



A REVIEW STUDY ON COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN INDIA DURING PERIOD 1900-1947

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ABSTRACT

Early in the 20th century, colonial exploitation, economic disparity, and the expanding influence of socialist and Marxist ideologies all contributed to the emergence of the communist movement in India. The development of the communist movement in India from 1900 to 1947 is examined in this review study, with special attention paid to its beginnings, ideological underpinnings, organisational expansion, and contribution to the fight against British colonial power. The book examines the impact of the Russian Revolution, the emergence of communist organisations, and the 1925 founding of the Communist Party of India. It also looks at the movement's involvement in significant agrarian movements, trade union activity, and the battles of workers and peasants, as well as its connections to the Indian National Congress and other nationalist groups. The impact of colonial repression—including arrests, prohibitions, and prosecutions—on the development of communist politics is also covered in this book. The movement's evolving political tactics throughout the 1930s and 1940s, as well as its role in the larger anti-colonial movement, are highlighted. The review comes to the conclusion that the communist movement significantly contributed to the mobilisation of workers and peasants as well as the introduction of class-based political concepts into India's liberation movement, despite ideological differences, organisational constraints, and official repression. Its operations from 1900 to 1947 made a significant contribution to the growth of organised left-wing politics in contemporary India.

Keywords: Communist Movement, India, Marxism, Communist Party of India, Workers, Peasants, Colonialism, Freedom Movement, 1900–1947.

INTRODUCTION

In India, the Communist Movement was a significant political and socioeconomic movement that began in the late colonial era and grew to become a powerful force among intellectuals, workers, peasants, and students. Indian society saw significant changes between 1900 and 1947, including the

rise of industrial capitalism, the exploitation of peasants and agricultural labourers, the growth of the working class, nationalist resistance, and the dissemination of socialist and Marxist ideologies. The formation of organised communist politics in India was made possible by these developments. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' writings, the worldwide socialist movement, and the 1917 Russian Revolution all had an impact on the ideological underpinnings of Indian communism. Indian political activists and revolutionaries who lived outside encountered socialist concepts and tried to incorporate them into the fight for Indian independence. The Communist Party of India (CPI) was founded in 1925 as a result of the development of communist organisations throughout India in the 1920s.

The communist movement made an effort to link the fight for national independence with the fight against colonial capitalism, economic exploitation, and class injustice. It was crucial in organising railroad workers, plantation workers, industrial workers, peasants, and agricultural labourers. The growth of mass politics was facilitated by communist organisations and movements, such as the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), peasant groups, and local conflicts. The British colonial authority implemented a number of policies to stifle communist activity because it saw communism as a major political threat. The movement was impacted by the Peshawar Conspiracy Cases, the Kanpur Conspiracy Case (1924), the Meerut Conspiracy Case (1929–33), and various types of repression. M. N. Roy, S. A. Dange, Muzaffar Ahmad, Shaikat Usmani, and P. C. Joshi were among the communist leaders who helped the movement flourish in India at the same period.

The communist movement underwent significant political and ideological transformations as well. Its ties to the Indian National Congress, the Quit India struggle of 1942, the anti-colonial struggle, and the Civil Disobedience Movement evolved in response to changes in global communist politics. The 1941 German invasion of the Soviet Union changed the communist stance on the Second World War, making it especially noteworthy. Communist influence grew during the last years of colonial rule thanks to worker and peasant movements, especially the Telangana peasant fight and Bengal's Tebhaga Movement. As a result, an analysis of the communist movement from 1900 to 1947 offers a crucial viewpoint on the development of India's independence movement. It demonstrates how nationalism, Marxism, class politics, worker mobilisation, peasant struggles, and global political processes interact. A significant part of contemporary Indian history is the movement's contribution to the growth of peasant and working-class consciousness.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Neelotpal, Mulugu. S. (2022) Intellectuals and thinkers benefit society by exploring the background of ideas and offering thoughtful analyses of them. Indians have a long tradition of engaging in discussions and debates that draw from a variety of theoretical traditions, from the ancient to the modern. Coastal Andhra was the scene of a well-informed intellectual debate between rationalism, atheism, and radical humanism in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The three ideas trace their roots back to the late 18th-century introduction of English education to India. Students from the Krishna and Godavari river belt, who were heavily influenced by the radical humanism of M.N. Roy, went through three distinct stages of intellectual development: atheism, rational thought, and social reform. Prominent figures gave lectures, students participated in awareness camps, and literature was created. Coastal belt public intellectuals of the next generation contributed constructive ideas regarding the role of the state to the public forums of the region, as this thesis follows the legacy of three prominent thinkers from distinct schools of thought and their debate methods. First and foremost, they set up mechanisms to spread ideas about the importance of human life, civic responsibility, personal and social liberty, and the role of government in upholding these values.

Mounir Abu (2022) A little magazine is a periodical run with little capital and resources where artistic expression along with literary experimentation rather than commercial gain is the driving force behind its creation. Not burdened by profit concerns, little magazine editors have the independence to address issues and concerns generally not addressed by the mainstream media and in the process counter the latter's dominant narratives. Little magazines are symbols of protest – be they against conventional literary forms or established social customs or political systems. They gave a fillip to the Dalit movement in Maharashtra. In Kerala, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, little magazines served as alternative media platforms and expressed Marxist political and cultural ideas and also boosted the literary career of several renowned writers and poets. The late sixties also witnessed the outbreak of the armed Naxalbari rebellion that sparked off in Naxalbari (West Bengal) in 1967. The movement spread to the cities, especially Kolkata and caught the fancy of the urban youth. The little magazines mentioned above all aligned themselves with the Naxalite cause though their editors were not directly associated with the CPI-ML, the political party of the Naxalites. The aim in my research study is to understand the character and role of left radical little magazines with a focus on the Naxalbari uprising. The little magazines in Bengal, like elsewhere, were initially bold attempts to introduce new forms in literature and poetry styles. After the 1950s, several political little magazines appeared espousing the communist ideology. This trend was set off by Porichoy, one of the oldest surviving Bengali little magazines. As mentioned above, left radical little magazines such as Aneek, Anushtup, and Frontier among others voiced their support to the Naxalbari cause during the 1960s. My study of

the little magazine movement in Bengal is expected to throw new light into the rebellious nature of little magazines in general and their representation of Marxist movements such as the Naxalbari agitation during the turbulent sixties and early seventies in West Bengal.

Mallick Debasish (2021) When Marxism initially emerged on the global stage, the new line working class people were hopeful that it would lead to their liberation from the bourgeoisie class's chains. India was just like any other country in this regard. A working-class movement impacted by communist newline ideology began in the 1920s when the Communist Party of India took charge of the working-class masses in India. Commencing a fresh. Because of this process, Marxist ideology became well-known in Odisha and all of India. A new beginning. Following independence, the Communist Party of Odisha and India exerted such a strong and extensive influence that they were seen as the state's preeminent political party. Nonetheless, the left-wing newline party finally fragmented. The result is that we are seeing left-wing groups in this new century. The contemporary era has seen the rise of new sectarian and fascist groups, which threaten the political structure of Odisha. Therefore, Odisha's working-class newline people have looked to the state's left-wing parties for guidance in their fight for emancipation. A new beginning. Protesting the bourgeoisie's exploitation and the government's anti-people policies, left-wing parties should educate the people about their rights. The left-wing parties in Odisha, on the other hand, have a dismal showing in the elections, failing to gain a single seat.

Spacek, M. (2017) This dissertation delves into the Maoist insurgency in India's eastern and central hills and forests, tracing it back to the colonial era and placing it within broader historical processes of state growth and engagement with the indigenous population. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's ideas on space, the state, and capitalism, it builds an analytical framework. Then, based on a conceptualisation of insurgent zones that utilises Zomia research by James C. Scott and Willem van Schendel, the empirical analysis of insurgent zones is conducted. Anger against state growth in the area, which dates back to the Moghul state's defeat at the hands of the British East India Company, is seen as a modern incarnation of insurgency in the Chotanagpur Plateau in Jharkhand and the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh. We can better understand the causes of different conflict dynamics in two geographically and demographically comparable locations by highlighting the evolving linkages between pre-state spatial practices at the local level and an expansionist state geography. Chotanagpur is now a disjointed metropolis where hyper-modern industrial spaces coexist with unique "protected" spaces built around a model of pre-capitalist economic and social ties. Notably absent from southern Chhattisgarh is the state. The development of natural resource exploitation and neoliberal capitalism are destabilising both of these spaces. As a result, in Chotanagpur, previously divided spaces have

begun to combine, and new power networks have formed, uniting rebels and other local actors. What has arisen in Bastar is a very dangerous kind of state-making that is counter-insurgency driven, with its roots in displacement and bloodshed. On the periphery of state projects past and present, the dissertation adds to the literature on space, capitalism, and conflict. In particular, it contributes to the literature on the Maoist insurgency in India by arguing that the current situation is partially the result of state expansion into a peripheral "frontier" zone that has been going on for a while.

Prabhakaran V (2016) No political group in history has endured the level of unfair criticism, smear campaigns, crackdowns, and tortures inflicted upon the Communist Movement around the globe. The state of Tamil Nadu was not immune to the many comrades who had sacrificed themselves for the Movement. Whereas throughout India it faced off against the Congress Movement, in Tamil Nadu it faced off against the Congress and the Dravidian Movement simultaneously. The former fought for the independence of the Tamil people, while the latter

sought to elevate the status of the Tamil race. Peasants and agricultural laborers in Tamil Nadu were led in their fight against landowners' inhumane exploitation by communists. Strikes and struggles by workers against capitalist exploitation were led by them on multiple occasions. Everyone in need of protection—employees, students, professors, refugees, and everyone else—was with them. Various communist-related publications have been released in Tamil Nadu, including books, documents, and pamphlets. On the other hand, very few have presented an unbiased view of the Communist Party of Tamil Nadu. An amateurish effort at a historical narrative, "The Communist Movement: Rise and Contribution in Tamil Nadu (1917 - 1967)" is the subject of this thesis.

Singh, P. (2016) From 1967 till the present day, this study explores the beginnings, influence, suppression, and persistence of the Maoist/Naxalite movement in India. A particular incident in 1967 gave rise to the movement, and this article focuses on that event and its wider consequences for Indian culture and politics. It all started on May 25, 1967, in the West Bengali village of Prasadujot, when peasants under the leadership of Kanu Sanyal and Jangal Santhal tried to violently take land from landowners. The confrontation, which was backed by communist ideologue Charu Mazumdar, escalated into violence due to police interference, hence launching the Naxalite movement. The label "Naxalite," first introduced by an English-language journalist or commentator, has been taken up by the movement's adherents and is used to characterise affiliated groups or individuals.

Brown, T. (2013) In this thesis, sustainable agriculture programs in India are investigated, with a particular emphasis placed on the possibilities and limitations of these initiatives for fostering democratic and inclusive development in rural spaces. To investigate the ways in which power

relations inside civil society have an effect on these projects, it takes a Gramscian point of view. Given the current social structures and the roles that various actors play, the research sheds insight on the difficulties that must be overcome in order to achieve development that is beneficial to the poor. The concept of sustainable agriculture with few external inputs is being proposed as a potential solution to the "agrarian crises" that are occurring in developing countries, particularly in rural India. Contamination of the environment, growing costs of inputs, and debt incurred by farmers are the root causes of these crises. Participatory approaches that construct alternative farming systems that represent the needs and perspectives of rural communities, particularly the rural poor, are emphasised as having a high value in the research that has been conducted.

Singh Vinay (2012) The collapse of individualism was evident toward the end of the nineteenth century. It didn't take long for Dicey to notice the collectivist movement in English law around 1870. At the turn of the current century, conventional individualism showed little signs of improvement. A political uprising known as "socialism" occurred during the 1920s and 1930s in response to the growing socialist ideology. Most Western nations retreated from individualism as a whole, with its non-interventionist philosophy, in response to the threat posed by socialist ideologies. Through the challenge of open revolt or the verdict of the ballot box, traditional individualism was increasingly rejected by the people as a hindrance to progress. It's possible that communism on a global scale, whether totalitarian or democratic, has captured the political temple.

Sethulekshmi, S (2005), The Industrial Revolution gave rise to the factory system, which in turn gave rise to trade unions. In order to bargain with employers as a group and offer some protection for its members, workers in different trades band together. The goal of forming trade unions, according to Frederic Engels, was to "protect the single working man against the tyranny and neglect of the bourgeoisie, in all branches of industries," as stated explicitly. Wage fixing and dealing with companies as a whole was their goal. They wanted to control the rate of pay according to employers' profits, increase it when opportunities presented themselves, and make it the same throughout all industries in the nation. Academics, social theorists, and political activists have all offered different definitions of "trade union." Trade unions are defined as "a continuous association of wage earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their working lives," according to Sidney and Beatrice Webb, the most prominent of these definitions. Workers' cooperatives, businesses, and other organizations that employ people for pay are all considered part of a trade union according to Soviet law. The Union is the go-between for its members when it comes to dealing with the government, whether it's to finalize a contract or agreement or to discuss issues of social welfare and labor.

Cairó i Céspedes, G. (2001) The Indian state of Kerala is the subject of this research titled "State and Society Relationships in India: Explaining the Kerala Experience," which focuses on the distinctive model of development that has been witnessed in Kerala. Its purpose is to establish a connection between the high levels of human development that Kerala possesses and the particular political and social forces that are at work inside its society.

Rai Lakshman (1995) The Soviet Union's foreign policy has revolved around anti-colonialism since the October Revolution's triumph in 1917. Lenin gave the spread of colonialism a great deal of thought, both globally and in Asia specifically. Marxism-Leninism was the theoretical framework from which the Soviet Union's anti-colonialist policies emerged, since Lenin looked up to Marx as his ideal. Marx and Engels' early publications on several Asian colonies during that period provide a possible origin. The New York Daily Tribune was an American newspaper that published Marx's writings on India. The bourgeoisie has enacted town rule over the country, as Marx and Engels stated earlier in the Communist Manifesto. It has produced massive metropolitan centers, boosted the urban population relative to the rural one, and saved a sizable portion of the population from the foolishness of rural living. In the same way that it has made cities vital to the country's economy, it has also shifted power from rural to urban centers, from peasant nations to bourgeois ones, and from the East to the West.

Singh Rammohan (1990) Class strife is a fundamental part of human history. This undeniable Marxian axiom provides us with a clear picture of humanity's continuous fight against anything that threatens its basic interests. To advance infinitely in the realms of development, progress, and social improvement, mankind has and continues to fight against the sociopolitical structures and sub-systems of the dominant economic mode of production.

Mohan Ram (1972). The superpower detente has centered on non-aligned India. Since the Soviet Union saw India as a prime example of a "national democracy" that can easily transition to socialism without a revolution, it has been keen on preventing a revolution in the country. In any case, the US and the Soviet Union both want India to be strong and stable so that they can keep fighting China in Asia. To keep India from experiencing a revolution, both superpowers have sought to underwrite the country. As a result of getting entangled in the superpower containment game with China, India's nonalignment has turned into double alignment. There has been a steady increase in India's economic reliance on both superpowers. Soviet ideologues celebrated state economic planning for over 20 years as a means to non-capitalist development through intervention, but the program has backfired, leading to a political and economic catastrophe. Out of India's overall development investment, one-fifth

comes from foreign aid, and this proportion has been rising over the past three five-year plans. Investments totaling 10% in the first five-year plan, 24% in the second, and more than 30% in the third came from foreign aid. Due to economic downturn and uncertainty about help, the fourth plan was put on hold for four years.

CONCLUSION

In India's political and socioeconomic history, the communist movement from 1900 to 1947 was a significant turning point. The movement gradually became a powerful force in India's anti-colonial and labour movements, emerging in the backdrop of colonial exploitation, expanding industrialisation, economic inequality, and the dissemination of Marxist ideas. While Indian political activists, intellectuals, labourers, and revolutionaries contributed to the growth of communist ideals within the nation, the Russian Revolution of 1917 had a significant conceptual impact. A key turning point in the movement's organisational development was the establishment of the Communist Party of India in 1925. Communist activists took part in trade union activities, strikes, and agricultural conflicts, and they were crucial in organising peasants and industrial workers. Thru these initiatives, the movement entered the broader political discourse on topics like social justice, workers' rights, better pay, land reforms, and economic equality. Additionally, the communist movement helped some workers and peasants become more aware of their class.

At the same time, the movement encountered many difficulties. British colonial authorities used surveillance, arrests, bans, and prosecutions in response to their perception of communism as a major political danger. The scope of colonial repression was shown by cases like the Meerut Conspiracy Case. Internal ideological disputes and organisational challenges also plagued the communist movement. It had a complicated connection with the Indian National Congress and the larger nationalist movement that fluctuated based on both domestic and global political conditions. These complications were especially evident during the Second World War. The CPI's resistance to the Quit India Movement and its policy shift after the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 caused a great deal of controversy and alienated the party from significant segments of the nationalist leadership. However, communist groups persisted in growing their power among labourers and peasants and continued to play a significant role in Indian politics.

Although the communist movement did not ultimately dominate India's independence movement, its historical significance cannot be disregarded. It highlighted the significance of social and economic change in addition to political freedom and presented a clear class-based understanding of

colonialism. Its contributions to trade union formation, labour organization, peasant mobilisation, and the expansion of left-wing political philosophy had a long-lasting effect on contemporary Indian politics. The communist movement's history from 1900 to 1947 so illustrates both its strengths and weaknesses. It was successful in making Marxist and socialist concepts significant components of Indian political discourse despite repression, ideological disputes, and shifting political tactics. Political parties, trade unions, peasant organisations, and social movements all carried on the movement's legacy after independence, making it a crucial topic for comprehending both the development of contemporary Indian political philosophy and the larger history of India's freedom struggle.

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