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*Research Article*

# Recognizing the Impact of Capitalism on Contemporary Agro-Farming: A Step toward Finding a Solution

**Dr. Jagriti Rai [1*], Dr. Amresh Kumar [2]**

[1] Department of Philosophy, Purnea Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Purnia, Bihar, India

[2] Department of Zoology, M.L. Arya College, Kasba, Purnia, Bihar, India

**Corresponding Author:** *Dr. Jagriti Rai

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## Abstract

Agriculture has consistently served as a fundamental component of civilization in all cultures. It moulds economies, affects social frameworks, and supplies nourishment for communities. The significance of agriculture is paramount in addressing contemporary issues like climate change and food security, therefore assuring a sustainable future. Land is intrinsically linked to agriculture, which has consistently served as a source of power. The interaction between land and agriculture not only moulds economies but also affects social structures and community dynamics. Societies develop, mirroring extensive cultural transformations and priorities in their utilization and valuation of land. Nonetheless, the temporal and methodical evolution of agriculture is altering its structure. The scientific revolution has revolutionized the modern agricultural system. The incorporation of capitalists into the agro-system triggered a profound transformation in agricultural practices. Capitalism presents difficulties within the agriculture sector. It presents restrictions and obstacles, accompanied by solutions. This article will examine the effects of capitalism on agricultural systems, the associated issues, and potential remedies from policy to practice.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past century, the rise of capitalism has converted agro-farming from a predominantly subsistence and community-oriented activity into a market-driven, industrialized system. This transformation has led to increased overall food production and technological progress, yet it has also resulted in the concentration of land and resources, heightened farmer debt, loss of biodiversity, and environmental harm. Identifying these effects, both through empirical evidence and philosophical inquiry, is the essential initial step toward developing policies and practices that promote ecological balance, food sovereignty, and social justice. How does capitalism transform agro-farming: Essential Trends and Statistics? Three interconnected processes reflect the influence of capitalism on contemporary agriculture: the commercialization and integration into markets; the intensification of technology and

reliance on inputs; and the consolidation of control over essential inputs and supply chains. Initially, agriculture continues to engage a significant portion of the Indian workforce, despite its diminishing contribution to the GDP situation which heightens vulnerability. As per the estimates modelled by the World Bank and ILO, the share of employment in agriculture in India constituted around 43.5% of total employment in 2022[1]. Concurrently, the contribution of agriculture to GDP has decreased to approximately 15-17% in recent years [1], indicating the ongoing presence of numerous workers in low-productivity agricultural positions. Secondly, the intensification of technology-particularly the increased application of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, led to higher yields, yet it has also resulted in environmental externalities. India's fertilizer consumption has been substantial and on the rise: official data from the Government of India indicates consumption in the tens of millions of tonnes, exhibiting significant year-to-year fluctuations and a growing dependence on imports for certain inputs [2]. This reliance on input factors increases production expenses and heightens farmers' vulnerability to fluctuations in global prices. Third, the human costs reflect the distress experienced by producers. The National Crime Records Bureau's Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India (ADSI) report indicates that in 2022, there were 11,290 suicides among individuals identified as part of the farming sector (farmers and agricultural labourers). This figure serves as a significant indicator of systemic distress, often associated with factors such as indebtedness, crop failure, and market pressures [3]. Globally, the FAO's State of Food and Agriculture highlight the "true cost" of agrifood systems, including environmental, health, and social externalities that are not reflected in market transactions. It cautions that agribusiness-driven models can generate significant hidden costs that disproportionately affect vulnerable groups [4]. This article elucidates the limitations of the capitalistic agricultural system, the philosophical framework surrounding these limitations, the resultant social injustices, and the policies necessary for regulating modern agriculture.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This study will use interpretivist and analytical philosophical methodologies to analyse the impact of capitalism on the modern agricultural system, using inquiries into governmental data sources. The results will elucidate the intricacies of agricultural practices under capitalist systems, demonstrating how economic forces influence farming choices and sustainability initiatives.

## 3. Capitalist Agricultural system: Adverse impact

**3.1 The centralization of authority and corporate influence:** Market power over prices and technology is exercised by seed companies, agrochemical firms, and large processors. Contract farming and vertical integration restrict the bargaining power and autonomy of small farmers [4].

**3.2 Monoculture and the Decline of Biodiversity:** Profit motivations promote the cultivation of monocultures consisting of high-value, easily commodified crops. This diminishes agro-biodiversity, weakens resilience, and heightens susceptibility to pests and climate extremes [4].

**3.3 Financial Obligations and the Process of Financialization:** Increasing input costs, such as those for fertilizer, seed, and mechanization, along with reliance on credit and vulnerability to fluctuations in commodity prices, contribute to ongoing cycles of indebtedness. Various national studies associate indebtedness with distress among farmers and instances of suicide [3].

**3.4 Environmental Externalities:** The excessive application of inputs leads to the deterioration of soil organic matter, contamination of water bodies, and an increase in greenhouse gas emissions. Data from governments regarding fertilizer consumption illustrate the extent of nutrient application [2], which is significant for the long-term health of soil and water.

## 4 Capitalistic Agricultural System: A Philosophical Analysis

From a philosophical standpoint, capitalist agro-farming illustrates two significant shortcomings: Exploitation of natural resources-According to market principles, land, water, and seed are viewed mainly as economic resources instead of communal assets with ethical significance. This undermines inherent ecological worth and promotes exploitative practices, as highlighted in Marxian and eco-philosophical critiques found in FAO and academic literature [4]. Equity Impairment-Market outcomes do not ensure equitable distribution. Amartya Sen's capability framework emphasizes that the goal of agricultural policy should be to enhance genuine freedoms-such as food security, health, and dignified livelihoods-rather than merely focusing on maximizing output [5]. Capitalist agriculture frequently limits the potential of smallholders, despite enhancing overall supply.

## 5 Exploring Solutions from Policy to Practice

Identifying the issues leads to comprehensive solutions that integrate structural policy changes with community-based practices:

**5.1 Establish regulations and promote democratic practices within supply chains:** Enhance antitrust enforcement, oversee seed and chemical markets, and promote frameworks that empower producers, such as farmer-producer organizations, with authentic farmer governance. The FAO suggests implementing policy packages that account for externalities and safeguard vulnerable populations during necessary transitions [4].

**5.2 Promote Agroecology and Organic Transitions**: Incentives for organic farming, agroecological practices, and regenerative agriculture-such as subsidies, extension services, and public investment, reduce input reliance and enhance resilience. India's policy documents and ministry

reports emphasize initiatives and pilot programs that promote sustainable practices [6].

**5.3 Financial Instruments for Strengthening Resilience:** Create credit and insurance solutions tailored for smallholders that avoid increasing their debt burden. Microfinance reforms and SHG-linkages, as documented by NABARD, indicate significant potential: community finance can be effectively utilized to support agroecological transition without exploitative conditions [7].

**5.4 Comprehensive Evaluation of Costs and Policy Integration:** Implement true-cost accounting to uncover concealed environmental and health expenses, utilizing these findings to adjust subsidies and taxation accordingly [4]. For instance, reallocating subsidies from blanket fertilizer application to initiatives focused on enhancing soil health.

**5.5 Equity in Social Justice and Labor Safeguards:** It is essential that agricultural restructuring places a strong emphasis on labour rights, social protection, and the livelihoods of rural communities [5]. Considering the significant proportion of the workforce engaged in agriculture [1], it is essential for policies to foster dignified non-farm employment opportunities while also safeguarding the interests of those who continue to work in farming.

**6. A Philosophical Framework for Transition: a step toward an egalitarian society**

A sustainable solution encompasses both technical and ethical dimensions. Three guiding principles should inform reform:

**5.6 Ecological Stewardship:** Acknowledge ecological systems as intrinsic values and view humans as caretakers [7].

**5.7 Democratic Commons:** Reinterpret land, water, and seed as communal resources managed through democratic means-local participatory governance that embodies the principles of social democracy and village self-governance as emphasized by Ambedkar and Gandhi [8, 9].

**5.8 Capability-Centred Justice:** Policies ought to enhance substantive freedoms-food security, secure income, health-aligned with Sen's capability approach [5].

## CONCLUSION

The transformation of agro-farming under capitalism has resulted in both benefits and significant social-ecological repercussions. The empirical evidence-spanning high agricultural employment alongside a decreasing share of sectoral GDP [1], significant fertilizer usage (Government of India statistics), and farmer distress [3], highlights systemic issues that cannot be resolved by market mechanisms alone. An effective approach integrates regulatory reform, public investment in agroecology, inclusive finance, and a philosophical shift towards justice and stewardship. Identifying the effects of capitalism is a crucial initial step; following this, intentional policy and community-based actions are necessary to reintegrate food systems within ecological boundaries and principles of social justice.

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**About the corresponding author**

**Dr. Jagriti Rai** is a faculty member in the Department of Philosophy at Purnea Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Purnia, Bihar, India. She specializes in philosophical research and teaching, significantly contributing to the academic growth of her students and institution. Her academic interests cover various branches of philosophy.