



INEQUALITY ALERT

DISPATCHES FROM A
WORLD GROWING
APART.

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1. असमानता और गैरबराबरी के खिलाफ उठी सीतापुर की आवाज़

मनोहर सीतापुर, उत्तर प्रदेश में आयोजित किसान-मज़दूर मेला देखने आए तो उन्हें मेले में असमानता के विरुद्ध जन अभियान का एक स्टॉल दिखाई दिया और वहां लिखे एक नारे 'अमीरों पर टैक्स बढ़ाओ, जनहित में पैसे लगाओ' ने उनका ध्यान खींचा। स्टॉल पर जनता से भी इस मुद्दे पर उनके विचार लिए जा रहे थे और मनोहर ने भी अपने विचार लिखने की इच्छा जताई। एक कागज़ पर असमानता खत्म करने के लिए अपने विचार लिखने में मनोहर को काफी समय लगा। लिखने के बाद मनोहर ने ज़्यादा समय लेने के लिए माफ़ी मांगी और बताया कि “दरअसल पिछले महीने लुधियाना के एक कारखाने में काम करने के दौरान मेरी दाएं हाथ की एक उंगली मशीन में आ गई जिससे एक उंगली को आधा काटना पड़ा और इस कारण से मुझे लिखने में दिक्कत होती है”। लिखने में असमर्थ होने के बावजूद मनोहर को असमानता के मुद्दे पर अपनी बात मज़बूती से दर्ज करानी थी ताकि फिर कोई उनके कमाई की तलाश में जैसा लुधियाना-मुंबई या दिल्ली के कारखानों में अपनी उँगली न गवाए।



मेले में आए युवाओं ने भी बढ़-चढ़कर असमानता के विरुद्ध इस अभियान का समर्थन किया और अपने विचार रखे। 17 वर्षीय सुरेखा समता युवा मंच से जुड़ी हैं और स्कूली शिक्षा पूरी करके आगे की पढ़ाई करना चाहती हैं। असमानता का एहसास सुरेखा को इस बात से हुआ कि उसके जिले सीतापुर में ऐसा कोई सरकारी विश्वविद्यालय या कॉलेज नहीं है जहाँ छात्रावास की व्यवस्था हो और कम पैसों में उत्तम शिक्षा ग्रहण की जाए। सुरेखा ने कहा कि देश में सभी को समान शिक्षा मिलनी चाहिए और अमीर या गरीब के बच्चों को बराबर के मौके मिलने चाहिए। समता युवा मंच के कुलदीप ने बताया कि उत्तर प्रदेश में पिछले दिनों सरकारी प्राथमिक विद्यालयों का मर्जर किया जा रहा था जिसमें कई स्कूलों को बच्चों की कम संख्या के आधार पर बंद किया जा रहा था ताकि शिक्षा पर सरकार का कम पैसा लगे। कुलदीप ने आगे कहा कि बजट न होने के बहाने का सबसे मुहतोड़ जवाब यही है कि अमीरों पर टैक्स बढ़ाया जाए और उन पैसों का इस्तेमाल शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य और रोज़गार जैसे ज़रूरी काम में हो।

8 से 10 नवंबर तक चले एकता, स्वावलंबन और ग्रामीण समृद्धि के प्रतिक वाले इस किसान-मज़दूर मेले में असमानता के मुद्दे की बात लोगों के सभी मुद्दों के साथ जुड़ती हुई दिखाई दी और धन-संपदा के न्यायिक वितरण को सच करने के संघर्ष को सभी ने एक सामूहिक संघर्ष माना।

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2. Inequality takes centre-stage in G20

The South African presidency's high point was the manner in which it centre-staged concerns around global inequality. In the lead-up to the G-20 leaders' summit, President Cyril Ramaphosa commissioned a committee of experts to produce a global assessment of economic inequality. Its findings were grim: a quarter of humanity – about 2.3 billion people – now face moderate or severe food insecurity, up from 335 million in 2019; and wealth gaps have widened sharply over the past 25 years, with 90 percent of the world's population living in societies shaped by high economic inequality. The report underscores that these outcomes are ultimately a “policy choice,” reversible through progressive taxation and other redistributive tools. Yet global momentum for such measures remains weak.

In response, the special G-20 committee has proposed creating an international panel on inequality modelled on the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change



3. South African Presidency of G20 underlined Inequality as a concern to be confronted collectively

In the context of the South Africa presidency of the G20, Oxfam has revealed that the amount of wealth that the G20's own billionaires made just last year – \$2.2 trillion – would have been more than enough to lift 3.8 billion people out of poverty.

Billionaires in G20 countries saw their wealth grow 16.5% in just one year, from \$13.4 trillion to \$15.6 trillion dollars. The annual cost to lift up the 3.8 billion people who currently live below the poverty line is \$1.65 trillion. It is in this context that the decision to make an IPCC like body foregrounding inequality assumes significance.

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4. 570 Economists and Experts from 70 countries wrote to World Leaders ahead of G20 to address inequality

*“Dear World Leaders,
We write to you as 570 economists and inequality experts from 70 countries, to call on you to support the establishment of a permanent International Panel on Inequality to address the global inequality emergency, as recommended by the Extraordinary Committee on Inequality report to the G20, led by Professor Joseph Stiglitz.*

We are experts from a broad range of disciplines, including economists, political scientists, climate scientists, sociologists, epidemiologists, anthropologists, historians, geographers, philosophers. Our diversity reflects a key fact: high levels of economic inequality have a negative impact on every aspect of human life and progress, including our economies, our democracies and the very survival of the planet.

We support the view of the Stiglitz G20 Committee that the world faces an inequality emergency....”

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5. Can Brain Scans Help Us Understand Inequality's Toll on Kids?

There is now strong evidence that unequal societies experience more mental health problems. Scientists in developmental neuroscience are studying how poverty and inequality can become “built into” the brain. This is taking research around inequality and its implications to an entirely different paradigm.

Research shows that higher income inequality is linked to smaller overall brain volume, thinner brain cortex, and reduced brain surface area. It also affects key parts of the brain – the frontal, temporal, parietal, and occipital regions. Greater inequality is further connected to changes in how different brain networks communicate, especially those involved in complex thinking and decision-making.

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6. Climate change and inequality are connected - policies need to reflect this

A growing number of experts say that inequality must be included in climate change discussions. Major global bodies like the International Labour Organisation, the UN Environment Programme and the Network for Greening the Financial System have explained why: inequality weakens democracy, harms social unity and creates economic instability.

Inequality also makes it harder for societies to respond to climate and environmental crises. Many countries now mention “just transition” ideas in their climate plans. But when it comes to actually designing and carrying out these policies, fairness and equity are still not treated as the main priority.

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7. Thermal Inequality: We need to rethink our cities?

Cities show both the best and worst sides of human life. They offer jobs, community, and culture, but they also reveal sharp social inequalities. Urban exclusion appears in many ways – limited transport, poor housing, lack of public spaces, or safety concerns. One form that is hardly ever discussed is “thermal inequality.”

Poorer neighbourhoods, often areas that were once redlined, can be 15 to 20 degrees hotter than wealthier, greener parts of the city. This leaves millions of families suffering through extreme summer heat. Greg Kats notes, despite billions spent by governments and foundations on projects to tackle heat, flooding, and related health problems, most cities have continued to get hotter and more prone to flooding.

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8. Bernie Sanders warns AI could deepen inequality and reshape war

Few days back Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang predicted that AI will create more millionaires in five years than the internet did in 20. Bernie Sanders too now has a clear warning when it comes to AI and its impact on inequality:

“Today, before we have seen the full implications of robotics and AI, you’re looking at unprecedented wealth and income concentration.”

“The top 1% of Americans own more wealth than the bottom 93%,” he said. “All of these zillionaires — the Musks, the Ellisons, the Bezoses, the Zuckerbergs — are investing hundreds and hundreds of billions of dollars into AI and robotics. What is the result of all that?”

Elon Musk could soon be the world’s first trillionaire. “It will mean even more wealth and even more political power for these guys at the top, while our democracy gets weaker and weaker. Working people will see a significant decline in their standard of living unless we turn this around.”

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9. Intra-country inequality is on the rise and is more visible today

Todd Knoop, the David Joyce Professor of Economics and Business, recently wrote an article titled “Global inequality has gone local—and why this matters”. In this he explains how inequality has changed over the past few decades and how inequality within countries and communities has increased.

“This means that where you are born matters a little less for your income than before — but the neighbourhood you live in matters much more,” Knoop writes. “Inequality is now something people can see around them, not just read about in global reports.”

Therefore there are 70 lakh Indians who today live as lavishly as those in first world countries. But 70 crore Indians who live at the very bottom of the global ladder. Intra-country inequality is a feature of neoliberalism.

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10. India's super rich are avoiding their fair share of taxes, How?

India's super-rich pay strikingly low taxes because they report very little of their actual wealth as taxable income. Prasanna Mohanty writes "Indian super-rich are, like their counterparts elsewhere in the world, don't really like paying tax. It has become an annual ritual for newspapers to scream that thousands of Indian dollar millionaires are fleeing India to avoid paying tax to Dubai and other tax havens. But many super-rich Indians don't. They find ways to pay little tax by suppressing their incomes."

Most of their wealth comes from assets like equity, commercial real estate, and land — sources that either generate income that isn't taxed until it is realised (such as capital gains) or can be easily hidden or deferred. Despite growing public debate about taxing the rich more — through measures like a wealth tax — the government has avoided major reforms, arguing that higher taxes might scare away capital. This leaves India with a widening gap: visible wealth at the top and very low effective tax contributions from those who own it. This of course weakens the country's revenue base and deepens inequality, as the burden of taxation falls more heavily on the bottom of the pyramid through indirect taxes while the wealthiest continue to accumulate assets with minimal tax scrutiny.

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Take Inequality Head On!

This is a campaign by people's movements, trade unions, civil society organisations and common people demanding wealth and inheritance tax for the top 1% rich to generate resources so as to ensure universal social and economic rights for the people.



Secretariat at **Centre for Financial Accountability**

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