Twitter Thread by theZULU■■



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ARHATIYA (Not Farmer) AGITATION.

Request indulgence. Another Long Thread curated from @Indusglyphs FB page ...

PUNJAB & CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD

- In Punjab, Jatt Sikhs own more than 90% of available agricultural land.

- Jatt Sikhs are 50-60% of the Sikh population.

Contd

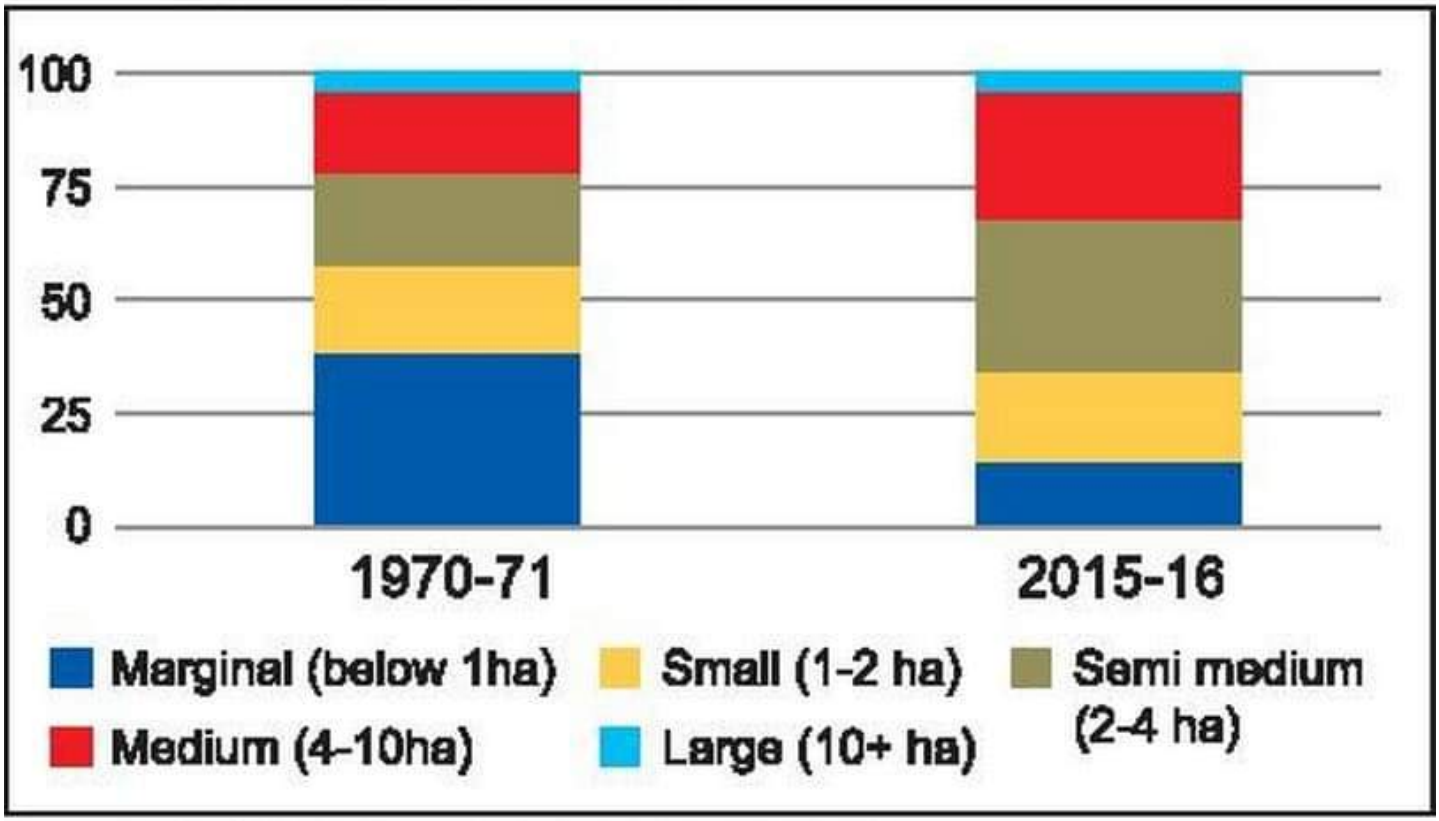
- Among all Indian states, Punjab has highest proportion of DALITS.

- Only 3.5% of Pvt farm land is with Dalits who are 32% of population. The national avg is 8.6% of farm land for 16.6% of Dalits.

- Punjab has max %age (5.28%) of big farmers owning >10 hectares of land.

FIGURE 1

Distribution of land by size class of operational holdings, Punjab (in per cent)



Source: Statistical Abstract of Punjab 2019-20

- Punjab has highest Gini quotient of inequality compared to other states.

- Dalits, landless & manual workers make up abt 35% of state population.

- Jutt Sikhs dominate due to political & social control.

- Arhtiyas & Large Farms owned by Jutt Sikhs, form the choke point.

TABLE 1

Distribution of operational holdings, Punjab and India, 2015-16 (in per cent)

	Distribution of Area of Operational Holdings	
Size Class	**Punjab**	**India**
Marginal (<1 ha)	2.35	24.16
Small (1-2 ha)	7.34	23.19
Semi Medium (2-4 ha)	24.87	23.65
Medium (4-10 ha)	43.76	19.96
Large (10 ha+)	21.68	9.04
Total	**100**	**100**

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India

- Farmer unions in Punjab, starting from the New Farmers Movements of the 1970s and 1980s, have served the interests of LARGE farmers.

- Assertion of land rights often leads to grave violence in Punjab where popular culture glamorizes gun toting to gain possession of land.

- In Punjab, there's also 'common village land'. Large farmers wrest control & cultivate them, excl Dalits.

- Dalits are majority of labour. In Punjab, Dalit farm labourers are ref as seeri, rather derisively. They form heart of agrarian workforce, but thr condition is fragile.

- When these labourers start demanding pay increments, landlords rain down on them with majoritarian might. Collective action is crushed with village-wide boycotts.
- Sexual exploitation is rampant threat for women labourers, most are Dalits, & ~70% of them have been exploited.

- These Dalit and a few small farmers form the catchment for the money-lending practices of big farmers. They take money at a MINIMUM of 18% interest. This rate is generally easily 100% per anum.

- They also form the labour force for the big Jutt Sikh farmers.

- The Jutt Farmers exert control over Dalits incl:
a) unilaterally fixing wages for transplantation work;
b) controlling movt of workers by forbidding work outside the vill or for farmer of other village & threats of social ostracisation & hefty fines if they dare to disobey

- Dalit Sikhs & farm labour in gen are leaving Punjab as theyve no way to move up economic ladder.

- Converting to Christianity in common.

- Dalits try to get foothold is by leasing common lands & till them collectively These lease land are auctioned. Jutt Sikhs rig these too.

- Jutt Sikhs have a close nexus with the police & Dist admins.

- Landowners have prohibited Dalits from using village common grazing lands and restricted the collection of fuel and fodder from their fields. The increasing resort to gun violence on activists of the lower caste.

- The Farm Bills represent the biggest opportunity to such Dalit Farmers, to break free of this exploitative nexus & leverage thr small plot size & focus on growing other high-value but perishable crops, provided they get support of org lgs providers, which would be Pvt players.

- Many farmers have been sold scare stories wrt the Farm Bill viz labourers will lose jobs. Corporates will take away their land etc. This is a failure of eff comn to people by Govt. Having said which, given fact that who conts Farm Unions, going past gatekeepers might be tough.

- The very cause of their plight are now being made into being their saviours from the same plight.

It needs a massive communication exercise to allow them to come to a more informed picture.

Irrespective, it WAS the Govt's job to do so. And they better step up & do it!

- The big farmers have been more effective at fanning scare related to the farm bill over time. And moreover, by holding on to the picnic, they are trying to pull more people in.

- Yet NOBODY can stand his ground & explain HOW the Farm Bills are against interest of the farmers!

