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## **Jugal Kishore Roybir: A Revolutionary Mind Caught Between Marxist Ideals And Socialist Realities**

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### **Abstract:**

*Jugal Kishore Roybir also known as 'Uttarbanger Gandhi' (The Gandhi of North Bengal), though not as widely recognized as other political figures of his time, was a significant player in the intellectual and political movements of postcolonial India. His philosophical and ideological outlook was deeply shaped by the Marxist-Socialist currents that swept across India in the mid-20th century. Like many of his contemporaries, Roybir's engagement with Marxism was not limited to its theoretical aspects; it was a tool for understanding the socioeconomic and political challenges of a newly independent India. This essay critically examines how Marxist-Socialist ideas influenced Roybir's thought and activism, drawing connections to other key socialist thinkers of his time, such as Ram Manohar Lohia, Vinoba Bhave, J.P. Narayan, and Kishen Pattnayak. Jugal Kishore Roybir, a prominent Indian socialist leader and thinker, is widely recognized for his commitment to the ideals of social justice, economic self-reliance, and political empowerment. His thoughts on self-reliance, particularly within the context of India's socio-political and economic conditions, remain relevant even today. Roybir's ideas emerged during a crucial period in India's history, when the country was grappling with the aftermath of British colonial rule and the challenges of building an independent, self-sustaining nation. His last rites were*

*performed by people belonging to different religions such as Hindus, Muslims and Christians — this actually proves his great acceptability across communities. He was warmly greeted as Jugal Da by his fans/followers.*

**Keywords: Equality, Justice, Independence, Marxist, Economic Socialism.**

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**Introduction:** A simple and straightforward life, uninterested in luxury, a compassionate soul - a lifelong servant of humanity, a selfless householder-turned-monk, a leader of the oppressed Dalit movement, a coordinator of various mass movements across India, an advocate for a society free of discrimination, a believer in equality, socialist in thought and ideology, an advocate of collective leadership. Jugal Kishore Roybir was a political figure of great foresight in India's socio-economic sphere, a person whose ideological thought was shaped by the principles of Ambedkar on social issues and Gandhi on economic ones.



Fig.1. A Portrait of Jugal Kishore Roybir (17.05.1946-06.11.2007)

Jugal Kishore Roybir was the eldest son of a prosperous farming family from the Hedayet Nagar area of Jateswar. He began his social work and activism under the mentorship of the renowned social activist Kalyan Rai. With his deep understanding of social issues, eloquence, and analytical prowess, he quickly became a popular youth leader in the area. His dream was to create a society free from discrimination, where no divisions would exist between villages and cities, the rich and the poor, or between castes. He aspired for the balanced development of all regions.

Jugal Kishore Roybir entered politics during his student years through the Socialist Youth Front, aligned with the United Socialist Party, founded by Dr. Lohia, whose ideals he greatly admired. During this time, he was accompanied by Kamal Banerjee, and the national president of the Socialist Youth Front at that time was Kishen Pattanaik (in 1962).

He witnessed the economic, political, and cultural exploitation of North Bengal. The representation of Rajbanshi people was minimal, and the exploitation of tea garden workers by British colonizers was a major issue he began to address. He worked hard to unite various mass movements of North Bengal and formed the North Bengal Autonomous Struggle Forum. He also played a pivotal role in creating the All India Coordination Committee of Mass Movements by uniting movements across the country, believing firmly in the ideology of struggle and collective formation.

According to Ranjana Roy, President of UTJAS, Jugal Kishore Roybir's efforts led to the unification of various mass movements in North Bengal, forming the North Bengal Autonomous Struggle Forum. His foresight helped form the Socialist People's Council (SJP) in Mumbai as a political party with the goal of addressing global issues like globalization, international exploitation, and climate change. Jugal Kishore Roybir was unanimously chosen as the National President of the party.

He often lamented that such top-tier leadership should not be reduced to being merely called a leader of the Rajbanshi community. He was not just a leader of the scheduled castes or Rajbanshi people; he was a leader for all common people. In his final speech in Champasari, he spoke passionately about the need for collective leadership—a true mark of a visionary leader.

The late Kalyan Rai, social activist and leader, said that Jugal Kishore Roybir was the only person who maintained contact with the first-generation educated Rajbanshi people during the UTJAS movement. He lived in such simplicity that he could blend easily with anyone. There was no leader in the region who did not maintain a good relationship with him. Even leaders from other parties respected him for his honesty and integrity.

But was he just an honest man? As a powerful political figure, he not only understood the consequences of internal colonial rule but also fought against it as a prominent leader. According to the current General Secretary of the Socialist People's Council, the development of cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata was only possible because of the looting, exploitation, and natural resource theft from smaller towns and villages. The five districts of North Bengal were affected in the same way, and Jugal Kishore Roybir became the voice of the protest against this exploitation.

He also became known as the leader who unified the oppressed Dalit communities and led movements for their rights. Under his leadership, the Socialist People's Council was able to push for the establishment of panchayat systems in tea garden areas, which previously had no system of political representation. Furthermore, he advocated for the reservation of Muslims in North Bengal, who, despite being economically and socially marginalized like other backward communities, were not recognized as a minority until he took action.

Socially, he followed Ambedkar's principles, and economically, he adhered to Gandhi's ideas. He wore Khadi both at home and in public meetings, a symbol of his commitment to Gandhian economic thought. He believed in the abolition of caste discrimination and, in his

free time, visited the homes of ordinary party workers to check on them. This human compassion was an intrinsic part of his character.

Jugal Kishore Roybir founded the Samata Kendra (Centre for Equality) on December 6, Ambedkar's death anniversary, with the goal of establishing a society of equality. The Samata Vidyalaya (School of Equality) continues to operate under its ethos in Joteshwar, where the core principles are non-violence, equality, and self-reliance.

He was also deeply involved in the struggles for the rights of Dalits and other marginalized groups, working alongside leaders like Kishen Pattanaik. He mourned deeply when Patnaik passed away. Many believe that had Jugal Kishore Roybir not passed away prematurely, his ideas would have significantly advanced the Dalit movement in India, offering new paths for its progress.

His commitment to non-violence earned him the title of "Gandhi of North Bengal," and 17 years after his death, the people of Joteshwar erected a statue in his honor, a gesture that was long overdue.

**Critical Review:** Jugal Kishore Roybir emerges as a deeply committed social and political figure who dedicated his life to combating systemic exploitation and advocating for the rights of marginalized communities. His life, which spanned activism, political engagement, and social welfare work, was characterized by a commitment to equality, collective leadership, and non-violence. The text paints a portrait of an individual whose multifaceted work in uniting various movements for autonomy, Dalit rights, and social justice makes him a significant figure in the history of North Bengal's social movements.

One notable strength of this narrative is its emphasis on Jugal Kishore Roybir's human qualities: his simplicity, humility, and deep compassion for the oppressed. His ability to connect with common people, his refusal to be confined to any single caste or community, and his advocacy for a more equitable society reflect the ideals of social harmony and justice that he sought to instil.

However, the text at times idealizes him, presenting him almost as a saintly figure without delving deeply into the complexities of his leadership or the challenges he might have faced. While the narrative touches on his achievements, such as his efforts to unite the diverse struggles in North Bengal and beyond, it could benefit from a more critical examination of the outcomes of his efforts. For example, were all the movements he led or supported truly successful in the long run? Did his ideal of a discrimination-free society take root in the way he envisioned?

Moreover, while the reverence for his ideals is clear, the text would be more compelling if it engaged with the political dynamics of the time—his relationship with other leaders, the challenges he faced in a post-colonial India, and how his vision translated into practical political strategies. The connection to larger national movements, including his alignment with socialist ideals and his association with figures like Dr. Lohia, is only briefly

mentioned and could be explored further to give readers a clearer picture of his political ideology.

Lastly, while his leadership style is depicted as "visionary," the focus on collective leadership is commendable, yet there could be a more nuanced reflection on how collective leadership functioned in practice. Was there ever a tension between collective decision-making and the need for decisive individual leadership in crises?

In conclusion, while the text serves as a heartfelt tribute to Jugal Kishore Roybir's memory and his impact on the region, a more balanced exploration that includes both his successes and limitations would provide a fuller understanding of his legacy.

At the core of Roybir's vision of self-reliance was his emphasis on the economic and political independence of the people, particularly the rural masses. Unlike the elite-driven models of development that were often advocated by more mainstream political leaders, Roybir believed that true independence could only be achieved by empowering the people at the grassroots level. This vision resonated with the larger ideals of the Indian independence movement, but Roybir took a more radical stance, advocating for a socialist framework that placed the welfare of the working class and the underprivileged at its center. Roybir's conception of self-reliance went beyond mere economic independence; he saw it as a holistic process that involved social, political, and cultural dimensions. In economic terms, he argued for the decentralization of industries and resources. He envisioned a model of self-reliance in which communities would be self-sufficient, reducing their dependency on external markets or foreign goods. This approach was rooted in the belief that India's vast rural population, if adequately empowered and organized, could generate sufficient local resources to meet their needs without relying heavily on imported goods or services.

In terms of agriculture, Roybir's self-reliance strategy involved the promotion of indigenous methods of farming, encouraging local resource management, and creating cooperative structures to allow small farmers to access tools, knowledge, and markets. He was highly critical of large-scale industrialization that he believed led to the exploitation of workers and the marginalization of farmers. His socialist philosophy emphasized the need for equitable distribution of resources and the reduction of social hierarchies that perpetuated economic inequality.

Roybir's idea of self-reliance was also linked to his broader vision of political independence. While many leaders of the time focused on achieving political sovereignty from colonial powers, Roybir argued that political freedom without economic self-sufficiency would be hollow. He contended that political power should not merely rest with the elites but should extend to the people, particularly those who had historically been excluded from political participation. His political philosophy was grounded in the belief that democracy in India could only be meaningful if it ensured the welfare of the marginalized and worked to dismantle entrenched power structures.

Furthermore, Roybir's focus on self-reliance was also closely tied to his critique of Western models of development, which he saw as alien to India's needs and circumstances. For Roybir, self-reliance was not just about economic independence, but about the restoration and reassertion of India's indigenous cultural and social practices, which had been undermined by colonialism.

In conclusion, Jugal Kishore Roybir's idea of self-reliance was multi-dimensional, emphasizing economic independence, political empowerment, and cultural revival. His critique of capitalist development models and his emphasis on decentralization and local self-sufficiency provided an alternative path to development that prioritized the well-being of the common people over profit-driven industrialization. His thoughts continue to inspire discussions on sustainable development and social justice in India.

**Samajwadi Jana Parishad (SJP): An Overview:** Samajwadi Jana Parishad (SJP), translated as "Socialist People's Council," is a political party in India, founded in 1995 by the late Kishen Pattanaik and several grassroots political organizations. These founding members aimed to create an alternative political culture, distinct from the mainstream political establishment. The party operates with a commitment to grassroots movements and a strong *antiglobalization* stance.

**Samata Kendra: A Pillar of Equality, Non-Violence, and Justice:** Samata Kendra, an institution dedicated to the values of equality, non-violence, and justice, was established by the visionary social reformer and activist, Jugal Kishore Roybir. Founded on the principles of social equity and human dignity, Samata Kendra has grown to become a beacon of hope and a powerful tool for promoting social change and empowering marginalized communities. Through its relentless commitment to the ideals of justice, non-violence, and equality, Samata Kendra stands as a symbol of the possibility of a more just and equitable society for all.

**The Legacy of Jugal Kishore Roybir:** Jugal Kishore Roybir, the founder of Samata Kendra, was deeply influenced by the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and other prominent leaders of the Indian independence movement. Gandhi's philosophy of ahimsa (non-violence) and satya (truth) had a profound impact on Jugal Kishore Roybir, shaping his views on social justice and equality. Like Gandhi, Roybir was an advocate for the upliftment of the marginalized and disenfranchised sections of society, including Dalits, tribals, and other oppressed communities.

Roybir's understanding of social issues was rooted in his own experiences growing up in a society rife with inequality and discrimination. He recognized that the root cause of many social ills lay in the systemic structures of oppression, which marginalized entire communities based on their caste, religion, gender, or socio-economic status. It was his firm belief that true justice could only be achieved by dismantling these structures and ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all, irrespective of their social background.

In the face of widespread discrimination and societal indifference, Jugal Kishore Roybir took it upon himself to lead the charge for a better, more equitable society. Samata Kendra was the manifestation of his vision — a place where individuals from all walks of life could come together, engage in dialogue, and work toward creating a just and non-violent society.

**The Three Pillars of Samata Kendra:** Samata Kendra is built upon three foundational pillars: equality, non-violence, and justice. These principles form the core of the institution's work, and its initiatives reflect a deep commitment to promoting these values in every aspect of life.

**1. Equality:** The principle of equality is perhaps the most central tenet of Samata Kendra's mission. From its inception, the organization has sought to eliminate caste-based discrimination and ensure equal access to resources, opportunities, and rights for all members of society. In India, where caste-based inequalities have long been entrenched in both social and economic structures, the work of Samata Kendra has been crucial in challenging and deconstructing these oppressive systems.

The focus on equality is not limited to caste alone but extends to gender, religion, and economic status as well. Samata Kendra has been instrumental in addressing issues such as child labor, bonded labor, and untouchability, while also promoting the rights of women, tribals, and other vulnerable groups. The Kendra conducts workshops, awareness campaigns, and advocacy programs aimed at sensitizing the public to the importance of equality and empowering marginalized communities to claim their rights.

One of the key initiatives of Samata Kendra has been the establishment of educational programs and vocational training centers that provide marginalized individuals with the skills and knowledge they need to break free from cycles of poverty and inequality. By promoting access to education and skills training, Samata Kendra has been helping individuals achieve economic independence and social mobility.

**2. Non-Violence:** Non-violence, or ahimsa, is a principle that underpins all the activities and interventions of Samata Kendra. Drawing from the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, who advocated for non-violent resistance to injustice, Samata Kendra believes that change can be achieved without resorting to violence or hatred.

The institution works to foster a culture of peace and non-violence through community engagement and dialogue. It encourages people to resolve conflicts peacefully, to practice tolerance, and to engage in constructive discussions aimed at resolving social issues. The Kendra provides mediation and counseling services, helping to address interpersonal and community conflicts through non-violent means.

Samata Kendra also advocates for non-violent means of political activism and social change. It has been involved in organizing peaceful protests, rallies, and campaigns that demand justice and equality for marginalized communities. By adhering to the principle of non-violence, Samata Kendra aims to create a social environment where individuals can

coexist peacefully, irrespective of their differences, and work together for the common good.

**3. Justice:** The third pillar of Samata Kendra is justice — a comprehensive concept that encompasses social, economic, and legal justice. Samata Kendra's advocacy for justice goes beyond legal frameworks and focuses on ensuring that justice is accessible to all people, especially those who have historically been denied it.

The institution works closely with local communities, providing legal aid and support to individuals who are victims of discrimination, violence, or exploitation. Many of the communities that Samata Kendra serves are unable to access formal legal systems due to poverty, illiteracy, or lack of awareness. In these cases, Samata Kendra acts as a bridge, helping individuals understand their legal rights and empowering them to seek justice.

Furthermore, Samata Kendra advocates for reforms in the legal and political systems to ensure that laws are implemented fairly and equitably. It actively participates in campaigns that call for the elimination of discriminatory practices in the legal system and the creation of laws that protect the rights of the marginalized. In addition to its legal aid initiatives, Samata Kendra works to raise public awareness about social injustices and strives to influence policy reforms that would lead to a more just society.

**Samata Kendra's Impact and Achievements:** Over the years, Samata Kendra has made significant strides in advancing its mission of promoting equality, non-violence, and justice. Through its grassroots initiatives and partnerships with other organizations, it has helped thousands of individuals and communities access education, legal support, and economic opportunities.

One of the most notable achievements of Samata Kendra has been its role in mobilizing communities to demand their rights. By empowering individuals and communities to challenge social injustices and claim their entitlements, Samata Kendra has played a key role in raising awareness about issues such as caste discrimination, child labor, and gender inequality.

Moreover, Samata Kendra has contributed to building a network of activists and social workers who are dedicated to working toward a more just and equitable society. This network has become an invaluable resource for communities seeking support and guidance in their struggles for justice.

Samata Kendra, established by Jugal Kishore Roybir, stands as a testament to the power of ideals and the potential for social transformation. Through its unwavering commitment to the principles of equality, non-violence, and justice, it has provided a platform for marginalized communities to assert their rights and challenge the social structures that have long kept them in positions of disadvantage. The work of Samata Kendra is far from over, and as long as inequality and injustice persist, the institution will continue to fight for a society where all individuals, regardless of their caste, gender, or background, can live with

dignity and respect. In this way, Samata Kendra remains a vital force in the ongoing struggle for social justice in India and beyond.

**Founding and Ideology:** SJP was established with the vision of fostering a political environment based on the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, Ram Manohar Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, and Vinoba Bhave. These figures are central to its ideology, which blends social justice, anticolonialism, and rural empowerment. Members of the party are strictly prohibited from associating with foreignfunded NGOs, reflecting its nationalist and selfreliant philosophy.

The party believes that globalization represents a "counterrevolution," and thus aligns itself with antiglobalization struggles, positioning itself as a defender of indigenous cultures, rural communities, and the rights of the marginalized. The party operates in 15 states, focusing on issues related to the economic impact of globalization, land rights, and social justice.

**Historic Struggles and Advocacy:** SJP has been involved in numerous historic struggles across India, advocating for the rights of rural and marginalized communities. Notable examples include:

Mehdiganj, Mau (Uttar Pradesh)

Betul, Kesla (Madhya Pradesh)

Niyamgiri, JagatsinghpurPOSCO (Odisha)

Jalpaiguri (North Bengal)

Kudankulam (Tamil Nadu)

The party is also renowned for its vocal opposition to government spending on largescale projects, exemplified by its protest against the extravagant spending during the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi. SJP was the only political party to directly challenge this expenditure, nearly breaching the Commonwealth Games office to voice its dissent.

**Connection with Popular Movements:** SJP is closely allied with many grassroots movements and is a founding member of the National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM), a coalition that advocates for human rights, environmental justice, and social equity. This connection strengthens the party's credibility among activists and communities engaged in protests against corporated development and government policies perceived as unjust.

**Organizational Structure:** The party's structure is primarily led by a central leadership with representatives from different regions of India. At its 11th National Council Meeting, held in Jateswar, Alipurduar (West Bengal) on April 29–May 1, 2017, the following officebearers were elected:

President: Lingaraj Azad

Vice Presidents: Adv. Kamal Bannerjee, Adv. Joshy Jacob

General Secretary: Aflatoon (Uttar Pradesh)

Organizing Secretary: Ranjit Kr. Roy (West Bengal)

Secretaries: Phagh Ram (Madhya Pradesh), Prof. Mahesh Vikram (Uttar Pradesh), Tara Jadhav (Maharashtra), Atul Kumar (Delhi)

Treasurer: Dr. Chandra Bhusan Choudhary (Jharkhand)

**Electoral History:** SJP has participated in multiple general elections at both the state and national levels, but it has struggled to make a significant electoral impact. The party has not secured any seats in the Lok Sabha (Lower House of Parliament), Rajya Sabha (Upper House), or state assemblies.

In the 2003 Madhya Pradesh elections, SJP fielded candidates in four constituencies:

1. Mangal Singh – Ghora Dongri
2. Fagram – Itarsi
3. Shamim Modi – Harda
4. Ajay Khare – Rewa

Despite its activism and ideology, the party's limited electoral success reflects broader challenges faced by alternative political forces in India, particularly in a landscape dominated by larger, established parties.

Samajwadi Jana Parishad remains a significant force in the political landscape of India for its consistent advocacy for marginalized communities, its deep connection with grassroots movements, and its critique of both the Indian government and global capitalist structures. While it has not achieved substantial electoral success, its continued influence in movements for social justice, antiglobalization struggles, and economic fairness highlights its ongoing relevance in Indian politics.

**Marxism and the Indian Context: A Brief Overview:** Before delving into Roybir's specific ideological influences, it is essential to understand the broader Marxist-Socialist landscape in India during the 20th century. The influence of Marxism in India can be traced to the early years of the 20th century, largely through the work of intellectuals who adapted Marxist theory to the peculiar socioeconomic conditions of colonial India. Unlike Europe, where Marxism emerged primarily as a critique of industrial capitalism, in India, Marxism addressed the dual challenges of colonial exploitation and feudal social structures.

The early Marxist movements in India were primarily concerned with the exploitation of peasants and workers under colonial rule. However, after independence in 1947, the focus shifted to the questions of land reform, industrialization, and the creation of a just social order in a newly independent nation. It was within this context that Jugal Kishore Roybir, along with other Marxist-influenced intellectuals, contributed to the evolving socialist discourse in India.

**The Marxist Influence on Jugal Kishore Roybir:** Roybir's Marxist ideology was not a simple mimicry of Western Marxism; rather, it was an adaptation of Marxist ideas to the Indian reality, where colonialism, feudalism, and castebased inequalities intersected with capitalist modes of production. Roybir understood that India's social and economic structures were unique, and thus, any socialist vision needed to address these specificities. At the core of Roybir's thought was the Marxist idea of class struggle. He believed that India's social inequalities could not be addressed without dismantling the existing class structures, which were both feudal and colonial in nature. He saw the Indian bourgeoisie as complicit with colonialism and capitalism, and he argued that the postindependence Indian state, though ostensibly democratic, was perpetuating a capitalist agenda that served the interests of the elite. In this regard, Roybir was critical of the Indian National Congress and its leadership, particularly after independence, when he felt the Congress Party became increasingly aligned with the interests of the capitalist class.

In his writings and speeches, Roybir emphasized the need for land reforms as a crucial step in addressing rural poverty and exploitation. He believed that the vast majority of India's population, which lived in rural areas and was dependent on agriculture, could not achieve economic justice without a radical redistribution of land. This idea was central to the Marxist critique of colonialism, where the British had exacerbated the exploitation of Indian peasants by consolidating land ownership in the hands of a few. After independence, land reforms were seen as one of the primary means to empower the rural masses and reduce the power of the landlord class.

Roybir also advocated for the nationalization of key industries and resources. He believed that India's economic development had to be stateled and that private capital was incapable of promoting equitable growth. This view was in line with the Sovietinspired planning models that dominated Indian economic thinking in the 1950s and 1960s. For Roybir, industrialization needed to be aligned with socialist ideals, ensuring that the benefits of economic growth reached the working class and the rural poor, rather than being concentrated in the hands of the capitalists and foreign corporations.

**Key Influences: Ram Manohar Lohia, Vinoba Bhave, J.P. Narayan, and Kishen Pattnaik:** While Roybir's political philosophy was rooted in Marxism, it was also shaped by the broader socialist and anticolonial movements that dominated Indian politics in the mid20th century. His ideas were influenced by the works and activism of several key figures, notably Ram Manohar Lohia, Vinoba Bhave, J.P. Narayan, and Kishen Pattnayak. These thinkers, although differing in their approach to socialism, shared Roybir's commitment to challenging social inequalities and fostering a more just society.

**Ram Manohar Lohia:** Ram Manohar Lohia was one of the most prominent socialist leaders of postindependence India, and his influence on Roybir's thought was profound. Lohia's brand of socialism was rooted in anticapitalist, anticolonial, and antiimperialist ideologies. Lohia was a critic of both the Congress leadership and the Indian state's capitalist orientation, which, in his view, perpetuated inequalities and exploitation. Lohia

argued that India's independence had not resulted in true freedom for the masses, particularly the rural poor, women, and marginalized communities. His commitment to socialism was intertwined with a vision of social justice that emphasized equality, economic redistribution, and empowerment for the oppressed.

Roybir shared Lohia's critique of Congress's postindependence policies and aligned himself with the socialist critiques of Indian capitalism. Like Lohia, Roybir believed that India's economic development had to prioritize the needs of the working class and the rural poor, rather than the interests of the capitalist elite. Lohia's emphasis on decentralization and his opposition to centralization of power resonated with Roybir, who believed that India's political and economic systems needed to be radically transformed to ensure justice for all.

**Vinoba Bhave:** Vinoba Bhave, although more closely associated with the Gandhian movement, also had a significant influence on socialist thought in India. Bhave's ideas on land reform and rural development had a lasting impact on the socialist discourse of the time. His concept of Bhoodan (land donation) aimed to address the issue of landlessness in rural India, though it was based on voluntary rather than forceful redistribution. While Roybir was more inclined toward stateled reforms, he appreciated Bhave's emphasis on rural upliftment and the importance of empowering peasants. Roybir, however, was critical of Bhave's idealism, particularly his belief in nonviolence as a means of achieving social change. Roybir believed that, in a country like India, nonviolence would not suffice to dismantle the entrenched structures of oppression and exploitation.

**J.P. Narayan:** Jayaprakash Narayan (J.P. Narayan) was another major influence on Roybir, especially with regard to his emphasis on mass movements and grassroots political mobilization. Narayan's commitment to socialism was deeply rooted in the idea of a Total Revolution (Sampoorna Kranti), which aimed at transforming the political, social, and economic structures of India. Narayan's critique of both the Congress Party and the communist parties resonated with Roybir, as he too felt that the existing political structures were inadequate for achieving the goals of true socialism.

Narayan's focus on the empowerment of ordinary people, particularly through the construction of a decentralized political order, aligned with Roybir's own ideas about the importance of a massbased movement for social change. Narayan's leadership in organizing mass protests, especially during the Emergency period (1975-77), showed Roybir the importance of a strong, people-driven movement in challenging both authoritarianism and the socioeconomic order that sustained inequality.

**Kishen Pattnaik:** Kishen Pattnayak was another influential socialist leader who focused on agrarian struggles. His commitment to the peasant cause and his Marxist understanding of class relations in rural India resonated with Roybir's own focus on land reforms and rural empowerment. Pattnayak's emphasis on the need for a peasant-led revolution, which sought to dismantle the feudal order in India, was central to Roybir's thinking as well. Both leaders believed that the rural poor were the key to India's social revolution and that any

meaningful socialist change in the country had to begin with the empowerment of the peasantry.

**Critique and Analysis:** Jugal Kishore Roybir's engagement with Marxism was marked by a pragmatic, context-specific interpretation of socialist principles. His ideas were shaped not only by Marxist theory but also by the broader sociopolitical movements that sought to address the particular challenges of postcolonial India. His commitment to land reform, industrialization under state control, and the dismantling of social hierarchies reflected the ideals of Indian socialism at its most radical.

However, like many socialist thinkers of his time, Roybir's vision had its limitations. His focus on class struggle and economic redistribution sometimes overlooked the complexities of caste, religion, and ethnicity in shaping Indian social dynamics. While he recognized the importance of addressing class inequalities, he did not always adequately address how India's complex social stratifications—especially caste—required a more nuanced approach. Additionally, his reliance on state-led solutions, such as nationalization and land reforms, was criticized by some as overly centralized and insufficiently focused on grassroots initiatives.

In conclusion, Jugal Kishore Roybir's political thought was a significant contribution to the socialist movement in India. His ideas were shaped by the Marxist critique of colonialism and capitalism but were also influenced by the practical challenges of building a just society in postindependence India. His intellectual alliances with figures like Ram Manohar Lohia, Vinoba Bhave, J.P. Narayan, and Kishen Pattanayak helped him frame a vision of socialism that was indomitable.

The influence of key social reformers such as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Jyotirao Phule, Mahatma Gandhi, and Panchanan Barma on Jugal Kishore Roybir (also known as Jugal Kishore Ray) reflects a rich and complex interaction between anticaste movements, social justice, and the rights of subaltern communities in North Bengal. These reformers, each in their respective contexts, advocated for the upliftment of marginalized communities, and their ideas significantly impacted the social and political landscape of Bengal, including regions like North Bengal.

**1. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Influence:** Dr. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution and a leading advocate for Dalit rights, had a profound impact on movements for social justice throughout India, including in Bengal. Ambedkar's focus on the rights of the untouchables, his advocacy for education, and his demand for social and economic equality likely resonated with Jugal Kishore Roybir, who was involved in social reforms and movements aimed at uplifting marginalized groups.

**Caste Discrimination:** Ambedkar's critique of caste hierarchies and his emphasis on annihilating caste would have influenced social reformers in Bengal, including Roybir, to challenge entrenched social inequalities. Jugal Kishore, as part of the larger social reform

movement, would have been influenced by Ambedkar's efforts to build a society based on equal rights and social dignity, especially for those oppressed by the caste system.

**Dalit Empowerment and Education:** Ambedkar's advocacy for the education of Dalits and his efforts to create spaces for their advancement in all spheres of life would align with Roybir's concerns about the rights and empowerment of the marginalized. In North Bengal, the spread of education to underprivileged communities would have been a priority for many reformists like Roybir.

**2. Jyotirao Phule's Influence:** Jyotirao Phule was a pioneer of the anticaste movement in Maharashtra and a staunch advocate for the rights of the lower castes, women, and marginalized communities. His influence spread to other parts of India, including Bengal, where reformers like Roybir were fighting for similar causes.

**Anti-Caste Ideology:** Phule's ideas on the abolition of caste and his focus on the education of women and lower castes influenced the broader anticaste discourse in Bengal. Phule's emphasis on questioning the Brahmanical social order and his critique of its exploitation of the lower castes would have resonated with those like Roybir, who sought to challenge castebased exploitation in North Bengal.

**Educational and Social Reforms:** Phule's call for social and educational reforms targeted at empowering lower castes and women in rural areas would have been significant in North Bengal, where the influence of castebased hierarchies was still prevalent. Roybir's own advocacy for social justice likely took inspiration from Phule's work in encouraging the subaltern to assert their rights through education and organizing.

**3. Mahatma Gandhi's Influence:** Gandhi's influence was particularly significant in shaping the discourse around caste and social reform in the early 20th century. Although his approach to the caste question was more moderate compared to Ambedkar's, his advocacy for the upliftment of the "Harijans" (as he called them) had a broad influence across India, including in Bengal.

**Harijan Movement:** Gandhi's call for social equality and his efforts to integrate the so-called "untouchables" into mainstream society would have been crucial in shaping the social movements in North Bengal, particularly for leaders like Roybir. Gandhi's idea of "Sarvodaya" (welfare of all) and his emphasis on nonviolence and peaceful protests provided an alternative method for social reform, which likely appealed to many in the region.

**Fighting Untouchability:** Gandhi's emphasis on combating untouchability and promoting social integration would have directly influenced Roybir's work in advocating for the rights of oppressed communities in North Bengal, especially in rural areas where caste discrimination was deeply entrenched.

**4. Panchanan Barma's Influence:** Panchanan Barma was a prominent leader in Bengal who advocated for the rights and empowerment of the lower castes, particularly the

Rajbanshi community in North Bengal. Barma's work in organizing the subaltern groups in this region was crucial in shaping local resistance movements.

**Rajbanshi Identity and Social Justice:** Barma's work in organizing the Rajbanshi community in North Bengal was pivotal in addressing issues like caste discrimination, economic exploitation, and the marginalization of indigenous communities. Jugal Kishore Roybir, being from a similar background, would have been influenced by Barma's emphasis on asserting the identity and rights of the Rajbanshi people.

**Mobilization for Land, Water, and Forest Rights:** Barma's leadership was also instrumental in organizing communities for their rights to land, water, and forests, which were often controlled by uppercaste landlords and colonial powers. Roybir, who worked in the same region, would have been keenly aware of the struggles over these resources and would have likely collaborated with Barma's movement or drawn inspiration from his tactics.

**5. Caste Movements and the Rights of the Subaltern in North Bengal:** Caste Discrimination in North Bengal: In the early 20th century, castebased discrimination was rampant in rural Bengal, including in North Bengal. The upper castes, particularly the Brahmins and other landowning elites, held significant power over the lower castes and indigenous populations. The sociopolitical activism of leaders like Roybir sought to challenge these entrenched caste hierarchies and promote the rights of the subaltern.

**Movement for Land, Water, and Jungle Rights:** The question of access to resources like land, water, and forests was central to the struggles of subaltern communities in North Bengal. Much of the land in North Bengal was controlled by a few powerful elites, and the subaltern groups, including the Rajbanshis, were often excluded from accessing these resources. Leaders like Roybir worked alongside communities to demand greater control over these resources, challenging colonial exploitation as well as the domination of local landlords.

**Land Reforms and Peasant Struggles:** The issue of land reforms and the rights of peasants were integral to the social movements in North Bengal. Roybir, along with other reformers, was part of the larger peasant and worker movements that sought to challenge feudal landholding patterns, where the lower castes and indigenous populations were often deprived of land ownership or fair access to agricultural resources.

**Subaltern Movements and Collective Struggle:** The struggle for the rights of the subaltern in North Bengal was multifaceted, encompassing demands for social justice, economic equality, and access to essential resources. The efforts of leaders like Roybir were aligned with the broader national movements for the rights of the marginalized, particularly in the context of the independence struggle and the rise of social reform movements.

**Conclusion:** Jugal Kishore Roybir was part of the broader social reform movement in Bengal that sought to challenge caste hierarchies and promote the rights of marginalized

communities. His work in North Bengal, particularly in organizing movements around land, water, and jungle rights, would have been deeply influenced by the anticaste and social justice movements led by figures like Ambedkar, Phule, Gandhi, and Panchanan Barma. These leaders, each with their unique approach, provided the ideological foundation and practical strategies for challenging social inequalities and promoting the rights of subaltern communities in both urban and rural Bengal.

Jugal Kishore Roybir stands as a significant figure in the history of socialist and Marxist movements in India, particularly in the context of Bengal. His contributions to the socio-political landscape were rooted in his firm commitment to the principles of social justice, class struggle, and the empowerment of the marginalized sections of society.

Roybir's political activism was shaped by his deep belief in Marxism as a framework for societal transformation. He was not merely a theoretician but also a practitioner of revolutionary politics, organizing movements that sought to challenge the existing colonial and post-colonial power structures. His work aligned with the broader objectives of the Communist movement in India, which sought to bring about a radical redistribution of wealth and power.

However, his journey was not without challenges. The political climate of India in the mid-20th century, marked by both internal divisions within the leftist parties and external pressures from the ruling establishment, meant that Roybir and his comrades often faced intense opposition. Despite these obstacles, his resilience and dedication to the cause of socialism earned him a lasting place in the annals of Indian revolutionary history. Roybir's ability to navigate complex political landscapes, while staying true to his Marxist principles, made him a respected figure among both his supporters and critics.

In conclusion, Jugal Kishore Roybir's life and work remain an important chapter in the narrative of socialist and Marxist movements in India. He embodied the ideals of resistance against exploitation and the pursuit of a more just society, contributing significantly to the political discourse of his time. While his political career was marked by struggle and controversy, his legacy continues to inspire those who seek social and economic justice, reminding us of the enduring relevance of Marxist thought in the fight for equality and workers' rights.

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## Annexure



Fig.2. Secondary Literature in Bengali Language on Jugal Kishore Roybir

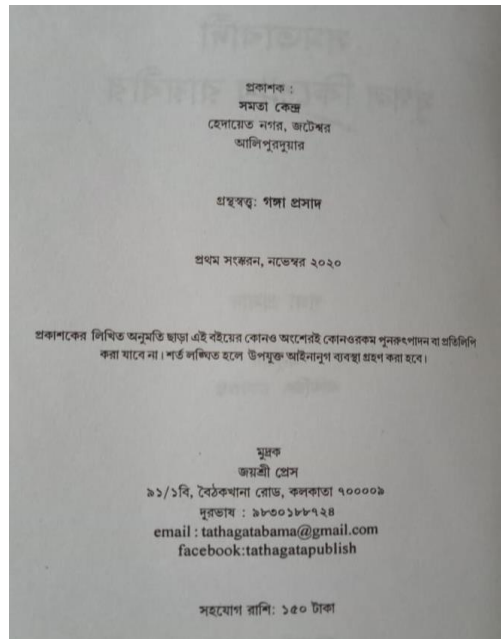


Fig.3. Secondary Literature in Bengali Language on Jugal Kishore Roybir