

Social Reproduction, Constitutional Provisions and Capital Accumulation in Post-independent India

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The relationship between social reproduction and capital accumulation in independent India is delineated by arguing that social reproduction subsidises wages through unpaid labour time and thus is crucial in the extraction of additional surplus in the wage–surplus relationship that constitutes capital accumulation. This process is dependent both on constitutional provisions and existing social relations.

Every society produces to reproduce itself. Thus, production is and has to be for social reproduction. People, especially women, work to socially reproduce themselves and their kin to feed, clothe, and so on, and ensure their survival. Under capitalism, however, social production is fundamentally organised on the basis of socialisation of labour for the creation of surplus value, which is realised through the sale of commodities. A major part of this surplus value is privately appropriated as profits. The creation and distribution of value depends on the circuit of capital conceptualised as self-expanding value by Marx, whereby the value is divided between wages and surplus value (profits being a part of surplus value). It is the worker's labour power that is applied by capitalists for the creation of value. Part of the labour time of workers is used to produce value to cover the worker's socially necessary cost of living (the minimum cost of social reproduction of the worker). This is paid labour time in capitalism in the form of wages. The worker is made to expend labour time beyond this socially necessary labour time to create surplus value for the capitalist. This is pure unpaid labour time in capitalist production. Capitalism is, thus, historically specific in this construction of the wage–surplus relationship on the basis of paid and unpaid labour time. So, paid and unpaid labour together constitute the process of creation of marketable value under capitalism. On the other hand, there are many forms of activity that manifest at work but are not done directly to produce value for the market. Domestic work is the best example of such work but there are other forms too. While such work does not produce marketable value in itself, it is absolutely indispensable to the value creating process. It can take both the form of paid and unpaid work. This is the sense in which the concepts of paid and unpaid labour and paid and unpaid work are applied in this paper.

Social reproduction under capitalism is accordingly institutionalised to assist in value creation at minimum cost, keeping wages down to maximise the surplus value. This was Marx's original explanation in *Capital: Volume I* of the relationship between social reproduction and value creation in capitalism (Marx 1867). Laslett and Brenner defined social reproduction in relation to feminist theory.

Writing on the gendered division of labor, feminists use social reproduction to refer to the activities and attitudes, behaviors and emotions, responsibilities and relationships directly involved in the maintenance of life on a daily basis, and intergenerationally. Among other things, social reproduction includes how food, clothing, and shelter are made available for immediate consumption, the ways in which the care and socialization

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of children are provided, the care of the infirm and elderly, and the social organization of sexuality. Social reproduction can thus be seen to include various kinds of work—mental, manual, and emotional—aimed at providing the historically and socially, as well as biologically, defined care necessary to maintain existing life and to reproduce the next generation. And the organization of social reproduction refers to the varying institutions within which this work is performed, the varying strategies for accomplishing these tasks, and the varying ideologies that both shape and are shaped by them. (Laslett and Brenner 1989: 382–83)

Such a perspective on social reproduction seems to suggest that production itself has very little to do with social reproduction. While it focuses on some important aspects, it does not adequately theorise the historical specificities of social reproduction under capitalism. Earlier debates of the 1970s and 1980s had looked at domestic work as a systemic aspect of capitalism, which led to the demand for wages against housework (Federici 1975). But, this formulation was also argued against as it did not address the heart of the capitalist system in its subjugation of domestic work, and thus, wages for housework was argued to be not an emancipatory solution for women (Davis 1981). Unlike in previous societies, the wage–surplus relationship is at the heart of social reproduction in capitalism. This paper argues that the role of women in social reproduction in the capitalist production process subsidises specifically the wage component of the wage–surplus relationship to enable the share of the surplus to be expanded. For example, if women in the family stopped cooking, food will have to be bought from the market. This will increase the necessary cost of living for workers’ families and wages will accordingly have to be increased to maintain workers in working condition. So, the unpaid work of women in social reproduction subsidises wages and keeps it low, which in turn increases the share of surplus value in the total value created in the capitalist mode of production. In this way, unpaid work of women in social reproduction is vital to the regime of capital accumulation.

In recent times, there has been a renewed interest in the social reproduction theory. In her much publicised edited volume, Bhattacharya (2018: 2) argues that “social reproduction theorists perceive the relation between labor dispensed to produce commodities and labor dispensed to produce people as part of the systemic totality of capitalism.” She proposes social reproduction theory “as a conversation between Marxism and the study of specific oppressions such as gender and race,” and “as developing a richer way of understanding how Marxism, as a body of thought, can address the relationship between theory and empirical studies of oppression” (Bhattacharya 2018: 4). However, the book falls short of delineating the role of social reproduction in capital accumulation by just confining itself to the question of who produces the worker. Nancy Fraser’s chapter in the volume delineates the “social-reproductive contradictions of financialised capitalism” (Fraser 2018: 22). Despite its persuasive arguments, the focus on care as the synonym of social reproduction takes away from the rich understanding that emerged from Third World feminists about social reproduction being much more than care work for most women in the Third World (Ghosh 2009). It also moves away from the understanding that social reproduction is not just about the nature of work that it entails, but is a question about the

reproduction of the entire social system. So, this recent and deeper engagement with the link between social reproduction and capitalism also does not adequately theorise the role of social reproduction in the shaping of the wage–surplus value relationship in capital accumulation.

It may be noted that the process of social reproduction is neither teleological nor linear. Every society integrates into capitalism based on its own inheritance of social relations, which are in a state of continuous flux. This shapes the institutions of social reproduction in ways which are historically specific to each society. In this paper, we propose to delineate the specific historical and social process of reproduction that has marked post-independent India’s integration into the global capitalist order.

India’s integration into capitalism under the aegis of British colonialism meant that at the time of independence, India was a repository of a vast and cheap labour surplus that was created through a variety of means under the colonial modes of extraction. The drain of surplus and acute deindustrialisation led to pauperism, intense poverty, and propertylessness, which in turn contributed to the making of the vast labour surplus.

The post-independence economic and social trajectory in India not only failed to absorb this labour surplus, but also relied on existing social relations and modes of appropriation of surplus to produce and reproduce a working class that became cheaper over time. This was done through both intervention and non-intervention as policy tools. For example, the narrow definition of the worker (as someone who worked in a factory of a certain size) in various labour laws left out the majority of the informal labour force in the economy and the different types of employer–employee relationships that came with it (Das Gupta 2016). Changes in constitutional provisions related to property rights also contributed to perpetuation of the modes of extraction of surplus value. Liberalisation of the economy intensified these processes of labour cheapening through the dilution of the minimally existing labour rights paradigm to the extent that today, for every ₹10 of value produced in the formal organised sector of the economy, just 18 paise goes to labour (Annual Survey of Industries: 2016). Labour is not just cheap, it is virtually free in India.

Table 1 shows the average share of compensation of employees (which includes both wages of workers and salaries of managers, including high value chief executive officer and top management salaries) and the share of the operating surplus (a part of which accrues as profit). We find that in the private organised sector,

Table 1: Average Share of Compensation to Employees and Operating Surplus

Series Definition	Period	Average Percentage Share of Compensation to Employees	Average Percentage Share of the Operating Surplus
Private organised (1999–2000 factor income series)	1980–81 to 1992–93	55.59	44.41
Private organised (1999–2000 factor income series)	1993–94 to 1999–2000	35.02	64.98
Private organised (organised–public sector) (1999–2000 Series)	1999–2000 to 2007–08	33.21	66.79
Private organised (organised–public sector) (2004–05 Series)	2004–05 to 2011–12	30.50	69.50
Private corporations (2011–12 series)	2011–12 to 2017–18	36.48	63.52

Source: Author’s calculation based on data from Central Statistical Organisation, various years.

from 1980–81 to 1992–93, the share of compensation to employees was 55.59%, while the share of the operating surplus was 44.41%. But, between 1993–94 and 1999–2000, the share of compensation to employees fell to 35.02% while the share of the operating surplus increased to 64.98%. Since then, up to 2017–18, this distributive trend has been maintained.

Given the inflated emoluments to top managers in the post-liberalisation period, the average share of compensation of employees suggests that the share of workers' wages has declined in the entire period under consideration. Thus, wage depression seems to have been the primary mode of labour cheapening in India in the last three decades.

How has this situation come to pervade the logic of capital accumulation in India? This is the fundamental question we pose in this paper. We argue that patriarchy, caste and religion, under the aegis of the state, create hierarchies of insecure citizenship and labour that combine the domains of work and labour—paid and unpaid—to reproduce more cheaper labour. Such a process, dovetailing into the competitive race to the bottom in which international finance capital through open markets relies on this cheap labour for maximum extraction of value, singularly accounts for the political economy of capital accumulation based on cheap labour as the driving force behind capitalism in India.

Our point of departure from existing theories of social reproduction on the one hand and liberal economic theory on the other is rooted in the following Marxist feminist paradigmatic premises. First, patriarchy is endogenous to the construct of the macroeconomy (Dewan 2011). The actual macroeconomic construct of patriarchy within which the social hierarchy of paid and unpaid labour operates, is very much a historical process in its social and economic specificity both in terms of time and space. Thus, the ahistorical abstraction of Homo economicus-based market systems is inadequate in its explanatory capacity either as a point of entry or as a point of departure in understanding and analysing actually existing capitalisms.

However, patriarchy is not a stand-alone institution. In India, it is shaped by caste relations in a fundamental way, and the two institutions cannot be understood in India except in relationship with each other. This is because caste sanctity is maintained through patriarchal norms, deriving from religion through the institutions of caste endogamy (prohibiting inter-caste marriages) and *gotra* exogamy (not marrying in the same *gotra*) (Ambedkar 1916). This is what gives sanctity to the family as the abode of social reproduction through the sanctity of caste. It operates at three levels. Control over women's bodies is to control their sexuality through monogamy, confinement, and caste and patriarchal segregation so as to ensure their labour time in the hierarchies of unpaid work for social reproduction.

Our analytical narrative in this paper is based on the following premises:

- (i) Capitalism, in its systemic dimension, has been dependent on both paid and unpaid labour time from its very inception.
- (ii) While it is a global system, it functions on the basis of several institutions that have both spatial and temporal specificity, as is evident from the discussion on caste. Both caste and

patriarchy mutate over time adapting to the needs of the regime of capital accumulation.

(iii) Of these, the combination of international market systems, nation states and family as a basic unit of organisation of society comprise the institutional terrain of the construction of regimes of accumulation.

(iv) The continuities and changes in the role of paid and unpaid labour in the accumulation process can only be established through the interstices of institutional hierarchies in social relations.

(v) In the Indian context, this co-constitutive rather than intersectional hierarchy for historical reasons is constituted not only by patriarchy but also caste and religion in the making of class (defined in terms of social relations in the Marxist sense rather than income status in the liberal paradigm).

(vi) By extension, these premises define the relationship between paid labour time, unpaid labour time and labour in unpaid work, and the nature and extent of the economic surplus which is appropriated as profit.

Property Rights and Constitutional Provisions

A significant aspect of the Indian national liberation struggle was the demand for land redistribution as a part of land reforms. This demand emerged with the increased participation of peasants and agricultural workers in various strands of the anti-colonial struggle. Landlessness was critically and overwhelmingly prevalent among women, Dalits, Adivasis and religious minorities. For women, landlessness assumed a different dimension from legal provisions of not recognising them as farmers, and hence, not owners of land. Thus, women cultivators fell in the category of the landless even when the family owned land. On the question of substantive land redistribution after independence, the main barrier was the power of landlords who had enough social and political power both inside Parliament and outside, but more importantly in the state legislatures.

In the Constitution adopted in 1950, Article 31 guaranteed the right to property, Article 19(g) protected the right to practise any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business, and Article 15(3) provided for special provisions for women and children within the larger right to no discrimination.

On the one hand, using these constitutional provisions, landlords went to court against the different versions of the land tenure regulation acts and the abolition of the Zamindari Act, pleading protection for "their women and children" and their right to property and freedom to carry on occupation, trade and business. On the other, there were larger agitations and legal battles on the implication of the right of no discrimination both on the question of protection and affirmative action for Dalits, Adivasis and minorities.

The first amendment of the Constitution in 1951 was a response to this political situation. It listed 13 existing acts in central and state legislatures in the Ninth Schedule, which meant that these could not be challenged before the judiciary. Later, the 14th and 34th amendments added further acts on land reforms to the Ninth Schedule.

The dominant understanding of the amendment from the point of view of both jurisprudence and social theory has been

to interpret it as progressive. This has largely been based on the reading of the amendment of Article 15, which established the right of the state for taking affirmative action for Scheduled Castes (scs) and Scheduled Tribes (sts) and upheld the right to do the same for women, children, and religious and ethnic minorities. Also, Article 19 is often considered only in the singular dimension of upholding freedom of speech. What has been significantly missed in such readings is the premise of class compromise that underwrites the amendment, as evident in the continuities and changes that were constituted in the three articles and their interrelationships.

Given that land reforms were under the domain of the states rather than the centre, the first amendment qualified the right to property in the following ways:

Article 31 was qualified by the insertion of 31A, which said,

Saving of laws providing for acquisition of estates, etc—(1) Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing provisions of this Part, no law providing for the acquisition by the State of any estate or of any rights therein or for the extinguishment or modification of any such rights shall be deemed to be void on the ground that it is inconsistent with, or takes away or abridges any of the rights conferred by, any provisions of this Part: Provided that where such law is a law made by the Legislature of a State, the provisions of this article shall not apply thereto unless such law, having been reserved for the consideration of the President, has received his assent.

The “estate” was defined in relation to any local area to have the same meaning as that expression or its local equivalent has in the existing law relating to land tenures in force in that area, and included any *jagir*, *inam* or *muafi* or other similar grant. “Rights” was defined in relation to an estate, and included rights vesting in a proprietor, sub-proprietor, under-proprietor, tenure-holder or other intermediary and any rights or privileges in respect of land revenue. Hence, all social relations were encompassed in the conceptualisation of the hierarchy of “rights” in an “estate.” Thus, very little legal manoeuvring space remained to break the hierarchy of “rights” structured by class power co-constituted by patriarchy, caste and religion.

The right to property became a statutory right rather than a fundamental right through a process that was finally completed in 1955 with the fifth amendment. But, this very process also opened up the route to discretionary legislative power to uphold property rights of landlords in state legislatures. It also enabled discretionary executive power in the office of the President to veto progressive land reform legislation in cases where the powers of landlords were circumvented in the process of law-making in state legislatures.

In the first amendment, Article 19(g) was amended as follows:

Nothing in the said sub-clause shall affect the operation of any existing law in so far as it relates to, or prevent the State from making any law relating to-

- (i) the professional or technical qualifications necessary for practising any profession or carrying on any occupation, trade or business, or
- (ii) the carrying on by the State, or by a corporation owned or controlled by the State, of any trade, business, industry or service, whether to the exclusion, complete or partial, of citizens or otherwise.

It further stated that

No law in force in the territory of India immediately before the commencement of the Constitution which is consistent with the provisions

of article 19 of the Constitution as amended by sub-section (1) of this section shall be deemed to be void, or over to have become void, on the ground only that, being a law which takes away or abridges the right conferred by sub-clause (a) of clause (1) of the said article, its operation was not saved by clause (2) of that article as originally enacted. Thus, the amendment in effect, validated all laws on occupation, trade and business that pre-dated the Constitution and left it open to both “business as usual” and legal interpretations for the judiciary. This facilitated landlords in case law using Article 15(3) and Article 19(g) to challenge any appropriation of estates or curbing of revenue rights under Article 31, thus providing a way to circumvent the ninth schedule listings. It also facilitated circumvention of tax imposition or curtailing of business operations in the interest of protecting citizens. This facilitation has continued across policy regimes up to the present period (for some examples, see AIR 1952 MAD 203, AIR 1952 Bom 16, AIR 1952 Mad 565, AIR 1951 All 674; 1967 SCR (2) 762; AIR 1964 Guj 82; 2002 (6) ALD 548).

Hence, land reforms remained an unfinished agenda, except for the minimum abolition of zamindari. The contradictions in the Constitution were thus used by landlords, and a class compromise was arrived at by the central legislature to perpetuate and institutionalise the status quo in social relations. Not only did this institutional legitimisation of the status quo lead to concentration of property, it institutionalised social inequality in all its dimensions. For example, Article 23 prohibited *begari*. But, given the amended status of Article 31 (discussed above) along with the legalisation of existing social relations under the garb of freedom through the introduction of Article 19(g), *begari* could not be institutionally stopped even after it was recognised and a separate law brought in to abolish it in 1976, namely the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act.

The same provisions rendered Article 38 toothless in its aim to minimise inequality of income, status and opportunities by legitimising all concrete social relations based on class, caste, patriarchy and religion. The definition of estate also made Article 39 redundant (the objective of which was equitable distribution among the community for common good) because the control of the propertied over ponds, lakes, forests, grazing lands, etc, all came under the wide definition of the estate protected by Article 31A.

Moreover, this legal framework, by being silent on the status of parallel structures of social adjudication, perpetuated those. In fact, *joru* and *jameen* as signifiers of status were legitimised. Institutions of social oppression and adjudication (for example, khap panchayats, caste panchayats, religious boards and trusts, etc) were legitimised through the combination of Article 31 and Article 19. Thus, beyond the narrow scope of limited affirmative action for identified oppressed groups, despite Article 14 of the Constitution guaranteeing equality, and despite the plethora of directive principles of state policy, by 1951, the ruling class in India had institutionalised the existing property rights and labour and social hierarchies in all its dimensions by making suitable amendments to the Constitution.

This had four implications: first, it underwrote the demand constraint in the economy and perpetuated the huge labour reserves inherited from the colonial period. A large poor populace meant that there was not enough purchasing power to create demand for commodities that could have triggered a virtuous cycle of growth. Second, it ruled out a classical capitalist transformation by ruling out a process of development through

creation and channelling of a substantive agrarian surplus into industry. The constraints on the agrarian economy due to lack of land reforms meant that the sector could not produce sufficient surplus that could be invested in building of industries as had been done in Great Britain, Germany, United States and Japan. Third, it perpetuated one of the strongest links in preserving the links between caste, gender and property relations in the hierarchy of property rights and labour organisation. Fourth, it ensured the perpetuation of labour regimes based on extra-economic coercion with legitimisation of the unpaid labour regime based on caste, religion and patriarchy.

So, class relations, in constituting the labour process, consisted of creation of economic subsistence and surplus remained/became heavily reliant on unpaid labour in production and unpaid work in social reproduction. The variety and forms of unpaid labour time in both social production and reproduction, and hence, the macroeconomy was a complex interstice of caste, religion and patriarchy. This has both spatial and temporal variations, but unpaid labour is the universal on which this labour hierarchy was institutionally constructed.

Unpaid Work and Unpaid Labour

In India, the family as the basic institution for social reproduction is shaped by religious and caste rules defining marriage and property relations, both of which fundamentally shape patriarchy (Das Gupta and Gupta 2017). On the one hand, religion-based customary law lays out the first basis of hierarchy of household labour and the gendered division of labour, which is tightly controlled by the patriarchal control over women's bodies. On the other, these features are inevitably intertwined with the hierarchies laid out by caste-based labour ordering, which manifests itself in several ways.

First, there is a very significant overlap between caste-based labour hierarchies and the valuation of labour in the market. Second, this difference in valuation derives from a distinct caste logic in the nomenclature of "skills" by the state where the notion of skill derives from Brahminical ideas of "higher labour status" associated with a hierarchy of knowledge-based on education levels, as is apparent from the nine-level classification of skills by the government in the National Classification of Occupations (NCO). This derives from the casteist distinctions between mental and manual labour that is essential to Brahminism. Domestic labour (conveniently placed outside the production boundary and, hence, not assigned a value if it is not marketed), most kinds of agricultural work, and sanitation labour are classified as "unskilled" even though these require a high degree of tacit knowledge and myriad "skills." Third, property rights structures emanating from constitutional provisions and boundaries essentially shape this status quo of vast multitudes of propertylessness intertwined with this Brahminical labour hierarchy in the market.

Caste has been studied and understood in various ways, with an emphasis on indignity, humiliation, discrimination, degradation, segregation and exclusion (Ambedkar 1916; Guru 2009; Papola 2012). But the relationship between caste and oppressive labour in capitalism has not been subjected to adequate conceptualisation. The adaptability of caste to changing economies

and social formations lies in the abilities of caste power to extract coercive labour and unpaid work according to the social context. Unpaid labour structured by caste, class and patriarchy exists in the following forms: (i) domestic labour both within and outside the production boundary, (ii) labour extracted outside the wage contract from wage labour, and (iii) within the wage-surplus relationship, as discussed before. Patriarchy and caste mutate interconnectedly and adapt to the changing needs of capitalism. These can be illustrated through three examples.

First, let us take the case of domestic labour in the case of paid work for social reproduction. In 2018, we carried out a survey of 2,000 part-time women domestic workers in South Delhi. The aim of the survey was to explore the relationship between paid and unpaid labour among domestic workers, and if, and how, caste shapes this relationship. This survey was part of a larger ongoing study on caste, patriarchy, and women's labour. We found that women domestic workers tend to be mostly from castes situated lower in the social hierarchy, with respect to the caste of the domestic employers. The paid work assigned to domestic workers is largely work related to social reproduction of the employer's families/households. Such work comes within the definition of "unskilled" labour according to the NCO. It is low paid and thus helps to reproduce the employer family or the household, as the case may be, at the lowest cost.

In most cases, less than 5% of the employer's family income is spent on the wages of domestic workers. But, apart from the low pay, domestic workers end up doing a lot of extra work that is casually asked of them, which go way beyond the tasks they have been contracted for. This can range from making tea, to watering plants, to folding clothes, to shopping for groceries and vegetables, to minding the children. None of these are separately contracted, for the oral contract is usually for cleaning (*Jhadu-pochha*), cooking, washing utensils and clothes. All the other tasks accrue as extra work without any compensation. The question was why do workers do such work? The overwhelming response from the women workers was that they could not say "no" to the employer who occupied a higher social status. This higher social status is co-constituted by class and caste. Class power, in effect, structures the inequity of the oral wage contract of domestic workers, but the power to extract coercive labour emanates from caste power. The two processes cannot be separated out as the process is co-constitutive. Debt also is an effective instrument for extraction of such unpaid labour.

Now, let us turn to the explanations of wage gap for work that forms the bottom of the skills ladder and those at the top. The reporting of results from a survey on wage gaps that I did in 2019 in three public educational institutions (part of the study cited above) would be pertinent in this regard. We found that the average pay of cleaners and sanitation staff (*safai karmcharis*) was just 3% of the average pay of the faculty members. While the average monthly faculty pay was around ₹1,00,000 (rounded off to nearest ₹1,000), that of the actual pay of sanitation workers was around ₹3,000 (with a significant gender gap in wages among the sanitation workers). While contractualisation has been the usual explanation for this gap, such disparities in the valuation of labour power cannot have social sanction, without

the caste basis of the labour hierarchy based on notions of purity and pollution, and by extension, untouchability being taken into account. Moreover, similar patterns of unpaid work extraction to that of domestic labour were observed in these institutions. Sanitation workers were often asked to do odd jobs like towing furniture, serving tea, etc, tasks which were not part of their labour contract. And the same social basis of caste seemed to account for such modes of extraction. These processes singularly account for the perpetration of not just cheap labour but the cheap social reproduction of the institutions of higher learning themselves. The same would be true of corporate offices and other private and public sector institutions. In the case of the private sector, the wage gap between the top and the bottom is likely to be even higher.

The third example lies in the significant re-emergence of non-capitalist forms of labour in the fastest growing sites of accumulation in India, such as the brick kilns, garment industry, and construction sites with increasing use of family labour and bondage like *jodi* and *sumangali* labour. According to Mazumdar, Neetha and Agnihotri,

the present labour law regime's conceptual effacement of women workers' individual entitlements where *jodi* based migratory labouring units are combined with piece rate wages—as in brick kilns across the country and sugar cane harvesting in western and southern India. The significance of this issue, though noted in description, has been largely ignored in the literature ... a larger proportion of women of sc and st backgrounds are concentrated in rural based circular migration marked by contractor driven debt/advance based tying of male-female *jodi* labour. This in turn has interlocked semi-feudal bondage and semi-feudal patriarchal practices into recruitment and employment practices of a section of the developing modern industries, highlighting the primitive basis of their mode of accumulation. (2013: 62)

Similarly, *sumangali* labour has been in vogue in the export-based hosiery industries in Tiruppur. Despite laws to abolish it, this form of labour is perpetuated wherein young women and under-age girls are contracted for employment for a period of two to four years at a lumpsum of ₹20,000–₹30,000 that is supposed to cover the cost of their own marriage. Such women and girls work in slave-like conditions in which they face deprivation, illness and sexual violence. The entire purpose of this bondage is to extract pure unpaid labour time in production to maximise the surplus value accrued in such production by the employers (Ota 2014).

The lineages of power to extract coercive labour without pay derive from the power of caste status. The remnants of practices under the *jajmani* system have mutated under capitalism to extract pure unpaid work from those who are lower down in the social hierarchy, based on caste by those located above. Indignity, humiliation, discrimination, degradation, and segregation are all intrinsic to the social consensus to extract pure unpaid work. Thus, this kind of pure unpaid work, which is otherwise also cheap (and thus entails unpaid labour time in the Marxist sense), subsidises the socially necessary labour time, even in the cost of living of the employer. (These are not non-capitalist modes of accumulation because the wage-surplus relationship is still at the heart of the accumulation process. It is just that the labour extracted in such cases goes way beyond the traditional wage-surplus relationship in capitalism.)

If domestic workers unionise and charge for all the work that is done, this cost would increase, making the socially necessary

labour time to cover the cost of living higher for the families employing domestic workers. This, in turn, would mean that the wages/salaries of the income earners in the family would have to rise to compensate for the increased socially necessary cost of living. This would mean that the share of wages would rise in the macroeconomy, and correspondingly, the share of surplus value would fall. Thus, caste-based extraction of labour in social reproduction directly subsidises and reduces wage costs in the economy. This extraction of labour based on caste is a vital cog in capital accumulation through maintaining the cheap labour economy.

Workers at the bottom of the caste-patriarchy co-constitutive hierarchy thus subsidise social reproduction at various institutional levels, which add to keeping labour cheap. This is one of the significant ways in which the low wage and high surplus value proportions that drive capital accumulation in India is maintained.

This narrative, so far, indicates that the relationship between caste and patriarchy in the making of the working class is co-constitutive rather than intersectional. Intersectional theory largely works as a status signifier but does not capture the inter relations between caste and patriarchy. It also does not capture how both caste and patriarchy together constitute class relations. B R Ambedkar was the first thinker in India to argue that caste and patriarchy are co-constitutive; one cannot exist without the other. I am extending that argument to propose that both of these go into the making of class and in that sense are co-constitutive. This is different from intersectional theory from the West, in which race and patriarchy are independently constituted and then intersect. Such co-constitution combines with propertylessness and maintenance of social hierarchies that derive from legal provisions, traceable, as argued earlier, to the first amendment to the Constitution.

Lastly, this social order based on caste and patriarchy, in our opinion, cannot be understood through the conceptual framework of exclusion. The exclusion literature has largely believed that caste-based discrimination has “excluded” people from participation in the economy, and hence, “inclusion” is the way forward to ensure that people benefit from participation in the economy (Papola 2012). But our analysis so far leads us to argue that each social layer in the graded hierarchy plays a vital role in the labour-cheapening process, and that the paid and unpaid labour of the so-called excluded contributes to capital accumulation by subsidising both production and social reproduction. The people at the very bottom are vital to this process, suggesting that adverse inclusion rather than exclusion characterises the capitalist regime in India.

To sum up, feminist engagements with social reproduction have highlighted the role of women's unpaid work with a focus on care in reproducing the worker in capitalism without which production of value is impossible. However, such renderings have not sufficiently theorised how unpaid work in social reproduction shapes the wage-surplus value relationship in capitalism. We have argued that all unpaid work in social reproduction, including that of women, reduces the cost of social reproduction in the form of wages in capitalism and thus, by extension, increases the share of surplus value that

accrues as profits. However, this process in its materiality is historically specific and dependent on existing social relations.

We have shown that cheap labour as the sole basis of the accumulation regime in India is structured by unpaid work and unpaid labour in social reproduction on the basis of a graded social hierarchy of labour co-constituted by caste and patriarchy in the making of class. This social arrangement is sanctified by the state not only through constitutional changes, but also through official classification of occupations. It is being further extended by the state on a religious basis through changes in citizenship laws. All of these processes have contributed to the increasing share of surplus value in India at the cost of wages in the production process. Thus, the relationship between the wage-surplus value distribution and the methods of social reproduction reliant on unpaid work and unpaid labour co-constituted by caste, patriarchy and religion in the structuring of class relations is a significant driver of the cheap labour-based accumulation regime in India.

Insecure Citizenships

Recently, we have witnessed the ways of controlling labour on the basis of gender and caste, incorporating additional dimensions, with pogroms, lynchings, rape, as developing modes of control through a permanent threat of such violence. As argued earlier, the system defined by the relationship between state and capital works to perfection in its ability to deliver labour virtually free to India's capitalists big and small (Das Gupta 2016). More overtly, political methods of control are emerging in a situation of crisis, when mounting proportions of unemployed/underemployed labour (increasingly unable to reproduce itself) threatens to overwhelm the system. As falling wage levels, increasing precarity/volatility in employment, and agrarian crisis generate a demand constraint that threatens the realisation of surplus value and accumulation itself, demands on the state to fill the gap in social reproduction have necessarily come to the fore. It is at such a point that the state is moving to oust a section of the general citizenry from any claims on its resources. One way is by creating insecure

citizenships, using religion as a divisive marker for a new hierarchy of citizens and non-citizens.

Such a phenomenon is not, however, unique to India. Standing (2014) had argued that all over the world, a significant number of people are being turned into denizens from citizens by the whittling away of various kinds of citizenship rights. But this process in India has its own specificities in terms of the state's sanctification by law of the role of religion in determining hierarchies of insecure citizenship.

Citizenship as a concept that entailed equality, fraternity and liberty can be traced to the French Revolution where the transition from subject to citizen entailed a degree of emancipation from subjecthood. But, citizenship remained connected to property ownership in Europe and excluded by definition the proletariat, women, slaves and people of colour (Davis 1981). So, citizenship under capitalism has had a long and fraught history of being linked to property ownership. But this link was slowly severed at different points of times due to protracted democratic struggles in various nation states of women, of slaves, of people of colour, the colonised, and the working class. Universal adult franchise was one articulation of this universal notion of citizenship, but it is the range of fundamental rights that made it the bedrock of democracy.

The national liberation struggle in India led to the same achievement, that is, transitioning from graded subjecthood and privilege linked to private property and social status, to citizenship as a set of universal fundamental rights and adult franchise obtained by birth or naturalisation.

The architecture of the proposed National Register of Citizens combined with the Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019 and the proposed National Population Register is the most systemic attempt to create insecure citizenships as a mode of being on the basis of religion, regressing on the advances made by the Constitution. Whether it will enable the state to deal with this draconian extension of cheap social reproduction is, of course, an open question. We would only point out that the crisis of cheap social reproduction is upon us, and it is spawning a new form of state and citizenship in India.

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