

Are the farmers scared or the Prime Minister?

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been continuously attacking the opposition regarding the ongoing farmers' movement at the borders of the capital. He has constantly made accusations that the opposition is misleading the farmers against the three agri-laws to gain its lost political ground. Especially by showing them fear of losing their lands due to the new laws. Modi's attack is equally on the farmers as well. From the beginning, he has been pretending that the farmers are naïve and not able to recognize their good and bad. They are in the hoax of the opposition, while the biggest well-wisher of the country, including farmers, is present in front of them in the incarnation of Modi. He has revealed this 'ultimate truth' with more emphasis in the institutions/meetings of big corporate houses/industrialists. That is, farmers do not have to fear corporate. He himself and corporate are jointly committed to take care of their welfare. This stance shows that Modi considers corporate houses/corporate capitalism to be the natural welfare-doers of the country including farmers. So, be it labour laws or agricultural laws, there is no problem in them being corporate-friendly, rather they will have to be corporate-friendly. Workers and peasants have to leave all worries and just prepare to be rich!

Modi is aware that corporate-friendly laws have remained prominent in the country for the last three decades of neo-liberalism. Modi's opponents do not hold much weight in the argument that Modi is benefiting some of his cronies through various laws in various sectors. Crony capitalism has been going on in India since 1991 when New Economic Policies (NEP) were imposed. All political parties have been more or less encouraging to crony capitalism. All players in the main stream politics have their own 'Ambanis' and Adanis. Modi's distinct quality from other opposition parties/leaders is that he has made himself integral to corporate houses/corporate capitalism. This has become his natural state, which he attained as Chief Minister of Gujarat three times in a row. No other Indian leader could reach the stage of Modi, despite being an active/passive advocate of corporation capitalism.

There is a need to understand Modi's intimate relations with the masters of big corporate houses. As a sovereign nation, the strength of any leader in India would be based on the Constitution and parliamentary democracy. There could be no substitute of true loyalty to these for a leader. But if a leader gains his/her strength/power openly and directly from the wealth and facilities provided by corporate houses, he/she will naturally be a loving partner of the corporate. The Constitution, Parliament, democracy will be the things only to be used for such a leader. The chief minister of a state could not become the prime minister of the country by downing a senior national level leader like Advani, if he was not a natural corporate-savvy. It is not that if Advani were prime minister, the path of corporate capitalism would have blocked. But no capitalist could dare to offer him his personal airplane or put arms around his neck. The pro-capitalism Vajpayee was also confident of his strength as a leader first. No capitalist could touch even the shadow of Manmohan Singh, who paved the way for corporate capitalism in India through NEP. Only a leader whose source of strength comes from corporate houses, can do *galbahayan* with the capitalists.

In fact, capitalism has had a crony character in colonized countries from the very beginning. Previously, it was the crony of colonial powers, now the crony of the ruling classes of independent countries. These days crony character of corporate capitalism also can be seen in different forms at the world level. Leaders like Modi and Trump are the hallmark of crony capitalism in their own ways.

Modi says opposition leaders are making farmers scare of losing their land in the hands of corporate. But isn't Modi himself scared? Let's consider it a little bit. It is true that Modi has made crony capitalism 'sacrosanct' for his blind supporters by giving it a coat of communalism and fake patriotism. He has also made his role of 'Pradhan Sewak of Corporate' synonymous with 'Pradhan Sewak of Country'. He is aiming to do this 'Sewa' until last breath. For this, he has bought a special airplane for himself from the US by spending huge amount of money from the national treasury, and is constructing a new Parliament building under new Central Vista, again with a huge expenditure of public money. Corona infection should not interfere in his 'Sewa Marg' (path of service), he has not shaved for the past several months.

Be it a decision or a law related to any sector or subject, he engages himself solely in corporate interests without taking care of decorum or dignity of the post. In this way, it seems that both of them – he and corporate - live for each other. Modi is confident that no matter how low he falls in the game of power; the corporate will keep raising him high. He is sure that the corporate believes that a 'Sewak' (servant) like him cannot be any other leader from inside or outside. He not only passed the corporate-friendly labour and agricultural laws in the difficult period of the pandemic by violating democratic norms and decencies, he is determined to crush all resistance against them and implement the laws as it is. It is possible that such a wonder man Modi does not see any reason for fear for himself!

But politics is called a game of possibilities. No party or leader for corporate would be so dear that it would be ready to bear loss after him/her. The corporate is spending huge amounts of money on elections, channels, grand party offices and programs for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), as the Prime Minister and the government are giving it opportunities to earn huge profits constantly. A corporate who flies Modi in his plane can make him walk even if he is suspicious of his profits. The BJP is not limited to Modi and his 'Navratnas' (nine jewels). The day the corporate feels that Modi is not able to play his role as strongly as before, it can bet on a leader from within the BJP. After all, even after Modi, the corporate would need a 'Pradhan Sewak' (chief servant). Corporate can fix such leader in advance. Meanwhile, corporate must have read and understood the character of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The RSS, which has gone a long organizational journey due to the donations and dedication of small traders, has now licked big capital. It would rarely dare to go against the corporate now. It is not unlikely that a Leader of opposition might ascend to the corporate eye tomorrow.

This is to say that even though Modi considers himself to be integral to the corporate, it is not a compulsion for the corporate to stick to Modi. Perhaps Modi realizes this reality of corporate in one corner of the mind. This feeling must have instilled fear in him. That is why he is leaving no stone unturned to uphold present agri-laws after the labour laws. In such a situation, it is unlikely that the 7th round of talks between the government and farmer organizations on December 29, 2020 will lead to any concrete result in favour of agriculture and farmers.

In fact, peasant organizations must take a written resolution from the opposition parties advocating for their movement that in the states they are in power, or would come in power in future, and when they come to power at the Center, will not implement the corporate-friendly labour and agri-laws. They should also seek written resolution from the opposition parties that they will abandon the policies of privatization/corporatization in the country. This will create a right direction for the farmers movement that has been firmly stood for more than a month despite the pandemic and severe cold.

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