to replace the global neoliberal state-driven international political economy with the transnational global moral economy. Transnational peasant movements, including the Brazilian peasant movement such as La Via Campesina are very diverse in their goals defending the rights of peasants, landless people, indigenous communities, tribes, nomadic people and aboriginal communities. They are, in fact, doing the politics of 'agrarian citizenship' as Whitman calls it, which aims at the strengthening and integration of wide-ranging marginal and marginalized groups, other local social movements whether such movements be at the center or at periphery, in rural region or in the urban suburb. They aim at the transformation of the 'rural' place into an alternative civic base by developing farming cooperatives, unions of rural laborers, building alliance between them and by offering livelihood security to the unemployed in the urban centers, and through which they want to confront upper classes, the elite, the feudal system, statist policies, INGOs, and transnational capitalist globalism. [5,11]. Transnational and trans-local peasant movement believes in the efficacy, utility and naturalness of small and medium sized farms, and maintains that the small peasantry does not mean backwardness, but an added value, and that small farms ensure quality and diversified food production, maintain landscape, wood and enables systematic forest clearing, yet allows a human community to occupy its territory with the ability to sustainable ecological balance. These are the substantive rights of the peasant community, and 'agrarian citizenship' now demands on the part of transnational peasant activists to re-territorialize state through the revitalization "of local food ecologies under small-farmer stewardship, in the interest of" larger society. [5]

Donor-led NGO Culture in Sindh and Peasantist Agenda

After the failure of successive governments in 1990s to deliver to the masses, the failure of development sector to deliver has also got exposed to every sensible person in Pakistan. Apart from working on western-led econocentric and technocentric agenda, these NGOs turned out to be less community-based, and more like familial nepotistic business organizations surviving on the internal embezzlement of donations and funds given directly to them from international donors, such as the World Bank. [12,13]. In the name of

‘development, artificial, insecure and temporary employment opportunities are created for that literate majority which is always willing to overwork, filling in knowledge blanks and injecting unsustainable and crippling development dozes.

Pakistan government being evidently inefficient administratively, foreign donor agencies and Christian missionaries entered to fill in development vacuum created by the governmental mismanagement and departmental corruption, pouring their donations into short-term western-oriented project-based development initiatives in the area. Governmental failure to deliver was interpreted by peasant activists as the deliberate attempt fail peasants and succeed feudals. Hence, the state institutions were perceived by peasant activists as playing to the whims of anti-peasant forces. [14]. Several development and advocacy based pro-peasant NGOs (Hari Bhandar Sangat, Sami Foundation, GRDO, Thardeep, PILER, RDF, PCDP, Fisherfolk Forum) came into existence, that somehow related to the issues of landless peasants, laborers, ethnic minorities, fishermen and sharecroppers. For some of the idealist peasant activists and social activists that spawning of NGOs in the social and development was not welcomed wholeheartedly, yet most of the peasant activists entered into it with great enthusiasm and worked hard for the rights of peasants.

As things stand, foreign-funded NGOs, and the CSOs elsewhere in the world could not have succeeded in developing and reforming the peasants as they had wished to, nor the social change has gone the way peasants themselves and the peasant activists had desired to happen [5]. Similarly, CSOs and NGOs engaged in peasant advocacy and land reform campaigns could not materialize their avowed goals, as had failed the alternative land reforms launched by national governments to develop the peasant communities the way governments wished. The failures, however, were not total, but partial and definitely have had useful unintended consequences for peasant communities. Peasants communities and sharecroppers were not simply passive recipients of the social changes, but instead generated their own development dynamics. On the contrary peasants have progressed in a direction which, although unintended, have benefited them and still seems to be promising positive change in the desirable direction. The direction that peasant activists, particularly, peasant activists from within indigenous Dalit communities have taken, decries the neoliberal capitalist development paradigm as ethnocentrically Western, overtly modernizing, discriminatory in essence which aim at the dispossession of small peasants and the de-politicization landless peasants. That fact could be clearly evidenced from the description, by Bhooro Mal Kolhi, of Christian missionaries that deal with landless peasant communities of Dalits in Sindh as guinea pigs. Bhooro Mal Kolhi, the leading Kolhi-Dalit intellectual of lower Sindh, describes the ill-intentioned role of Christian missionaries. He says, “After the British control of India, Christian missionaries spread throughout India and started experimenting on aboriginal and indigenous folks only. Aboriginal tribe’s vulnerability, poverty, and haplessness made them interesting subjects for the Christian missionaries to coax and lure them into Christianity. Whereas upper caste Indian were given privileges and status almost equal to the

Englishmen, aboriginals were considered fit for religious conversion only. Those untouchables that convert to Christianity are offered assistance in cash and in kind. Old ragged clothes of the Englishmen are given to them to clad their bodies. They are educated in Christian ways of life, provided basic amenities of life, facilities of hospital. But these missionaries do not provide same facilities to non-converting aboriginal and untouchable population. Although Shuddi movement was also launched in 19th century to make untouchables accept Hinduism, but it did not have much success. Muslim, Christian and Qadiani missionaries, however, made their mark and converted millions of lower caste Hindus, aboriginal and untouchables to their religions.” [15]

Despite the outright rejection of such missionaries by Dalit activists, Christian missionary-cum-welfare services are marching ahead with their mission. As most of the Parkari Kolhis are illiterate, the foremost mission of Christian CSOs is to educate them. Their focus is on basic child education as they rightly believe that it’s easy to mould the children’s mind than going all out in communities to teach them how to behave, act, and believe in appropriate (Christian) way.

The hood hiding the inefficacy, inability and inherent corruption of donor-led NGOs has been uncovered and its hollowness of sophisticated project cycles is very much evident from the failure of several projects that miserably failed. It can be further evidenced from the prevalence of rampant corruption, nepotism, and often-occurring incidences embezzlement of funds. It is still more evident from the general stagnation of society as no visible NGO led structural change has occurred despite the two decades of NGO-led development [16]. Viewing it from within, the development discourse of the NGO’s protagonist in Pakistan is brazenly business-oriented, and ironically anti-developmental. Running of NGOs like family organization, or as a business or capitalist enterprise is evident from the jargon that is used while contracting partners or so called ‘stakeholders’, while engaging in self-styled ‘community interventions, and implementation of foreign funded projects. Hence, like elsewhere in the world, foreign-funded N.G.Os in Pakistan often speak of development in terms of partnership with stakeholders (government, IFIs, IN.G.Os and other N.G.Os), and not in terms of cooperation with CBOs, or for CBOs. They speak out mostly about the success of the project, but not about the political, economic and social empowerment of people.

The web of NGOs and INGOs in Pakistan is intricably woven with the implicit political agenda of the rich nations and multinational corporations. The fact worth mentioning here is that International Financial Institutions (IFIs), that provide funds to local NGOs are themselves funded by MNCs and politically supported by the capitalist bloc of G-20 countries [12,13,17,18]. Hence, one can hardly expect pro-peasant or pro-poor development from the development sector or donor-dependent NGOs in Pakistan that are merely serving as agents of the international and transnational imperialists, instead of the peasants and common people.

NGO-culture is sowing the seeds of opportunism within peasant communities that has been lamented by Dalit-peasant activists, that were the part of researcher’s ethnographic case-

study. They have expressed their utter dissatisfaction on the rising opportunism within educated Dalit families, and the way donor-led NGOs work within Dalits and for peasant communities in lower Sindh. Kholi says, “NGOs offer us some assistance. These NGO men leave us in the lurch. They come and go away and we do not rely on them much. There are very few who NGO men that remain in touch with us on their own behalf, but offer nothing except little moral support.” [19]

Dalit-peasant activist of Sindh, Ganpat Rai Bheel, in a socialist vein, condemns NGOs, civil society, ethno nationalists and human rights activists thus:

One of the prime reason of be wilderness and pessimism that prevails in Dalit communities lies in the still emerging of opportunistic middle class within Dalits, which, instead of helping Dalits out of structured exploitation, parasitize on the poverty of Dalit folks...NGOs, so called civil society, paper-dependent Human Rights commissions, and state institutions of justice are perhaps more oppressed than Dalits. Our great so called revolutionary ethno-nationalists have also done no more than paying lip service to issues of Dalit communities. [20]

Such ground realities and localized concern have made peasant activists from within actual peasant communities alert and cautious as well. But everything is not in black and white. There are few who are working with peasant communities and minorities independent of their paid-activism. Idealist and committed peasant activists have become very much aware of the limitations and long-term inefficacy of the token financial assistance, in cash or in kind, or the microfinance loan schemes provided to them by N.G.Os to uplift or mobilize their communities. Yet most of the outside-community peasant activists, despite their alertness and cautiousness, seem to have established commensal relationship with the NGOs economically depending upon the international donations and funding channeled through such NGOs, show reluctance to pass anti-developmental comments publicly against transnational IFIs, and INGOs that fund their organizations. The idealist and politically motivated NGO workers, however, express their concerns in private meetings over the so called development interventions of their NGOs. The multiplicity, diversity, and probably, the deliberate compartmentalization of development work, have reduced several peasant activists to technical experts, and project-dependent social workers. This depoliticization has kept them at the margins, and divided between their political desires and their immediate economic needs. They fall neither in the league of neoliberal capitalist-driven developmentalists, nor with the sub-alternists, or populists, or the post-developmentalists. Their marginal and liminal existence, in itself, is the indication of the bewildering political crises and the political and hegemonic pressures they are going through.

Looking Beyond Ngo-ising in Rural Sindh

Rampant corruption within social sector/development sector has recently prompted government to put certain checks and balances on N.G.Os that are run on funds from foreign donors. Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the federal cabinet approved policy in late 2013 by which it has been made legally obligatory for N.G.Os to disclose “sources

of funding, details of proposed projects, areas of work, and details of the geographic location of the projects” [21]. Given the fact that governmental bureaucratic institutions themselves are no less corrupt than NGOs, any governmental efforts to monitor and audit NGOs could hardly be expected to live up to their duties. [13]

Hence, although Economic Affairs Division of the government has recently bound NGOs and INGOs to governmental audit of finances and intervention activities, yet such demand may not be sufficient to ensure auditing by the local people themselves. Environmental justice demands to open up external development-interventionists to communal auditing as well. Local communities, which are the subjects and objects of development, deserve to have the knowledge of all those activities which are being undertaken for them and in the name of their welfare and well-being. Nevertheless, it is the step that would, to some extent, make NGO’s internal administrative files and workings accessible to the media for general auditing through the masses. It would have been still better if the government would have allowed local non-funded voluntary organizations or committees of communities to monitor and audit NGOs finances and evaluate its success in their respective localities [13]. It would be still more preferable if the government makes binding upon the NGOs and INGOs to declare their sources of funding and the funds utilized to concerned communities, their CBOs/ participatory CBOs / Communal councils.

Donor-funded NGOs can be replaced, if the government wills, where possible, by Participatory CBOs. Alternatively, the donor-led NGOs could be de-authorized to work as a subsidiary of communal participatory CBOs/Communal councils. Such a political restructuring would not only ensure environmental justice, food autonomy, ecological health, and the community empowerment for the localized communities, but also to good governance at local, administrative, transnational, and national levels. Government, NGOs and the indigenous communities in Pakistan would serve the purpose of developing local communities best if they derived the notions of ‘development’ from the ‘ideal development model’, that is “the indigenous cosmivision of co-existence with nature as a new view of development” that takes material, ecological and spiritual development as a single ‘whole’ and which is the integral part of the world view of every ecological community [22]. Such a cosmivision for peasant communities and marginalized ethnic groups was idealized in Sindh few centuries back by a socialist Sufi Shah Inayat. Shah Inayat’s cosmivision of ‘*Jo Khere So Khaey*’ and that have the potential to revitalize, revive and evolve in an existing context through serious theoretical discussions by peasants and the government and through practical experimentation by ethnically marginalized peasant communities.

Meanwhile, till such a situation evolves, government could be enforced, as it is being enforced to presently to bring about changes in tenancy laws, to give almost full financial and political authority in local matters to local communal councils to regulate, inspect and guide the outside experts, technicians or the NGO-managers.

Prioritizing Ecological Places over Social Spaces

The notion of 'place' connotes something concrete, physical, visible and organic, hence tangible, whereas, 'space' connotes something hollow, vacant, spread over, having no boundary and thus virtual. It is because of connotative difference, that the use of 'place' is preferred over 'space', as it better defines the ecological communities situated in a certain geographical area, that are contained in 'places', having archeological history of its own. It is this physical, biological and cultural historicity that is attached to places, and that makes the discourse of ecological communities look more real and tangible. In Pakistan as well as in Sindh, there inhabit hundreds of such ecological communities. In Sindh, for instance, there inhabit peasant pastoralists in Thar and Parkar, settled peasants in barrage area, rice growers in the upper Sindh, peasants of Katcha area (Indus basin), fishermen along the coastal belt, and the peasant-pastoral communities of mountainous region of Kohistan. Similarly there those that depend more on cotton, others on wheat growing, while some others on cattle. In certain areas or places, women do bulk of the labor in the field, while at some other places women tend to cattle. Some communities are trans-locally attached to other ethnic communities, while others remain socially segregated despite their movement from one place to another, such as Dalit peasant communities that tend to migrate from Tharparkar to Barrage area and often keep shuttling back and forth. Certain peasant communities, such as Kolhi community which inhabits in lower Sindh and Parkar, is not only trans-locally spread between Parkar and the barrage area of lower Sindh, but it is also active in the realm of virtual spaces at social media to establish virtual connections with trans-local and transnational peasantivist and ethnic identities. This distinctive geographical and ecological position shapes the culture, economy, food habits, and living patterns in a unique way. Centuries of attachment to the certain place mould the mentality of the local folks in such a way that they embark upon life-long projects to develop their communities, defend their territories, preserve their ecological wealth and practice the life of mutual coexistence. Such 'life projects' have recently come under threat due to the introduction of short-term 'project-cycles' that tend to reduce everything 'cultural', 'social', 'intrinsic', 'ideological', 'political', 'communal' and 'natural' to 'technical' and 'rational'.

Imaginations of and about local landscapes emerge from historical archeological past and ecological histories. Therefore, peasant cultures should be understood as embedded in places where peasants live or have used to live. It's not merely the dead historical past and age old traditions that loosely connect people to their place and land, but people's connectedness with the land is the result of their "active engagement with it" by which people's identities and places (their ecology, environment or landscape) are "mutually constituted" [6]. Therefore, the need is to realize and appreciate that centuries old intrinsic bond of the local peasant communities with their specific places, instead of relativizing it or subsuming it into the ubiquitous space in the name of the greatest nation, nationhood, or any homogenous universal political system.

Intersecting Feudalism and Casteism through Trans-localization

Because of the failure of land reforms in Sindh, feudalism there is more powerful than any other region in South Asia, its worst contradictions, however, can be evidenced in lower Sindh. Lower Sindh is the typical region where, predominantly, former untouchable minority communities, such as Kolhi, Bhil and Meghwar, have been trapped in structured ethnic discrimination and religiously approved economic exploitation. Most of the untouchable, now called as Dalits, live under social bondage of feudal lords, and as landless peasant under debt bondage of Sindhi Muslim landlords. It is the presence of large population of Dalit peasants living under structured systemic debt and social bondage of the land owning Sindhi Muslim ethnic upper class that has made agrarian bondage a kind of norm even for the poor peasants of lower castes. Hence, in lower Sindh it does not matter much to which religion a peasant belongs to so long as he or she belongs to lower castes. Caste-based identity is the primary indicator of one's social status in lower Sindh, and it's getting stronger and more assertive as it is happening in India as well where upper-caste Brahmin feudal and lower-caste Dalit peasant polarization is on the increase [23]. Such casteist, ethnic, ecological and geographical factors have not only limited the scope of activities of peasant activists, but also have defined the nature of peasant activism in lower Sindh.

Indian peasants and indigenous communities, as compared to Pakistani communities and peasants, however, are far ahead in their progress towards trans-localizing their struggles by establishing trans-regional, trans-ecological and transnational networks [3]. But the peasant activists in Sindh and Pakistan have not remained wholly isolated and stagnant. Peasant activism, during the post-colonial era is very much localized, yet recent technological and global social changes are swiftly turning their struggles into trans-local struggles against the nation-states, corporate culture, developmentalism and capitalist modernity.

Countering Perpetual Enslavement with Sustained Activism
There are certain communities, such as lower caste Muslim peasants and Dalit peasant communities of Sindh that have been exploited and suppressed, for centuries, by the invaders, the powerful, and the dominant ethnic groups. The true change for such colonized and historically marginalized, for those who have been reduced to lower castes, untouchables (Dalits) and for those who have been dispossessed of their indigenous rights over their lands, their territories and their places, the true change for all of such people would not come by simply going from one way of life to another, but by not going from one way of life to another, that is by resisting to the interpretations, representations and social systems evolved for them by the dominant "white-caste-class elites and consumer classes in the Indian context" [3,24], and perhaps, also in the Pakistani context, at least, as far as, the 'dispossessed', 'suppressed' and 'marginalized' reality of Dalit communities in Pakistan is concerned. The elements of that type of resistance can be evidenced in Dalit peasant activism in lower Sindh. What else is required, on the part of Dalit-peasant activists to sustain their activism and intensify it further by establishing trans-local and transnational

network along with continuous and deep engagement with the ethnic and peasant communities that they own. They have to evolve functional and participatory democratic mechanisms to abet the tendency towards the formation of elitist leadership hierarchies within the peasant activists. To evolve the egalitarian and participatory ethos is very important, particularly for the peasant activist of Sindh, and especially for the Dalit-peasant communities. Because, it is the casteism of Sindh tribal-type, not of typical Indian Hindu-casteism type, which seems to be on the rise among Kolhis. Bhooro Mal Kolhi, a Dalit-peasant activist has identified such tendencies among the relatively well-off Dalit families that are trying change their caste by hiding their essential castes, and has expressed his dislike for following the 'dependent thinking' the dominant's interpretations of the social status. "Four to five percent literate and so called civilised Scheduled castes that have become relatively well off, have stopped calling themselves Kolhi, Bheel or Meghwar, Chammar, or Jogi. Instead, they have started using Rajput subcastes such as Rathore, Parmaar, Chuhaan, Makwana etc., the trend that would ultimately not only cut them off from their poor tribal folks, but also hinder them to benefit from any job and funding quota offered by the government... Now we all have to stop calling ourselves, Achoot [untouchable], Shudra, and Harjijan, and think of ourselves as the normal human being like others, but we should not differentiate ourselves further into sub-castes or discriminate with each other on that basis." [15]

Keeping Bhooro Mal's concerns in mind, peasant and social activist's persistent engagement with peasant communities at intimate level, governmental attention to the issues of ethnic-Dalit communities, will serve two fundamental purposes. On the one hand it would weaken and reduce the influence of feudal politicians, and on the other it would help reorient local communities to form more egalitarian casteless social organizations and associations. It would keep them from erecting fake alternative hegemonic and casteist and non-democratic and authoritarian socio-political structures. Therefore, the tendency of 'concerned movements, such as Dalit peasant movement to seek ethnic and racial recognition as the Khashtriya Rajpoots, and the Dravidian inheritors of the Sindh; or the peasant movement in general intermeshed with Sindh ethno-nationalism seeking outright secession from the nation-state of Pakistan, both would fail to produce emancipating results, as both apply 'dependent thinking', the colonial lens, and try to seek the emancipation on the similar imperialist principles set up by the colonizers, subjugators and the so called oppressors. It is, in fact, the several decades long battle that Dalits and indigenous peasant communities that they have to fight against 'perpetual enslavement' through 'sustained activism'. Dip Kapoor, while commenting upon the nature of Dalit peasant network LAM¹ in India,

¹ LAM or Lok Adhikar Manch is the network of 15 social movements in South Orissa that include Dalits, aboriginal tribes, landless peasants, pastoral communities, fishermen, and horticulturalists. Such types of indigenously evolved networks are place-based trans-local entities, that defy the

elaborates upon such indigenous movements against colonial forces thus:

Self-recognition and anticolonial empowerment is, after all, a long term process of contradictory engagements given the parasitic and penetrating impacts of colonial structures; impacts that are recognizable along with resistances that have always tempered and limited colonial possibilities. The stress on unity (ektha), demonstrating strength in numbers and attempting to scale up Adivasi/Dalit and rural subaltern social action (hence the gradual emergence of formations like LAM) are clearly integral to the process of anticolonial contestations as is an anticolonial pedagogy of place and roots (historical, ancestral and/or spiritual). [3]

Hence, the end purpose of the Dalit or peasant movement should not be simply to emancipate peasants from bondage, to raise the social status of the marginalized according to the standards setup by the dominant classes, (as changing or hiding untouchable caste by effacing them from their surnames and instead of attaching the Rajput caste prefix, in case of Dalits of Sindh). They should depend on self-generated thinking having its own locus, instead of depending on the "dependent thinking" given forth by the powerful 'other'. They should not look towards him for recognition and acceptance would only perpetuate "sustained subordination." [3,24]

CONCLUSION

In Pakistan and particularly in Sindh, the historical structures of exploitation still exist in rural peasant culture. Because of the failure of land reforms in Sindh, feudalism there is more powerful than any other region in South Asia, its worst contradictions, however, can be evidenced in lower Sindh. Government-led land reforms, foreign-funded NGO interventions, and the so-called parliamentary federal centric governance system have virtually failed to bring about fundamental changes in the hegemonic and exploited feudal-capitalist system. Apart from working on western-led econocentric and technocentric agenda, these NGOs turned out to be less community-based, and more like familial nepotistic business organizations surviving on the internal embezzlement of donations and funds given directly to them from international donors

On the contrary, succeeding governments and the donor-dependent NGOs that propagate corporate farming and technical interventions, have done more harm than good to the local place-based yet trans-localizing peasant communities of Sindh. Peasant activists and the peasant themselves, on the contrary have not been merely passive recipients of change, and have progressed in a direction which, although unintended, have benefited them and still seems to be promising positive change in the desirable direction, that is heading them in the direction of transnational and trans-local networking. Hence, the peasant activists in Sindh and Pakistan have not remained wholly isolated and stagnant. Peasant activism, during the post-colonial era is very much localized, yet recent technological

post-colonial capitalist structures and both national and global coloniality.

and global social changes are swiftly turning their struggles into trans-local struggles against the nation-states, corporate culture, developmentalism and capitalist modernity.

International Peasant Movement, which is in the shaping, aims at identifying itself with the 'global civil society' which itself is in formative stages. The type of agrarianism that is practiced by localized and transnational peasant organizations such as La Via Campesina aims at the de-fetishisation of capitalist trend towards accumulation, for whom agriculture means something more than just money having intrinsic value with serious ecological and environmental implications. Transnational peasant movement, no more holds defensive or self-protecting stance in the global political scene. It has radically questioned the western neoliberal project of 'food security' which essentially aims at the commodification of global food regime controlled by the corporations situated in the rich western countries. La Via Campesina wants to replace the global neoliberal state-driven international political economy with the transnational global moral economy.

Through the suggestion to evolve agrarian regime and thus agrarian citizenship, peasant activists of Sindh are in fact further suggested to remain informed about the theoretical and ideological positioning of trans-local peasant communities, and to streamline and adapt their peasantivist agendas in accordance with transnational peasant movements through sustained activism. Sustained activism and sustained resistance require, in today's trans-localizing world, networking with other indigenous and peasant communities. It also requires continual engagement of the community members with the outside-side activists and vice versa. But before they externalize their activism, there is a lot to be done by peasants and leaders from within communities to make their indigenous and peasant associations internally viable, participatory and functional. Hence, peasant activist in Sindh have yet to devise their own contextually compatible plan of the level and strength that could penetrate the feudal regime and break it from within to create space for the marginalized. The breakage of the exploitative structures could be achieved if peasant activists, for instance, do not simply attempt to emancipate peasants from bondage, to raise the social status of the marginalized according to the standards setup by the dominant classes, but instead they should setup their own indigenously evolved standards. They should not look towards the dominant feudals or landlords for recognition by adopting their standards, values, but provide with alternative thinking, alternative values as vigorous and valuable as that of the dominant ones.

Keeping in perspective the strengths and limitations of peasant activism in Sindh, It would be better if the government allows local non-funded voluntary organizations or committees of communities to monitor and audit NGOs finances and evaluate its success in their respective localities. It would be still more preferable if the government makes binding upon the NGOs and INGOs to declare their sources of funding and the funds utilized to concerned communities, their CBOs/ participatory CBOs / Communal councils. Peasant activists, however, on their part, can evolve from within peasant communities more vigorous peasant organizations or communal councils.

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