

Modi's Predicament

(By N.T.Ravindranath)

Social activist Anna Hazare started a padayatra of farmers from Palwal in Haryana on February 20, 2015 in protest against the land acquisition policy of the Modi government. Palwal is an historical place from where Mahatma Gandhi was once arrested by the British government in April 1919 during an agitation. Land acquisition was one of the major campaign issues during the recent assembly elections in Haryana. On reaching Palwal, Hazare had visited Gandhi's ashram in Palwal and had addressed a gathering of farmers from 17 states before flagging off his padayatra to Jantar Mantar in Delhi. Opposing the land acquisition ordinance, he had criticized the government for trying to acquire the farmers' land without their consent. He also announced that about 70 to 80 organizations would be participating in his two day agitation in Delhi on February 23d and 24th 2015.

The padayatra programme was organized by the NGO Ekta Parishad. Deepak Goyal, Convener of Ekata Parishad, while talking to the media persons in Palwal had said that it was on their request that Anna Hazare had agreed to lead the Padayatra. Prominent leaders supporting the Padayatra include Ekta Parishad founder P.V.Rajagopal, former RSS ideologue Govindacharya, social activist Medha Patkar, Magsaysay award winners Rajendra Singh and Aruna Roy, swami Agnivesh, Arif Mohammad Khan and self-proclaimed Gandhian Bal Vijay. Interestingly, two front organizations of the RSS, namely Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) and Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) have also extended their support to the agitation against the land acquisition bill. The BMS is also reportedly planning a satyagraha at all district headquarters to press for the implementation of its 10-point charter of demands, and may hold a separate protest programme at Jantar Mantar. Since the Congress, the left parties, JU (U), TMC and AAP have also supported the Anna-led agitation against the land acquisition bill, the anti-land law agitation seems to have transformed into a grand gang up against the Modi government.

The Ektata Parishad which organized the 'padayatra' programme against the land acquisition bill of the Modi government is known for its international links and Maoist connection. Medha Patkar and Swami Agnivesh are also known supporters of the Maoist movement. A Gandhian and corruption crusader like Anna Hazare should have enquired about the antecedents of people like P.V.Rajagopal, Medha Patkar and Swami Agnivesh before associating himself with any movement launched by such shady characters.

Shady links of Ekta Parishad

P.V.Rajagopal, a converted Christian originally hailing from Kerala, had been associated with late Sarvodaya leader Jayprakash Narayan and was working among the tribals of Chambal region and other rural areas of Madhya Pradesh since seventies. He had established two NGOs namely Parivartan (Change) and Lehar (Wave) to organize the rural poor in the tribal regions of Madhya Pradesh and educate them to fight for their right to land and livelihood. In 1991, he founded the NGO Ekata Parishad (Unity Forum) and expanded his land rights activism to Odisha and Bihar. Rajagopal is also the Vice president of the Gandhi Peace Foundation now.

Ekata Parishad had organized a Janadesh Padayatra (People's long march) from Gwalior to Delhi from October 2 (Gandhijayanti day) to October 28, 2007 covering 340 kilometers to highlight the problems of the landless poor and assert their right to land and livelihood. About 20000 people, including 250 foreigners from countries like France, Canada, Ireland, Brazil, Kenya and Southeast Asia had participated in this march. This march demonstrated Ekata Parishad's world-wide support and links. (<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/janadesh-rally-resolves-to-fight-for-land-rights/article1938801.ece>)

The Ekata Parishad and Ekata Europe Network had jointly organized an International Mobilization Conference on the Right to Land and Livelihood at Geneva on September 12 and 13, 2011. P.V.Rajagopal, President of Ekata Parishad and representatives of various NGO and human rights groups from different countries had participated in the conference. The conference sought to explore the ways in which non-violent grassroots' mobilization could defend the people's right to land and livelihood and promote social justice and provide a viable route to sustainable development. After attending the Geneva conference, Rajagopal was also taken to Belgium where in Brussels he addressed an environmental conference on the theme of 'access to land' which was attended by about 350 people. (<http://www.ektaeurope.org/Portals/0/documents/conference/report/NL-Septembre-Eng..pdf>)

In continuation of its right to land and livelihood agitation, the Ekata Parishad had announced another Jan Satyagrah march (People's protest march) of 50000 people from Gwalior to Delhi from October 2d to 29th, 2012 demanding a comprehensive National Land Reforms Act, and implementation and monitoring of institutions to provide access to land and livelihood resources to the landless and homeless poor masses. Their demands also included implementation of Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996 and Forest Rights Act, 1996. In preparation for the proposed Jan Satyagraha Yatra in 2012, the Ekata Parishad also conducted an awareness campaign about the programme by taking out a Jan Satyagraha Samvad Yatra in 24 states in the country in 2011 to educate the landless poor in the country about the purpose of the Jan Satyagraha Yatra.

Before the start of the march, the participants in the march had assembled at the Mela Ground at Gwalior on October 2nd, 2012 morning, where they were addressed by Yatra leader P.V.Rajagopal, Union Rural Development Minister Jairam Ramesh and Congress MP Jyotiraditya Scindia who all supported the demand for land and livelihood for all the landless and homeless poor in the country. The presence of top Congress leaders at the meeting showed the UPA government's tacit support for the padayatra programme. The actual padayatra started from the Mela Ground in Gwalior on October 3, 2012 and it reached Agra on October 11, 2012. By that time, Jairam Ramesh who had held a series of discussions with top Congress leaders in Delhi worked out a compromise formula on the charter of demands of the padayatries, and came down to Agra for a discussion with Yatra leaders in a bid to resolve the issue. After the discussion, an agreement was signed between Parishad leader P.V.Rajagopal and Union Minister Jairam Ramesh on the demands of the pada yatries, with the government agreeing to enact a National Land Reforms policy within six months which will give the poor the right to a patch of land for agricultural and housing purpose. The pada yatra which was to proceed to Delhi was thus called off at Agra itself.

International support for Ekta Parishad's Jan Satyagraha March

In solidarity with the Ekta Parishad, several of its sister NGOs, partners and individual supporters in different countries had extended their total support for the Indian marchers of Ekta Parishad by conducting support actions like holding demonstrations, meetings, solidarity marches and exhibitions highlighting the plight and struggle of landless poor in India. The Ekta Parishad had also sent Nicolas Barla, one of its senior leaders from Odisha, to Europe on October 5th to participate in solidarity marches, meetings and conferences organized by its supporters in different cities. Some of the major events that took place in France, UK, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, etc, in support of Jan Satyagraha march of Ekata Parishad are as under. (<http://www.ektaparishad.com/Portals/0/Jan%20Satyagraha%20-%20special%20edition%20October%206th,%202012.pdf>)

Date	Place	Event
September 21 to and October 17, 2012	Le Croisic to Paris France.	Solidarity March by La Paix en Marche and Gandhi International.
September 27 to October 10, 2012	Habitat Centre, New Delhi, India	Exhibition and dialogue between art and social movement.
September and October, 2012	UK	Various Solidarity Marches by Christian Aid UK, and Action Village India
October 6, 2012	Norwich and Bury St Edmunds (UK)	Marches for justice by Christian Aid
Octo 6 and 7, 2012	Offenburg, Germany	Campaign around Jan Satyagraha and non- Violence, a march from Laach to Offenburg and a march from Offenburg to Strasbourg
Octo 6 and 7, 2012	Strasbourg, France	Solidarity March and Campaign on Jan Satyagraha and global land grabbing
October 17, 2012	Trocadero Square, Paris, France	Arrival of the march and gathering for the International Day for the eradication of Poverty in solidarity with Ekta Parishad.
November, 2012	Montpellier, France	Presentation and discussion on Jan Satyagraha in Montpellier
2011-2012	Switzerland	Evening programmes around Ekta Parishad, Jan satyagraha and Gandhi International

The Jan Satyagraha march of 2012 had the whole-hearted support of many international organizations mainly based in western countries. For instance, Karima Delli, European deputy of the European Green Party, had declared her support to the march by relaying Ekata Parishad's demands to the European Parliament and by participating in the march. Maria Salete Carollo from MSP (a landless movement in Brazil) had declared to the Swiss media IPS that the Jan Satyagraha march must strengthen the social fight for food sovereignty and land reform in Brazil, and they must support all the people who fight for their land rights wherever they are. Many international organizations also showed their support

for the Jan Satyagraha march of Ekta Parishad, like the Christian Aid which planned and executed numerous programmes in England in 2012.

A film on Jan Satyagraha

“Millions Can Walk” is a film made by Christoph Schaub and Kamal Musale of Switzerland on the Jan Satyagraha organized by the Ekta Parishad in India in 2012. The film highlights the power of non-violent struggle of landless poor in India in asserting their right to land and livelihood. The film was premiered at the Solothurner Filmtage in Switzerland in January 2014, where it was nominated for the Prix de Soleure the prize of the festival. The entire crew of the film and Ekta Parishad founder P.V.Rajagopal attended the festival and earned rave reviews. (<http://www.ektaparishad.com/Home/TabId/55/ArtMID/709/ArticleID/84/Millions-Can-Walk.aspx>)

Like all other civil society groups, the Ekta Parishad is also a pro-Maoist organization. On April 21, 2012, the government of India ordered the deportation of 10 French nationals, including six women, for working with the Ekata Parishad, an alleged pro-Maoist organization. The French nationals were accused of participating in a meeting organized by Ekata Parishad and also of visiting and staying in Maoist camps at Nawada, Jamui and Gaya in Bihar. (<http://defence.pk/threads/10french-ngo-workers-accused-of-supporting-maoists-to-be-deported-india.175414/>)

It is clear from the facts mentioned above that the Ekata Parishad is not a simple organization of the landless poor in India, but it is part of a world-wide movement of NGOs and human rights organizations that are involved in stirring up unrest and disaffection among the most marginalized and oppressed sections of people in India by exploiting their poverty, illiteracy and unemployment as part of a wider conspiracy to destabilize India. While P.V.Rajagopal organizes the landless poor in the Odisha-Delhi belt, Pradeep Prabhu, the founder leader of Kashtakari Sanghatana based in Maharashtra, leads the struggle of the landless poor and forest dwellers at the all India level. Similarly, while NGO leaders Medha Patkar, B.D.Sharma and Akhil Gogoi prominently figure in leading agitations against mega-development projects like big dams, coal mining and steel plants in different parts of the country, activists like Achin Vanaik, Justice (Rtd) Kolse Patil, S.P.Udaya Kumar and Admiral (Rtd) Ramdas concentrate on opposing new nuclear plants in India. Even the Maoist movement is promoted, controlled and guided by activists like Prashant Bhushan, Swami Agnivesh and Professor Nandini Sunder. In fact, all the anti-development agitations and every secessionist movement in the country are promoted and supported by the so-called civil society lobby which in turn is supported and funded by various church and western intelligence agencies with the immediate task of stalling India's economic progress and with the ultimate aim of India's disintegration. It is with such an anti-national organization like Ekta Parishad that the three frontal organizations of the RSS, namely Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM), Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) and Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) and also a former RSS ideologue have now decided to join together to oppose the Modi government's policies on land acquisition and GMO technology.

The NGO and human rights organizations (the so-called civil society groups) were always in the forefront of the church and other western agencies-sponsored propaganda war intended to malign the RSS and other Sangh Parivar organizations dubbing them as communal and divisive forces. As such, it may look strange as to how could pro-RSS outfits like KMS, BMS and Swadeshi Jagaran Manch could align with anti-Sangh Parivar civil society groups like Ekta Parishad in opposing some of the policies of the Modi government which is backed and patronized by the RSS. But there is nothing surprising about such contradictions. It has been a clever strategy of the western intelligence agencies to cultivate individuals and organizations even among the enemy ranks by liberal funding aimed first to dilute their opposition to the western agencies and win their support and confidence over a period of time. So that, in case when a friendly regime is toppled and the opposition comes to power, their strategic interests do not suffer.

Some of the organizations affiliated to the Sangh Parivar have been receiving a lot of funds from certain donor agencies in countries like the US and UK since last two decades with the declared aim of promoting education, health care and other such socio-economic programmes. In the US, the India Development and Relief Fund (IDRF, a pro-RSS organization) and RSS fronts like the HSS and Sewa International have been collecting a lot of funds from individuals and corporate houses in the US and sending the same to Sangh Parivar organizations like the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram in India since 1989. The IDRF was founded by Vinod Prakash, a former World Bank economist, and his wife Sarla Prakash in 1988. A number of technological firms like CISCO, Sun Microsystems, AOL-Time, Warner and Hewlett Packard figure among the companies that contribute funds to IDRF. The funds collected by the IDRF, HSS and Sewa International are distributed to Sangh Parivar organizations all across India. Some of the beneficiaries receiving such funds are as under.

Vanvasi Kalyan Ashrm.

Vikas Bharati, Bihar.

Jan Seva Vidya Kendra, Karnataka.

Girivasi vanvasi Seva Prakalp, Uttar Pradesh.

G.Deshpande Vanvasi vastigrah, Maharashtra.

Swami Vivekananda Rural development Society, Tamil Nadu.

<http://www.frontline.in/static/html/fl1925/stories/20021220005502700.htm>

Campaign against IDRF,HSS and Sewa International.

Though the IDRF, HSS and Sewa International have done some excellent work by raising funds in a most transparent manner and sending the same to organizations working for the uplift of women and children in the remote and tribal areas of India, there had been a sustained campaign against these organizations by some pseudo-secular and leftist elements in the US led by Angana Chatterji and Biju Mathew, describing them as hate-mongers and anti-minority organizations. They had even floated an NGO called 'The Campaign to Stop Funding Hate' to warn the people against funding such organizations. It may be noted that these were the same people who were in the forefront of a campaign seeking denial of an American Visa for Narendra Modi when he was the Gujarat Chief Minister.

Western funding of Sangh Parivar organizations

It has been reported that there are many corporate houses linked with western intelligence agencies among the donors giving funds to the IDRF and Sewa International. However, only a thorough scrutiny of the donor list could confirm such transactions. The western intelligence agencies are also known to be using third parties while forwarding funds to Sangh Parivar organizations, so as to avoid criticism from anti-Hindutwa groups. Why should any western agency give any financial aid to any hindu organization affiliated to the Sangh Parivar which is perceived as the most communal, divisive and regressive movement in India? It is obvious that funds are given to Hindu organizations only to dilute their opposition to the western agencies and win over their sympathy and support over a period of time. This is a classical strategy of the CIA, which it has successfully implemented in many other countries also in the past.

For instance, Ford's work in Indonesia was a major example of Foundation's collaboration with the US government plans. The Ford Foundation worked through MIT, Cornell, Berkeley and Harvard to train Indonesian officials as modern administrators working under US tutelage. It established a US type

economics programme at an Indonesian university and trained faculty at the US universities to run the Indonesian programme. High level Indonesian officers were trained in the US for acquiring counter insurgency skills from the US military and business and public administration from Harvard and Syracuse universities. Students in all of Indonesia's elite universities had been given paramilitary training by the army. All this helped lay the ground work for the 1965 coup in Indonesia in which the legitimate government was ousted and over 500000 communists and their sympathizers were butchered.

In Latin American countries like Peru, Columbia, Nicaragua and many others, there had been many insurgency movements. Thousands of NGOs had cropped up in these countries during the last three decades of the 20th century. Some of them promoted small-scale economic development as in micro-credit while others promoted health-care or home ownership in shanty towns. A large network of human rights NGOs were also set up. However they remained mum on the role and complicity of US and European countries in the local human rights violations. The Foundation-created Americas Watch was careful in not exposing the US-supported violence and abuses in Latin America. Many intellectuals and university teachers, including some radicals who lost their jobs following coups in countries like Chile have been rehabilitated by the NGOs bringing down their radicalism. The North American Congress in Latin America which was highly critical of NGOs has undergone a total transformation and is now heavily funded by Ford Foundation. Many other Latin American research institutes have stopped criticizing imperialism.

In South Africa, the African National Congress professed socialist principles, pursued a path of armed struggle and included South African communist party in its fold. South Africa was rich not only in gold and diamonds but also in chromium, ferrochrome, manganese, platinum and vanadium. In 1978, the Rockefeller Foundation convened a Study Commission on US policy towards South Africa chaired by the Ford Foundation President. The Commission mapped out a path for gradual transition to majority rule. It asked the US private organizations to support organizations inside South Africa for a change to assist the development of black leadership and promote black welfare. Ford and Rockefeller Foundations then started giving generous aid to various organizations, institutions, churches and law firms and were able to eradicate the anti-imperialist feeling from the minds of local people, and apartheid was thus brought to a negotiated end. (<http://rupe-india.org/38/foundations.html>)

Above instances make it very clear as to how the CIA, using the western NGOs, human rights organizations and some other such agencies brings about the desired transformation in the policies of even the enemy regimes. As such, the Sangh Parivar organizations have to be extremely careful and vigilant about the antecedents of the donor agencies from whom they receive their funds. The funds received from any agency linked to the CIA, USAID, National Endowment for Democracy or American foundations like Ford or Rockefeller, etc, could prove to be a death-trap in the long run. The US agencies cannot be blamed for its interventionist policies in other countries. The US, which is the most dominant superpower in the world, will do anything in its national interest, even by using illegal and unethical ways and means, to retain its present dominant position in the world. It is in our national interest not to fall into such death-traps. During the UPA rule, the BJP's stand on some of the policies and decisions of the UPA government was rather strange and suspicious. It is an open secret that the National Advisory Council (NAC), which was an NGO think tank chaired by Sonia Gandhi, was the ultimate authority on all policy decisions during the UPA rule. Every anti-national bill drafted by this NGO think tank, like the

MGNREGS and Land Acquisition Bill, and introduced in the Parliament as pro-poor welfare measures, was supported by the BJP with minor amendments despite knowing its destructive effect on India's economy. Now, with Sangh Parivar organizations like Swedeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM), Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) and Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) openly coming out with their support for the NGO-sponsored agitations against the land acquisition bill and GMO technology, there is cause for worry as these Sangh Parivar organizations appear to have fallen into the NGO trap. Modi has already completed nine months in power. His promised good days are yet to come. He has not taken effective steps to crush the anti-national NGOs which still appear to be dictating terms to the government. According to a report in the Times of India, dated March 16, 2015, more than 70 mega development projects still remain stalled in India. It is still bad time for India.

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