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## **Akhil Bharat Kisan Jahirnama**

(Adopted at Bombay by the All India Kisan Committee on the 21<sup>st</sup> August 1936)

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The peasants' Question alone is the most important Question in India. 80 percent of the Indian people are today obliged to drag on their existence in extreme misery and poverty. the Peasant do not own the land in more than two thirds of the country. Parasitic persons like Talukdars, Malguzars and Zamindars own the land (and) they does not allow sufficient grain for the livelihood of the Peasant to be left with him. In (those) parts where the Ryotwarie system prevails the Peasant is the owner of the land only in name, but as a matter of fact this ownership is mortgaged to the Zamindars or the savkar. The Question of the peasants' cannot be solved unless the lands of the peasants are restored to them. The poverty of the peasants will disappear only when oppressive systems like Zamindari, Talukdari and Khoti are abolished and the system, "who cultivates the land owns it", is brought into operation.<sup>1</sup>

Another heavy burden on the peasants is that of debt; the peasant is being so much impoverished as a result of this debt that he does not get for his livelihood even after toiling in the field for twelve months. This debt is totally of an unjust character. The principal happens to be paid (back) by the peasant long since. The burden of debt has grown like a mountain as a result of calculating interest upon interest and owing to the fall in prices. This debt should be completely cancelled and provision should be made so as to enable the peasant to secure loans at a low rate of interest for agricultural purposes.<sup>2</sup>

The present government not only does not relieve the peasants' from the clutches of the zamindars and savkars. But on the contrary, his poverty is being increased as a result of the land revenue policy of the government. The assessment of land revenue is excessive. Annewari is not properly made. No remission is granted if the crops fail on account of wet or dry famine or on account of any other cause. Even in day of extreme difficulty land revenue is paid by selling cattle and land. Besides, the peasants are so much harassed and robbed by legislation in respect of forest and canals, etc., that consequently their existence has become full of extreme hardship.<sup>3</sup>

Economic depression during the last five or six Jahrs has come as an addition to all these usual difficulties of the peasant. Prices of agricultural products have fallen to such an excessively low level on account of economic depression that the peasant has been totally impoverished (lit. denuded) as a result there of. Today the price fetched by agricultural products is not adequate to cover even the labour of the

peasant. Whence then is he to pay government's land revenue, rent of the zamindar and interest of the savkar? the Indian peasant has today become bankrupt on account of the zamindari system, heavy increase in debts, and government's land revenue policy and (also) on account of the economic depression that has come as an addition (to all this).<sup>4</sup>

No party in the country can carry on the movement for national independence by ignoring the question of the peasants, (who form) 80 percent, of the population. But every party, even the National congress has so far neglected the question of the peasants. Even among the peasants a class conscious movement of an organized character did not exist up to now. Up to now the peasants had recourse to risings several times but these (risings) could not assume a lasting and countrywide character. In order to make up for this drawback an All-India Kisan committee has been formed last year after organizing the peasants' movement in every province. This committee will no doubt organize the workers on class principle but it will also place the peasants' programme before powerful and representative bodies like the National congress and endeavor to secure the help of these bodies for the peasants' movement. With this object in view the kisan committee has prepared the following list (lit. table) of the demands and grievance of the peasants and it is the request of the committee that in order to secure those demand, a movement should immediately be started by forming peasants' unions in every place and in other ways.<sup>5</sup>

### **Fundamental demands.**

1. Zamindari, talukdari, malguzari, khoti and other systems of land tenure should be abolished and the ownership of land should be vested in the tenants cultivating it and as suggested for the ryotwari system the tax to be recovered from these tenants should be assessed in proportion to the produce.
2. The present system of land revenue in the ryotwari area is faulty and unjust, it should therefore, be abolished. No tax should be levied on agricultural income up to Rs.500/-calculated in cash. Tax on an ascending scale should be imposed on (agricultural) incomes of more than Rs.500/-.
3. All existing (lit. old) debts of the peasants and interest required to be paid on them should be cancelled and government should make provision to advance loans for current expenses.<sup>6</sup>

### **Minimum demands.**

1. All outstanding dues of (land) rent and land revenue should be remitted.
2. The land revenue system should be abolished. And exemption from land tax Should be granted to those families that do not get produce from land sufficient for their livelihood.
3. Land revenue, (land) rent and water ches should be reduced by 50 per cent. The rent to be paid to the zamindar by the tenants should on no occasion be in excess of the assessment paid in ryotwari areas. Laws necessary for advancing the welfare of the tenants should be enacted.
4. Tenants in the zamindari, malguzari and other areas should be granted the right of cultivating the lands permanently.
5. Tenants of zamindars should have the right of getting remission an (land) rent in case of failure of crops. Similarly no attempt should be made to increase the rent or assessment paid by them.
6. Income tax, death duties and succession duties should be imposed on the zamindar and commercial classes.
7. All feudal exactions foisted by the zamindars on their tenants, and systems like the veth and bigar system, should be abolished.
8. Repayment of all the debts of the peasants should be postponed for five years.
9. An immediate inquiry should be instituted into the economic condition of the peasants.

10. The peasants should not be arrested or imprisoned for the recovery of debt, (land) rent or land revenue.
11. If the holdings are small, the land itself, sheds for animals, tenements, commodities necessary for everyday use, Milch and agricultural cattle, etc., should not be attached for recovering land revenue and rent.
12. The rate of interest should not exceed 6 per cent, per annum. Penalties should be imposed on persons charging compound interest.
13. Licenses should be given to all Savkars (i.e. money lenders).
14. Co-operative credit societies and land mortgage bank for giving loans at a low rate of interest and for long terms should be established in different places.
15. Rates for the transport of agricultural produce and third class railway fares should be reduced. Similarly road traffic and canal traffic should be extended.
16. All indirect taxes such as those on salt, kerosene oil, sugar, tobacco, match boxes, etc., should be abolished.
17. The price of the postcard should be brought down to one price.
18. The lowering or the prices of grain and other articles of food should be prohibited.
19. The prices of agricultural produce should be bought on the level of (those prevailing in) 1929 by effecting proper changes in the exchange and currency policy.
20. All existing rights of the peasants in regard to forests in respect of cattle and grazing, fuel or timber for buildings should be kept intact. No fees should be levied for cattle grazing. The distribution of timber and the management of grazing grounds should be handed over to the village Panchayats. Watering places in the forests should be kept open for the cattle of the peasants. The peasants should be permitted to use arms to protect themselves from wild beasts.
21. The management of public lands and grazing grounds should be handed over to the village Panchayats.
22. A 'peasant union Act' should be passed in order to safeguard the fundamental rights of the peasants.
23. The minimum wages should be fixed and the workmen's compensation act should be applied to agricultural laborers.
24. Provincial and central budgets (lit. finance) should be framed in such a manner that 75 per cent. Of the total government taxes would be imposed on moneyed classes and 75 per cent. Of the total income would be expended for advancing the welfare of the peasant and worker classes.
25. The minimum price of the sugarcane should be fixed so that the peasant may get full advantage of the 'sugar protection act'. Similarly minimum prices of jute and coconuts also should be fixed.
26. In order to put a stop to middlemen's profits (lit. brokerage) an increase should be made in (the number of) co-operative and government shops. Deduction of money from the price of commodities in the shape of charity, etc. should be stopped.
27. Arrangements for (storing) water and draining it should be made in order to protect crops from famine. Funds should be collected from zamindars to maintain source of water supply (like) lakes, tanks, &c., in good repair (lit. working order).
28. A close connection should be established between government experimental farms and peasants' unions in order to extend bag it crops, to supply seeds and manure and to spread new methods of agriculture.

29. Arrangements should be made for insurance of cattle, fire insurance and insurance against disease (lit. of health).
30. Village panchayats should be established and the work of village administration and distribution of water should be handed over to them.
31. The kisan sabhas should be authorized to make proper measures against officers taking bribes.
32. An Agricultural Insolvency Act should be passed.
33. Every person who has attained majority should have the right of voting. Representatives should be taken on the legislatures from every trade.
34. All ordinances and laws in British India opposed to the peasants (and) workers and the nation should be repealed and all peasant, worker and nationalist prisoners should be released.
35. All lands, belonging to agriculturists confiscated because they took part in the movement of economic and political independence or owing to their inability to pay land revenue should be restored to them.
36. Compulsory and free education should be given to boys and girls. Provision should be made for sanitation, medical help and dwelling places.
37. The right of using arms should be conceded all peasants.

**Foot notes :**

1. The “Jahirnama” as published in the Yugantar, dated the 24-10-1936, page- 29 to 43, & {Home (spl) 800 (53) BB 1936-37, File no. 700}
2. J.R. Harris, Esquire, I.P., Assistant to Deputy Inspector General of police, criminal Investigation Department, Poona. Bombay castle, 17<sup>th</sup> November 1936. Page-67, {Home (spl) 800 (53) BB 1936-37, File no. 700, page-99 to 105}
3. “Advocate of India” , fort, Bombay, page-1 to 2 (Home (spl) 800 (53) BB- 1936-37, File no. 700, page-71 to 72)
4. “Kisan Jahirnama”, Indulal Iajnik Paper, Subject file no:5, Page-1 to 11(J.N.U.)
5. Kisan Sabah ni savari”, Indulal Iajnik Paper, Subject file no:5, Page-1 to 11(J.N.U.)
6. Indulal Iajnik, “Biography” part-5, goorjar prakasan Ahmadabad, 2011, page-46-47