

## NEW LAND REFORMS AND LIVELIHOOD INITIATIVES - SOME THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS\*

**Dr. Naseer Mohamed Jaffer**

Professor

Xavier Institute of Management & Entrepreneurship, Bangalore.

### **Abstract**

The major reason why capitalism has triumphed in the West and fails to thrive everywhere else is that in the western nations assets in the form of land have been integrated into one formal legal ownership system. The recent initiative by the Rural Development Ministry to draft the National Right to Homestead Bill 2013 may be first viewed from the theoretical perspective provided by Hernando De Soto (2000), especially in terms of 'informality and extralegality' and 'documents that empower' concepts. Secondly, the issue can be viewed also against the backdrop of the controversy between Jeffrey Sachs (2005) on the one side and William Easterly (2006) and Dambisa Moyo (2009) on the other side over the effects of aid on the poor. Thirdly, the issue can be discussed with the help of concepts like 'patrimonial capitalism' developed by Thomas Piketty (2014) and 'patrimonial democracy' in the Indian context.

The major argument of the present paper is that the National Right to Homestead Bill 2013 is an exercise in Rousseauan pastoral romanticism. There are theoretical insights, especially in the domain of new institutionalist economics, which show why concepts and practices that had proved effective in western societies may not be successful in non-western societies, particularly in the Indian context. The reason for lack of success of land reform initiatives in general in India, though still debated, are not difficult to identify. They are related mainly to structural and institutional factors of the polity and economy. The proposed New Land Reform Policy (2013) mostly deals with land distribution to the poor. The main contention

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*\*Paper presented at LBS National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie on July 14-15, 2014*

of the paper is that homestead land development as a livelihood initiative in rural India lacks conceptual clarity and practical effectiveness. Alternative livelihood initiatives are also presented at the end of the paper along with some suggestions.

A brief account of the concept is necessary for our discussion. The idea of individual farmers owning and operating their own farms was popular during the early years of agricultural development in the US, Canada and Australia. The Homestead Acts in the US gave ownership of land if the applicant fulfilled certain conditions. The first such law was the 'Homestead Act of 1862' signed by the American President Abraham Lincoln. Several such laws were made in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The claimant would get land measuring even upto 640 acres. As per one report, between 1862 and 1934, the US federal government granted 1.6 million homesteads and distributed 270 million acres of land for private ownership. This practice was continued till 1976 and in Alaska upto 1986. A homesteader had to be at least 21 years old, live on the designated land, build a home and make improvement on the land, like planting trees. The beneficiaries were immigrants, farmers without their own land, former slaves and even single women. There were several criticisms because the American government had not developed a systematic method to evaluate the claims made by the applicants. The Homestead Acts also increased conflicts between settlers and the indigenous American people, leading to the consequent decline in the latter population.

Now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the idea of homestead land development to enhance livelihood initiatives in rural India has come up for discussion. After legislating the Right to Information, Right to Education, Right to Work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and Right to Food under Food Security Act, the government's next step now seems to be legally upholding the right to land and home under the Right to Homestead Bill. A report by the task force set up by the Rural Development Ministry states that the proposed bill aims to ensure that "every shelterless poor family has a right to hold homestead of not less than 10 cents, within a period of 10 years". The Homestead bill is focussed on helping poor families in rural areas only. Government employees, those who already own land and income tax payers will not be eligible to avail themselves

of benefits under the scheme. Other details regarding maximum income limit are yet to be finalised. The draft says that the title of the homestead will be given in the name of the adult woman member of the family. The Bill aims at enhancing livelihood initiatives of poor landless rural families through grant of homestead land and also empowerment of women through the scheme.

The major question is whether the scheme is suitable in the context of Indian economic, social and political conditions. A main argument of the present paper is that a concept which explains socio-economic reality in a western country may not necessarily explain the same in a non-western society or economy. Similarly a policy or practice which was successful in a western country need not be successful in the Indian context. Economists and other social scientists generally assume that a concept or theory which explains social reality in one society may also do so in another society. The policy makers too are ready to follow this line of reasoning and begin to frame schemes. They all have good intentions but have little time to question the efficiency of their concepts and theories. As Prof. Joan Robinson famously pointed out once, the attitude of researchers in social sciences is reflected in their question, "Here is a nice theory, where can I apply it?" and they mostly fail to ask the relevant question, "Here is an important problem, how I can explain it?" Rural upliftment, agricultural development and women empowerment are all important problems, which need explanation from social scientists. Homestead development is a concept which may not be suitable in the Indian context. This is the thrust of the argument presented below.

An over-optimistic and opportunistic tendency in social science theorising and policy recommendations has been highlighted in the writings of economists and sociologists who belong to old and new institutional economics<sup>1</sup>. Gunnar Myrdal, for example says that all knowledge, like all ignorance tends to deviate from truth in an opportunistic and diplomatic direction. During colonial times and upto the end of World War II, the influential and sophisticated explanation was that the poverty of the people living in 'backward regions' was because they reacted differently from Europeans when they had choices to improve their conditions. There was a European ethnocentrism in the writings of anthropologists, sociologists and

economists. Climate was viewed as a reason for the people's negative attitude to life and work. A major source of bias in the writings of Western cultural anthropologists and economic researchers was the political interests of sustaining imperialism. When colonies began getting independence, research and policy prescriptions became 'diplomatic' in content which came to be described as a new version of the 'white man's burden'<sup>2</sup>.

Economists belonging to the New Institutional School generally argue how the economic models and theories given by development economists belonging to mainstream liberal economics make use of concepts which are not capable of explaining the social reality obtaining in developing countries. According to them, the concepts are largely biased and not realistic. For another, there is a fallacy of "category mistake" involved in much of the post-war approach to social theorizing<sup>3</sup>. To elaborate, the concepts which are relevant and useful in the context of western countries need not be so in a developing country like India. For example, the concept of 'unemployment' and 'underemployment' have either no meaning for understanding the economic reality in an underdeveloped country or an entirely different meaning from that of a modern economics text-book used in discussions in western universities<sup>4</sup>. In a similar way the concept of 'homestead development' is not suitable for understanding rural upliftment in India.

Having briefly explained the unsuitability of several concepts including 'homestead' in understanding social reality in a developing country like India, we shall move on to a discussion on land ownership related issues from the new institutionalist perspective. A very brief account of the intellectual background of the growth of institutional economics will be appropriate for our discussion. Karl Marx (1867) called the political economy of Adam Smith and other classical economists, plainly apologetic of industrial capitalism of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Western European countries. In his view political economy rose with the development of capitalism and would disappear with the end of capitalism. Capitalism would be replaced by socialism and communism as feudalism was replaced by capitalism. Marx could not explain the conditions in non-European societies. His most significant contribution however was his explanation of the Asiatic mode of production. The most insightful

and also contentious aspect of that mode of production is the absence of private property in land.<sup>5</sup> Institutional economists like Thorstein Veblen, Wesley Mitchell and John Commons criticised the lack of social content in the neo-classical analysis of the economy and at the same time did not agree with the Marxian contention that socialism was a better system than capitalism. Veblen who is considered to be the father of institutionalism wanted to save capitalism from both big business and growing consumerism.<sup>6</sup> Now the economists belonging to the new institutionalist economics try to combine the rigour of neo-classical economics with the social content of the Marxian thought.

Against this background, the following is a brief account of some insights which are relevant to a discussion on homestead development in the Indian context.

There is a huge ‘mystery of capital’ in developing countries. Hernando De Soto, a famous Peruvian economist states that the true mystery of capital lies in the lack of private property especially relating to land. There are various dimensions in which the poor may hold assets but may lack capital in the modern sense. It would be well to quote De Soto on this point at some length:

“(Assets are) in defective forms : houses built on land whose ownership rights are not adequately recorded, unincorporated businesses with undefined liabilities, industries located where financiers and investors cannot see them. Because the right to these possessions are not adequately documented, these assets cannot readily be turned into capital, cannot be traded outside the narrow local circles where people know and trust each other, cannot be used as collateral for a loan, and cannot be used as a share against an investment.

(The poor) have houses but not titles, crops but not deeds, business but not statutes of incorporation. It is the unavailability of these essential representations that explain why people who have adopted every other western invention, from the paper clip to the nuclear reactor have not been able to produce sufficient capital to make their domestic capitalism to work”.<sup>7</sup>

The title of De Soto’s major work is *The Mystery of Capital –Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else* and he explains how unfavourable

institutional arrangements adversely affect development in poor countries. He points out that farmers cultivate lands belonging to the government but do not cultivate lands given to them by the government. For example, we do not know whether a landless poor family in a rural area in India will relocate, build a house and develop homestead land given by the government without any price. Still we favour schemes of giving land to the landless. De Soto says that if economists wish to study the horse, they should go and look at the horses and not sit at their studies and say to themselves, “what would I do if I were a horse?” Dead capital in the form of land without proper title of ownership can be converted into live capital by improving land records and property right certification:<sup>8</sup> Homestead development is not the right solution, the real solution is formal property rights. De Soto says, “money does not make money but property rights can make money”. Documents empower the poor. The tribals are not a problem in forest development but they are an opportunity. De Soto’s famous statement is “poor are not breaking laws, the laws are breaking them”.

A debate on the possible livelihood outcomes as the result of homestead development in India would need a brief account of the controversy over the role of foreign aid in economic development of poor countries to which it may be compared. Prof Jeffrey Sachs argues that poor countries need foreign aid to come out of poverty. In his best selling book “*The End of Poverty*” (2005) Sachs argues that if the rich countries had agreed to contribute \$195 billion in foreign aid per year between 2005 and 2025 poverty could have been eliminated in 20 years.<sup>9</sup> He says that the United States is spending about 30 times more on the military than on foreign aid to poor countries. Sachs makes an interesting comparison. He observes, “Today’s situation is a bit like the old soviet worker’s joke: We pretend to work, and you pretend to pay us!” similarly, many poor countries today pretend to reform while rich countries pretend to help them, raising cynicism all round to a pretty high level. In the context of the present discussion of homestead development to enhance livelihood conditions of rural poor in India, it may be stated that when the government distributes land acquired through land ceiling legislations as well as government lands among the landless the assumption is that it would remove poverty much as foreign aid was thought likely to lift the poor countries from backwardness. Apparently where the

economics ends and ethics begins is difficult to decide. The Draft National Land Reforms Policy 2013, states that the poorest and the most vulnerable among the rural families are those who are landless and homeless. So land available with the government may be distributed among the landless and homeless and if the government land is not adequate, suitable land may be acquired. Now it is a moot point whether the foreign aid would lift poor countries from poverty and whether distribution of land among the landless would provide social security and social insurance as expected.

There are also alternative views. When markets are free to function and incentives are right, people can find ways to solve their problems and improve their conditions, without aid and free distribution of land. We shall briefly see the views of two economists who believe that Sachs' answers are wrong. Prof. William Easterly has become one of the most influential anti-aid public figures in the United States in recent times. In his two books '*The Elusive Quest for Growth*' (2001) and '*The White Man's Burden*' (2006), Easterly argues that foreign aid brings more harm than good in poor countries.<sup>10</sup> He argues that the poor people do not need handouts from foreigners or from their own governments. Instead of giving land to the landless people, the governments of poor countries can give skills to the skillless people.

Another anti-aid voice comes from Dambisa Moyo, an economist who worked at Goldman Sachs and at the World Bank in her recent book '*Dead Aid*'. She argues that aid from a foreign country and free grant of land by the local government do more harm than good. Aid in general prevents poor people from searching for their own solutions to their problems, discourages effort, encourages corruption at different levels and creates a self-perpetuating lobby for more and more aid<sup>11</sup>. The government of a poor country should concentrate on strengthening the market forces. There is no such thing called poverty trap. Moyo gives data on several poor countries that show that the countries which received more aid did not grow faster than the rest. It is possible to expect that the landless who get homestead do not develop the land and improve their economic condition faster than the rest. We do not know that for certain but we can speculate on the basis of available evidence.

Let us take the example of toilets. India has the world's largest population that defecates in the open. According to NSSO data 59.4 percent of people in rural India defecate in the open. Another study has it that the economic impact of inadequate sanitation in India is Rs.2.4 trillion per year; of this about Rs.1.75 trillion is lost due to medical expenses. In June 2012, toilet construction was added to the list of works permitted under MGNREGS with a support of Rs.4500 per toilet which was increased later to Rs.14,600/- . According to the 12<sup>th</sup> plan, 50 percent of the village panchayats must attain open defecation free (ODF) status by 2017 and 100 percent by 2022. Recent reports, however, suggest that India can meet the first deadline only by 2028 and attain universal coverage only by 2044. Now the tragedy is that the government has built millions of toilets but people do not use them. As per a report, of the total toilets built since 1986, 67 percent in Jharkhand, 59 percent in Chattisgarh and 38 percent in Bihar are defunct. These are used as store rooms or to keep cattle<sup>12</sup>. A study made by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication in New Delhi on knowledge, attitude and practices in rural areas shows that only 2 percent of the respondents acknowledged that subsidy is a major motivating factor to build toilets. There are, however, success stories also, for example, in Sikkim there is significant improvement in this regard. The major reason for the success there is that families are made to understand why toilets are essential. Homestead development for rural upliftment can be a success only if the rural people want to have the scheme. Otherwise the story of unused toilets built with government subsidy will be repeated.

It has been widely acknowledged that the basic cause of rural poverty in India is closely related to the control and use of land. The central and state governments have promulgated a number of land reforms since 1947 with the aim of bridging the gap between the landless and homeless poor and the landed rich. These progressive laws include abolition of intermediaries, tenure security for tenants, rent control, minimum wages and land ceiling with the ultimate goal of providing 'land to the tiller'. However due to implementation problems, these measures have yielded only limited success. The new National Land Reform Policy (2013) and homestead land development initiatives are the recent progressive measures aiming at empowering the landless and the homeless. Now land administration and



particularly determination of the extent of landlessness are the responsibility of state governments. The fact is that many states are sitting on land acquired through land ceiling legislations which is yet to be distributed to the landless. Reports indicate that this surplus land is misused by local politicians in various ways or it lies fallow. By all evidence it is very difficult to identify who owns how much land because of the sorry state of the land records. There are innumerable benami transactions. Finding out who the tenants are and who is leasing to whom is a very difficult exercise<sup>13</sup>. There was much expectation about the outcomes of the Forest Rights Act of 2006. A recent study points out that in Udaipur district, for example, less than 3 percent of the intended beneficiaries have benefited and only less than 2 percent of the forest land has been transferred. Even in the case of homestead land distribution there is meagre success so far. The state governments of Odisha introduced Vasundhara, a homestead land allocation programme. A study shows that success was very limited and the prime reason was the lack of field-level revenue staff<sup>14</sup>. From all this it is possible to observe that granting homestead to the landless may be a utopian exercise.

The concepts of 'patrimonial capitalism' developed by Thomas Picketty in his recent work on growing inequality and 'patrimonial democracy' are of relevance in any discussion on the efficiency of homestead land development to enhance livelihood opportunities of the landless rural poor. By 'patrimonial capitalism' we mean an economic system in which the significant factor contributing to economic power is not just wealth but mainly inherited wealth; a social system in which birth matters more than effort and talent of an individual. It is not a new concept but Picketty has made it influential through his book '*Capital in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*' (2014)<sup>15</sup>. The political equivalent of the concept is 'patrimonial democracy' in which again birth matters more than contribution to social and economic development<sup>16</sup>. Income from capital (and land) which can be inherited, dominates over income from labour. This is what patrimonial capitalism is all about. Family dynasties are dominating business and politics. Picketty is able to prove the fall and rise of extreme inequality in the US and in western European countries over the course of the past century. A similar study on the Indian economy, particularly the rural sector, is not available. However there are a few insights.

Regional inequalities, especially inter-state inequality, have attracted more attention from researchers in India than inter-personal and inter-class income inequalities. In the early years of economic planning there was a declining trend in inter-state inequality in income. This declining trend was particularly pronounced in terms of rural incomes mainly due to the success of the Green Revolution. However, during the 1970's regional inequality increased and that trend continued during the 1980's and 1990's. Studies reveal that there has been an increasing trend in inter-state disparities since the introduction of economic reforms in the 1990's<sup>17</sup>. In the context of the present discussion on homestead land distribution to the landless, it will be useful to briefly describe the outcomes of land reform policies in terms of inequality in the ownership of land. The total land distributed amounts to just one percent of India's agricultural land and the beneficiaries account for only about four percent of rural households in the country<sup>18</sup>. The dominance of a kind of patrimonial capitalism and patrimonial democracy is easy to identify but difficult to measure. For example, we find some interesting data on the U.S. economy – the top one percent of households now own assets worth more than those held by the entire bottom 90 percent and the six Wal-Mart heirs are worth as much as the bottom 41 percent of American households put together<sup>19</sup>. Such data are not available on the Indian economy, particularly in respect of rural incomes and control and ownership of land.

It would be appropriate to consolidate the arguments presented so far. Institutionalist economists and sociologists hold the view that reforms without the necessary institutional and attitudinal changes will not bring the expected results especially in developing countries. For example, Gunnar Myrdal says that the concepts and theories developed in the context of western societies are not suitable to explain realities in non-western societies. Hernando De Soto explains how 'informality and extra legality' prevail in the use of land as an asset and not as a capital and to what extent 'the documents that empower' the poor are missing in developing countries. William Easterly and Dambisa Moyo argue that subsidies and free distribution of land produce more harm than benefit to the target groups of people. Picketty argues that capitalism (especially patrimonial capitalism and patrimonial democracy) is behind the fall and rise of inequality in western countries and that

extreme inequality can be checked through progressive tax on capital gains and not through subsidies and free distribution of land to the landless. These theoretical and empirical insights are of use in our discussion on the suitability of homestead land development. We find enough reasons to be less optimistic about the homestead development initiatives. When even the elaborately planned land reforms have failed to bring desired results, it is arguable that homestead land development is a utopian exercise. Land is scarce, the number of the landless and homeless is huge and political will to implement is mostly missing.

Improving land records, implementing minimum wages in the rural sector, direct transfer of subsidies to the beneficiaries, ensuring right to health and strengthening market forces in the rural economy, all these seem to have a higher potential for uplifting livelihood opportunities to the landless and homeless rural people of our country. In an influential book '*Why Nations Fail*' the authors Acemoglu and Robinson explain the role of 'inclusive economic institutions' which determine the prosperity of nations<sup>20</sup>. By inclusive economic institutions the authors mean an economic environment in which everyone gets opportunities to develop and there are incentives for hard and smart work and rewards for innovations. Such an economic environment is forthcoming in a liberal democracy. After decades India has a government with a clear majority in the Lok Sabha and people expect more market reforms and more effective implementation of reforms by the government headed by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. There are surely better ways of enhancing livelihood initiatives of the landless and the homeless than distributing land.

The phrase 'documents that empower' need not refer to only titles of land ownership. The landless and homeless should be given skills and not land for their social progress. Redistribution of land is highly contentious because land is not only an economic asset but also involves social status and political power in the Indian context. Land reforms, in general, have not achieved either their social objective or economic purpose<sup>21</sup>. Radical changes in redistributing land and bringing about higher agricultural productivity and more equitable agrarian structure based on ownership of land would perhaps have been possible during the initial years of

the experiment of democratic socialism in India. That opportune moment is gone. Now in the new era of privatisation, liberalisation and globalisation, 'patrimonial capitalism' under 'patrimonial democracy' can be accomplished mainly through skill development of the rural masses. The newly created Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has the target of developing marketable skills in 500 million people by 2022<sup>22</sup>. And the thrust of the arguments presented above is that it is high time that the focus from redistribution of land was shifted to improving the skills of labour in order to enhance economic efficiency and social progress in the country.

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1. See for example, Myrdal, Gunnar (1969), *Objectivity in Social Research*. New York: Pantheon Books, Myrdal (1957) *Economic Theory and Under-Developed Regions* London, Duckworth and Co.
2. See for example, Myrdal, Gunnar (1970), *The Challenge of World Poverty – A World Anti-Poverty Programme in Outline*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books.
3. In logic there is a popular fallacy called 'category mistake'. For example, one can ask and find out the sex of an individual but one cannot ask and find out the sex of a family or community. See Myrdal, Gunnar (1970) *Asian Drama* vol 3, Chap 14, New York, Penguin.
4. See, Myrdal, Gunnar (1970), op cit. chap 21 and Appendix 6.
5. A vast literature is available on this issue namely the influence of Asiatic mode of productions on socio-economic class formation and stratifications in society. In the Indian context the debate becomes more complicated because of the existence of caste system. A recent account of this debate is given in Jal, Murzban (2014), Asiatic mode of production, caste and the Indian Left, *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 10 2014 pp.41-49. See also O'Leary, Brendan (1989), *The Asiatic Mode of Production: Oriental Disposition; Historical Materialism and Indian History*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell and Sawyer Marian (1977). *Marxism and the Question of the Asiatic Mode of Production*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff.
6. Most influential among Veblen's works are Veblen, Thorstein (1899). *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, (1904) *The Theory of Business Enterprise* and (1921) *The Engineer and the Price System*. An historian of economic thought writes, "Both Marx and Veblen were institutionalist to the extent that they were interested in studying private property and other economic phenomenon in their changing forms". See Heilbroner, Robert L. (1999) *The worldly philosophers*, New York, Simon and Schuster

7. This famous statement of Hernando De Soto is quoted in Sachs, Jeffrey (2005), *The End of Poverty – How we can make it happen in our lifetime*, London, Penguin.
8. See, Srivastava, Bipin Bihari (2013) “Role of NLRMP in Rural Development” *CRS conference volume Mussorie*, CRS, LBSNAA.
9. Sachs, Jeffrey, op.cit.ch 17
10. Easterly, William (2001), *The Elusive Quest for Growth: Economists Adventures and Misadventures in the Tropics*. Cambridge MIT Press: and Easterly, William (2006), *The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest Have done so much ill and so little good*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
11. See Moyo, Dambisa (2009), *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa*, London, Allen Lane.
12. Jitendra, Gupta and Bera (2014), “India’s Sanitation Programme – Mission Possible”, *Down to Earth* Jan 16-31, 2014.
13. Mookherjee, Dilip (2013), “A ‘new’ land reform policy for India?” *Business Standard* Sep 29 2013.
14. Patnaik, Sanjoy (2014), “Community Resource Person: Harbinger of change in Rural land Governance” *Yojana* Jan 2014.
15. Picketty, Thomas (2014), *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, New York, Belknap Press.
16. The idea of ‘Patrimonial Democracy’ is not difficult to relate to contemporary Indian Political scene. During the 2014 General Election campaigns, political parties extensively used terms like ‘Crony Capitalism’, ‘dynastic politics’ etc. After decades, dynastic politics seemed to have come to an end, atleast at national level when results of 2014 General Elections were announced on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2014.
17. See, for example, Kar, Sabyasachi and S.Sakthivel (2007) ‘Reforms and Regional Inequality in India’ *Economic and Political Weekly* vol XLII No.47 and Sen, Kunal, “The State of Capitalism in States” *Economic Times* July 17, 2009.
18. See Binswanger-Mkhize, Hans P.Camille Bourguignon and Roger J.E.Van den Brink (Ed) (2009), *Agricultural Land Redistribution Towards Greater Consensus*, World Bank, Washington D.C.
19. Kristof, Nicholas, “It is now the Canadian Dream” *The Hindu* May 16, 2014.
20. Acemoglu, Daron and James A. Robinson (2012), *Why Nations Fail – The Origin of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*, New York, Crown Business.
21. The following is the observation made by Gunnar Myrdal who made an extensive study of the problem. “All measures for agricultural uplift sponsored by South Asian governments – whether in the form of agricultural extension work and technological

improvement or cooperation or community development programmes or land reforms and tenancy legislation – have thus tended to work for the advantage of the relatively wealthy.

The conclusion is that – as neither the political will nor the administrative resources for a radical or, for that matter, any fairly effective land reform are present – it may be preferable to make a deliberate policy choice in favour of capitalist farming by allowing and encouraging the progressive cultivator to reap the full rewards of his enterprise and labour, while approaching the fundamental issues of equality and institutional reform from a different angle and by different policy means”.

Myrdal, Gunnar *op.cit* pp. 1368 and 1380.

22. The three key agencies – National Skill Development Corporation, National Skill Development Agency and National Skill Development Trust will now come under the new ministry. Also programmes implemented by 20 different ministries will be coordinated by this ministry. The minister Mr. Sonowal has plans to reach out 6,24,000 villages spread over 700 districts of the country to accomplish ‘Skill India’ which is the dream project of the Prime Minister. See *The Economic Times*, Sept. 28 – Oct. 4, 2014.

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