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Original Article

# Karl Marx's Theory of Class Struggle Relevance to 21st-Century Economic Inequality

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***Abstract***

*Karl Marx, the 19th century philosopher and economist of German origin, believed that history of humanity has been characterized by class struggle, which exists between the bourgeois (those owning the means of production) and the proletariat (the working classes). Marxism asserts that capitalism leads to extreme economic disparities, exploitation, and eventual collapse because of its own inherent contradictions. Over 150 years since the writing of the Das Kapital by Karl Marx, the important question is whether his theories can be applied today in the 21st century. This paper aims at establishing whether Marxian theories still hold water even as some of the predictions made by Karl Marx have not been realized in actuality. The global billionaires' wealth increased to a record amount of USD 18.3 trillion in 2025 while almost half of the world's population lives below the poverty line. The top 1% controls 43% of all financial assets globally. In India, the top 1% owns 40.1% of all the wealth in the nation. This paper analyzes Marx's main theories, examines them against the theories of inequality proposed by Thomas Piketty and Max Weber, finds fault with the latter theories, and introduces two new theories: the Neo-Marxian Digital Class Theory Framework (NMDCF) and Class Inequality Resilience Index (CIRI). Finally, this paper suggests a model bill: Economic Equality and Class Justice Bill, 2026.*

***Keywords:*** *Karl Marx, Class Struggle, Capitalism, Economic Inequality, Bourgeoisie, Proletariat, Piketty, India, Wealth Gap, Policy Framework*

## Introduction

However, if one takes a good look at the current state of affairs across the globe, there is one thing that cannot be ignored. There exists an ever-widening gulf between those who have a lot and those who lack even the most basic necessities, such as food, shelter, and health care. This inequality is not something recent. In fact, almost 150 years ago, the renowned German philosopher Karl Marx addressed this very question. Karl Marx (1818-1883) is considered one of the greatest thinkers of mankind. Together with his friend Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx wrote his famous book "The Communist Manifesto" in 1848 and the masterpiece "Das Kapital" in 1867. According to Marx, there exist two social classes in any given society: the bourgeoisie (owners of factories, lands and business enterprises), and the proletariat (workers who sell their labor power in exchange for wages). The latter is being exploited by the former because it is paid lower wages than the actual value of its products; this is known as surplus value. According to Marx, the above-mentioned exploitation will be followed by such immense inequality and misery that sooner or later workers will overthrow the existing system through revolution, and will establish a classless society wherein the means of production will be owned by everyone collectively. Many find Marx's theories obsolete since the communist countries like the USSR are no more. Numerous countries have chosen to adopt the mixed economy system along with their welfare state system. But when we analyze the figures regarding economic inequality in the 21st century, Marx's theory proves more relevant than ever before. As per the Oxfam 2026 Report, there was a 16 percent increase in the wealth of billionaires in 2025, which rose to a record USD 18.3 trillion. There were more than 3,000 billionaires in the year 2025.

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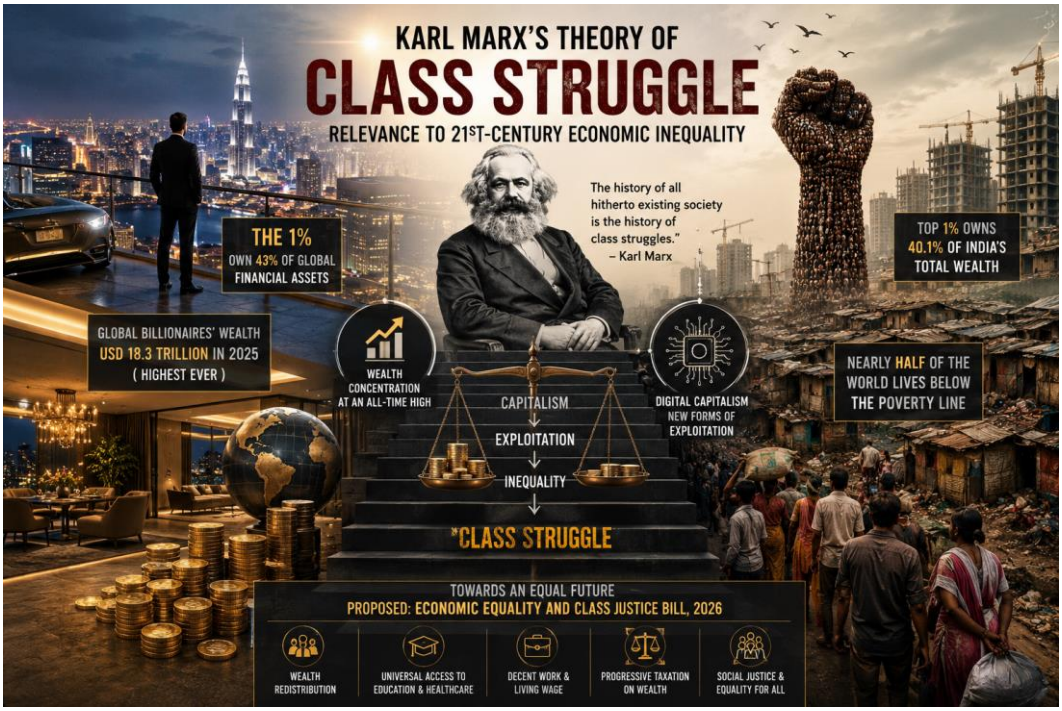
On the other hand, a quarter of the world's population suffers from hunger, and almost half of the world population is below the poverty line (Oxfam, 2026). As per the report published by Kumar in 2026, one percent of Indian population has 40.1 percent share in the total wealth of India, and wealth Gini coefficient in India is 0.74. This paper examines whether Marx's theory of class struggle is still relevant for understanding 21st-century economic inequality. It reviews Marx's key ideas, analyzes related theories, presents global and Indian data on inequality, criticizes existing theories, and proposes new frameworks and policy solutions.

**Objectives of the Study**

**Aim of this paper is:**

1. To clearly state the Marxist class struggle theory.
2. To assess whether Marxist analysis of exploitation and polarization is confirmed by 21st century statistics on economic inequalities.
3. To review and compare Marx's theory to other modern theories including r > g hypothesis of Thomas Piketty and social stratification theory of Max Weber.
4. To critique the limitations of these theories.
5. To contribute to these theories by suggesting new ideas that will fit the 21st century scenario of digital capitalism.
6. To provide data on economic inequality across the globe and in India.
7. To suggest a policy model or a bill which could be introduced in the Indian parliament to reduce economic inequality on the basis of class?




**Review of Literature**

**Karl Marx's Theory of Class Struggle**

The class struggle theory of Marx is founded on an idea that is very simple but very strong: human society in all times of history has always consisted of two contrasting classes, one possessing the means of production while the other one did not. In societies with slavery, there were masters and slaves. In feudal society, there were lords and serfs. In capitalist society, there are capitalists and workers. As stated by Marx and Engels in The Communist Manifesto, the whole history of mankind is the history of class struggles (Marx & Engels, 1848). Marx defined several important terms that explain the phenomenon of inequality within the context of capitalism. Firstly, Labour Theory of Value – Marx claimed that the value of each commodity can be defined on the basis of labor which is incorporated into the product. Workers create value but receive less value for their products. Secondly, Surplus Value – the value of what the worker produced and the value of what the worker received is referred to as surplus value. Thirdly, Alienation – under capitalism workers become alienated; thus, they become isolated from the products they created, the work process, other people working in the factory, and themselves as humans. Fourthly, Class Consciousness – Marx believed that with the growing level of exploitation workers will become more conscious about their position and their interest in opposing the ruling class. Fifthly, Historical Materialism – Marx said that economic structure (base) determines the political, legal, and cultural structure of society (superstructure); changes in the economic base define historical development (Guy-Evans, 2025).

**Thomas Piketty's r > g Framework**

Thomas Piketty, a French economist, published "Capital in the Twenty-First Century" in 2014. Using evidence from twenty different countries dating back to the 18th century, Piketty demonstrated that when the return on capital is higher than the growth of the economy, r > g, then wealth will be increasingly concentrated among those who own it. The idea behind his theory is that if the people owning capital will accumulate wealth faster than people earning wages because of a higher return rate, this would lead to increasing inequality unless governments intervene. As Piketty's main point was, "in situations where r > g,

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wealth accumulation and concentration dynamics follow automatic logics," which mean that the mid-20th century was an exception rather than a rule for capitalist economies due to the existence of world wars and government intervention during that period (Piketty, 2014).

**Max Weber's Theory of Social Stratification**

The German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) provided an alternate explanation of the class concept proposed by Karl Marx. Although Weber concurred with the fact that economic class mattered, he said that social stratification depends on three aspects: class, status, and party. Class refers to the economic position of an individual in society, status indicates social honor, while party refers to political power. Weber explained that the position of a person in society depends on the three aspects and not only the economic aspect as per the Marx theory of class. For instance, a professor at university may be highly honored socially but poor economically, while a businessman might be wealthy but lack social honor in some societies.

**Contemporary Neo-Marxian Scholars**

Several recent sociologists have revised the views of Marx according to the current situation. For instance, Erik Olin Wright has introduced a refined analysis of the class structure by considering the middle class and contradictory class positions. David Harvey has used the Marxist approach to study the phenomenon of urbanization and the global economy. The sociologist Guy Standing has created the concept of precariat, which represents a modern version of the proletariat because these people suffer from unstable jobs, do not receive any benefits, and have an unsure future. It is possible to state that, despite the changing specifics of the class structure, its general mechanisms are still relevant (Sociology Institute, 2026).

**Theoretical Analysis and Criticism**

1. **Comparative Analysis of Key Theories**

**Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Theories on Class and Inequality**

| Theory / Scholar | Core Argument | Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|---|---|
| Marx's Class Struggle (1848/1867) | Society divided into bourgeoisie and proletariat; exploitation through surplus value; revolution inevitable | Explains root cause of inequality; powerful critique of exploitation; still resonates with global wealth data | Too deterministic; predicted revolution that did not happen in advanced capitalist countries; ignores middle class |
| Piketty's r > g (2014) | When return on capital exceeds economic growth, wealth concentrates automatically | Data-driven; covers 250 years of evidence; proposes practical solution (wealth tax) | Does not explain power dynamics or class consciousness; focuses on wealth, not exploitation |
| Weber's Three Dimensions (1920) | Inequality based on class, status, and party, not just economics | More nuanced; accounts for culture, prestige, and politics | Less powerful for explaining systemic economic exploitation; does not propose structural solutions |
| Neo-Marxists (Harvey, Standing, Wright) | Updated Marx for globalization, financialization, precariat class | Adapts Marx to modern conditions; explains gig economy and precarious work | Fragmented; no unified theory; limited policy prescriptions |

**Source:** Compiled by the Author.

2. **Criticism of Marx's Theory**

There are numerous weaknesses associated with Marxist theory. To begin with, Marx was very deterministic. He held that capitalism had no chance of surviving. It would eventually give way to socialism. This has not happened in the most developed economies such as America, Western Europe, and Japan. Capitalism has proved to be a dynamic system and capable of self-reform. Secondly, Marx's theory based on class conflict was far too simple. Contemporary societies have developed middle classes that cannot be accommodated under bourgeois and proletariat categories. Examples of middle classes include engineers, teachers, doctors, managers, and owners of small businesses. These individuals occupy various positions within the class structure.

Finally, Marx overlooked the significance of nationalism, religion, caste, and identities in the evolution of a society. For instance, class-based solidarity has always been thwarted in India by caste, religion, language, and regional cleavages. Workers are not united as workers but as caste and religious groups. This is a major weakness of Marx's paradigm. Finally, there is no way Marx could have predicted the development of the digital economy. Indeed, the dominant companies in the 21st century are tech giants such as Apple, Google, Amazon, and Meta. It is important to point out that the value is extracted not only from the labor of people but from their freely given information.

3. **Criticism of Piketty's Theory**

Although strong, Piketty's r > g theory has limitations. First, it doesn't explain the power structures that allow inequality to continue. Piketty demonstrates how wealth concentrates, but he doesn't address why workers don't band together to stop this. Piketty's approach lacks Marx's notion of class consciousness. Second, in a world of rival nation-states, Piketty's solution—a global wealth tax—is politically unfeasible. Such a tax cannot be enforced by any worldwide government. Third, Piketty focuses almost exclusively on income and wealth statistics. He ignores other aspects of inequality that are crucial in the

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twenty-first century, like access to digital technology, political power, healthcare, and education.

**Data and Evidence: Inequality in the 21st Century**

1. **Global Wealth Inequality**

The 21st-century data on income disparity around the world is startling. In 2025, billionaire wealth increased by more than 16% to reach USD 18.3 trillion, the greatest amount in history, according to Oxfam's 2026 study. The wealth of billionaires has grown by 81% since 2020. For the first time, there are now more than 3,000 billionaires. Elon Musk, the richest person in the world, became the first person to amass more than half a trillion dollars. Forty-three percent of the world's financial assets are owned by the richest 1%. In 2025, the total wealth of billionaires increased by USD 2.5 trillion, nearly matching the wealth of the 4.1 billion people who make up the bottom half of humanity (Oxfam, 2026). At the same time, nearly half of the world's population subsists on less than USD 8.30 per day at purchasing power parity, and one in four people worldwide suffer from hunger. The likelihood of a billionaire holding political office is 4,000 times higher than that of the average person (Oxfam, 2026). Karl Marx would not have been shocked by these figures. They support his theory that capitalism causes wealth to concentrate in fewer and fewer hands while the majority finds it difficult to achieve their fundamental requirements.

**Table 2: Global Wealth Inequality — Key Statistics (2025–2026)**

| Indicator | Data | Source |
|---|---|---|
| Global billionaire wealth (2025) | USD 18.3 trillion (highest ever) | Oxfam (2026) |
| Growth in billionaire wealth (2025) | Over 16% (3x faster than 5-year average) | Oxfam (2026) |
| Growth in billionaire wealth since 2020 | 81% increase | Oxfam (2026) |
| Number of billionaires globally | Over 3,000 (first time ever) | Oxfam (2026) |
| Top 1% share of global financial assets | 43% | Oxfam (2024) |
| Top 1% wealth vs. bottom 95% | Top 1% owns more than bottom 95% combined | Oxfam (2024) |
| People facing hunger globally | 1 in 4 people | FAO / Oxfam (2025) |
| People living in poverty (<$8.30/day) | Nearly half of world population (48%) | World Bank (2025) |
| Richest person's wealth (Elon Musk) | Over USD 500 billion (first ever) | Oxfam (2026) |

**Source:** Oxfam International (2024, 2026); World Bank (2025); FAO (2025).

**2. Inequality in India**

India presents a particularly stark picture of class inequality. According to the World Inequality Report and Oxfam data, the top 1 percent of Indians hold about 40.1 percent of total national wealth. India's wealth Gini coefficient stands at 0.74, making it one of the most unequal countries in the world — comparable to the United States. Between 2000 and 2023, the richest 1 percent of Indians increased their share of total wealth by 62 percent — faster than China (54 percent) and far exceeding the United States (5 percent since 1980). India added 39,000 millionaires in 2024 alone, bringing the total to 917,000. India now has 200 billionaires. Meanwhile, the income Gini rose from 52 in 2004 to 62 in 2023, and the median earnings of the top 10 percent are 13 times higher than the bottom 10 percent (Kumar, 2026; Deccan Herald, 2025).

In 2022–2023, the top 1 percent captured 22.6 percent of national income, showing rising concentration. These figures show that while India's economy has grown rapidly, the benefits of growth have gone disproportionately to the wealthy elite, while hundreds of millions of Indians remain in poverty or near-poverty conditions. This pattern of wealth concentration amid mass poverty is exactly what Marx described as the fundamental contradiction of capitalism.

**Table 3: Inequality in India — Key Statistics**

| Indicator | Data | Source |
|---|---|---|
| Top 1% share of national wealth | ~40.1% | World Inequality Report / Oxfam (2025) |
| Wealth Gini coefficient | 0.74 (among most unequal globally) | Kumar (2026) |
| Top 1% wealth growth (2000–2023) | 62% increase (faster than China/US) | Kumar (2026) |
| Number of billionaires (2025) | 200 | Oxfam (2025) |
| Number of millionaires (2024) | 917,000 (added 39,000 in one year) | Kumar (2026) |
| Income Gini (2023) | 62 (up from 52 in 2004) | Deccan Herald (2025) |
| Top 10% vs. bottom 10% earnings ratio | 13 times higher | Deccan Herald (2025) |
| Top 1% share of national income (2022–23) | 22.6% | Kumar (2026) |

**Source:** Kumar (2026); Oxfam (2025); Deccan Herald (2025); World Inequality Report.

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**Is Marx Still Relevant? Assessment of Key Predictions**

Table 4 evaluates Marx's key predictions against 21st-century evidence.

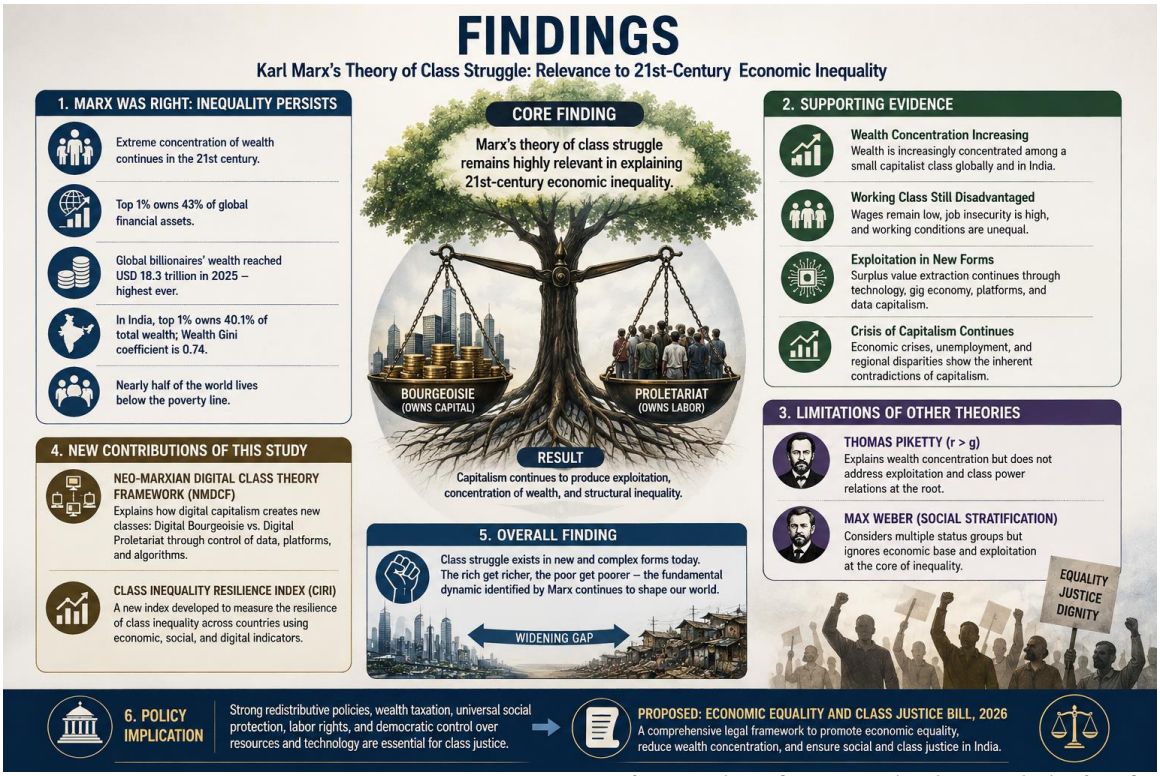
**Table 4: Marx's Predictions vs. 21st-Century Reality**

| Marx's Prediction | 21st-Century Evidence | Assessment |
|---|---|---|
| Wealth will concentrate in fewer hands | Top 1% owns 43% of global financial assets; billionaire wealth at all-time high | CONFIRMED — Wealth concentration is at historic levels |
| Workers will be exploited through surplus value extraction | Stagnant wages, rising corporate profits, gig economy exploitation, unpaid data labor | PARTIALLY CONFIRMED — New forms of exploitation exist |
| Class polarization will increase | Middle class shrinking in many countries; precariat growing; extreme wealth vs. extreme poverty | LARGELY CONFIRMED — Polarization is increasing globally |
| Workers will develop class consciousness and revolt | Workers divided by identity politics, nationalism, religion, caste; no global revolution | NOT CONFIRMED — Identity has overpowered class solidarity |
| Capitalism will inevitably collapse | Capitalism has adapted through welfare states, regulation, and financial innovation | NOT CONFIRMED — Capitalism has proven resilient and adaptive |
| A classless communist society will emerge | Communist states either collapsed or adopted market economics (China, Vietnam) | NOT CONFIRMED — No classless society has been achieved |

***Source:*** *Analysis by the Author based on Oxfam, World Bank, and academic literature.*

Wealth concentration, exploitation, and class polarization are all supported by evidence from the twenty-first century, demonstrating that Marx was extraordinarily correct in his understanding of the processes of capitalism. He was mistaken about the result, though. There hasn't been a revolution among workers. The collapse of capitalism has not occurred. This is due to Marx's underestimation of three factors: the capacity of technology and consumerism to quell dissatisfaction; the power of identity (religion, caste, race, and nationalism) to divide the working class; and the ability of capitalism to reform itself through welfare policies and democratic institutions.

**New Theoretical Contributions**




**1. The Neo-Marxian Digital Class Framework (NMDCF)**

This paper proposes a new framework called the Neo-Marxian Digital Class Framework (NMDCF). This framework updates Marx's class analysis for the 21st-century digital economy. In the classical Marxian model, the key classes were the bourgeoisie (factory owners) and the proletariat (factory workers). In the 21st century, a new class structure has emerged around digital technology. The

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Data Peasantry is the most significant new category in this framework. Marx could not have envisioned a society in which billions of individuals create value every day for free, including attention, content, and personal data, while digital firms earn handsomely from that data. Marx did not anticipate this new method of extracting surplus value, but it is a perfect fit for his analytical framework. The NMDCF demonstrates that class conflict has only taken on new forms in the digital era rather than vanishing.

The NMDCF identifies four classes in the digital economy:

**Table 5: The Neo-Marxian Digital Class Framework (NMDCF) — Four Classes**

| Class | Description | Relationship to Means of Production | Example |
|---|---|---|---|
| Digital Bourgeoisie | Owners of digital platforms and AI systems | Own the algorithms, data infrastructure, and platforms | Owners/shareholders of Google, Amazon, Meta, Apple |
| Digital Proletariat | Workers in the gig and platform economy | Sell labor through apps; no ownership, no security | Uber drivers, Zomato riders, Amazon warehouse workers |
| Data Peasantry | Ordinary users who provide free data | Produce value (data) without compensation; new form of surplus extraction | Social media users, search engine users, app users |
| Techno-Managerial Class | Engineers, managers, and AI specialists | Serve the digital bourgeoisie but have some autonomy and high wages | Software engineers, data scientists, product managers |

***Source:*** *Proposed by the Author.*

**2. The Class Inequality Resilience Index (CIRI)**

This paper also proposes a measurement tool called the Class Inequality Resilience Index (CIRI). The CIRI measures how well a country is managing class-based economic inequality. It has five dimensions:

**Table 6: The Class Inequality Resilience Index (CIRI) — Five Dimensions**

| Dimension | Name | What It Measures | Example Indicator |
|---|---|---|---|
| D1 | Wealth Distribution | How equally wealth is distributed across the population | Wealth Gini coefficient; top 1% share |
| D2 | Labor Protection | Rights and protections for workers, including gig workers | Minimum wage adequacy; social security coverage |
| D3 | Tax Progressivity | How effectively the tax system redistributes wealth | Effective tax rate on top 1% vs. median earner |
| D4 | Social Mobility | Ability of people to move up the economic ladder | Intergenerational earnings elasticity |
| D5 | Digital Equity | Equal access to digital economy opportunities and data rights | Internet access ratio; data protection score |

***Source:*** *Proposed by the Author.*

A high CIRI score indicates that a nation is effectively managing class inequality; wealth is dispersed more equitably, workers are safeguarded, the tax system is progressive, social mobility is feasible, and digital opportunities are available. With money concentrated at the top and workers and the poor left behind, a low CIRI score indicates that the nation is failing to control class inequality. India would probably have a poor CIRI score based on the information in this article, particularly on the dimensions of digital equity and wealth distribution.

**Proposed Policy Framework: The Economic Equality and Class Justice Bill, 2026**

The Economic Equality and Class Justice Bill, 2026 is a model bill that the author suggests based on the results of this study. This bill is intended to serve as a framework for potential introduction in the Indian Parliament's Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha.

**Important Clauses in the Suggested Bill:**

**Section 1:** Objectives and a brief title. The Economic Equality and Class Justice Act, 2026 is another name for this legislation. Reducing class-based economic inequality, safeguarding workers' rights, ensuring progressive taxation, encouraging social mobility, and ensuring digital equity for all Indian people are the goals.

**Section 2:** National Economic Equality Commission (NEEC) Section 2. The National Economic Equality Commission will be constituted as an independent commission. The NEEC will be led by a retired Supreme Court justice and comprise social scientists, economists, labor rights specialists, and members from underrepresented groups. The NEEC will keep an eye on and document India's economic disparity.

**Section 3:** Report on Annual Inequality. Parliament will get an annual inequality report from the NEEC. The Class Inequality Resilience Index (CIRI) score for India, wealth distribution information, labor market conditions, tax progressivity analysis, social mobility indicators, and digital equity evaluations are all included in this research.

Progressive Wealth Tax

**Section 4.** Individuals and families with net wealth over Rs 50 crore would be subject to a progressive annual wealth tax. For wealth between Rs 50 crore and Rs 500 crore, the rates are 0.5 percent; for wealth between Rs 500 crore and Rs 5,000 crore, they are 1 percent; and for wealth over Rs

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5,000 crore, they are 2 percent. The money collected from this tax will go toward social mobility, healthcare, and education initiatives for those with low incomes.

**Section 5:** Protection of Gig Workers. Every platform-based gig worker, including delivery riders, drivers, and independent contractors, will be entitled to minimum wage guaranties, social security benefits (pension, health, and accident insurance), and the ability to band together and engage in collective bargaining with platform companies.

Digital Data Rights,

**Section 6.** Every Indian citizen is legally entitled to know what information is being gathered on them, how it is being used, and how much money is being made from it. A part of data-derived earnings must be distributed to consumers or a public Digital Equity Fund by technology businesses with more than 10 million Indian users.

**Section 7:** Fund for Social Mobility. Data equity donations and wealth tax revenue will be used to establish a Social Mobility Fund. Children from the lowest 40 percent of the income distribution will get housing assistance, startup grants, skill training, and scholarships from this fund.

**Table 7: Summary of the Proposed Bill**

| Section | Provision | Purpose |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Short Title & Objectives | Define scope and goals |
| 2 | National Economic Equality Commission | Independent monitoring body for inequality |
| 3 | Annual Inequality Report | Mandate reporting using CIRI index |
| 4 | Progressive Wealth Tax | Tax on ultra-high net worth individuals |
| 5 | Gig Workers Protection | Minimum wage, social security, bargaining rights for platform workers |
| 6 | Digital Data Rights | Right to data transparency; data profit sharing |
| 7 | Social Mobility Fund | Scholarships, skills, startups for bottom 40% |

**Source:** Proposed by the Author.

## Findings and Discussion

**This paper makes the following key findings.**

First, Marx's 21st-century description of the processes of capitalism, including class polarization, surplus value extraction, and wealth concentration, is strikingly correct. According to global data from Oxfam, the World Bank, and the World Inequality Report, billions of people are still living in poverty while wealth is concentrating at previously unheard-of levels. Second, Marx's specific prophecies regarding the fall of capitalism and revolution have not materialized. Welfare states, democratic institutions, and consumerism are examples of how capitalism has evolved. Marx anticipated a class consciousness, but identity politics, nationality, religion, and caste have split workers. Third, none of the current theories—Marx, Piketty, and Weber—captures the complete picture. Exploitation is explained by Marx, but not adaptation. Power is not explained by Piketty, but wealth concentration is. Systemic exploitation is not explained by Weber, but multidimensional inequality is. Fourth, the Class Inequality Resilience Index (CIRI) and the Neo-Marxian Digital Class Framework (NMDCF) put out in this research provide fresh perspectives on inequality in the twenty-first century. The CIRI offers a quantifiable framework for evaluating how successfully nations handle class inequality, while the NMDCF names the Data Peasantry as a new oppressed class. Fifth, a crucial case study is India. India is a prime example of the class division Marx described, with a wealth Gini of 0.74, 200 billionaires, and the top 1% owning more than 40% of the country's wealth. A workable legislative foundation for resolving this inequality through progressive taxes, worker protection, digital data rights, and social mobility initiatives is provided by the proposed Economic Equality and Class Justice Bill, 2026.

## Conclusion

One of the most significant intellectuals of the modern era was Karl Marx. His theory of class struggle, which holds that capitalism produces extreme inequality by exploiting workers and that society is split into two antagonistic classes, is still highly relevant in the twenty-first century. The statistics speak for themselves: over half of all people live in poverty, billionaire wealth is at an all-time high, and the top 1% hold 43% of the world's financial assets. Marx was not quite correct, though. The collapse of capitalism has not occurred. The global revolution has not brought workers together. Class consciousness has been thwarted by nationalism, religion, and identity politics. The two-class concept has been complicated by the middle class. Furthermore, Marx could not have predicted the new types of exploitation brought about by the digital economy. The Neo-Marxian Digital Class Framework (NMDCF), which identifies four classes in the digital economy, including the Data Peasantry, and the Class Inequality Resilience Index (CIRI), which gages how well nations manage class inequality across five dimensions, are two new contributions that this paper has proposed to close these gaps. Additionally, it has presented the Indian Parliament with the Economic Equality and Class Justice Bill, 2026. Marx's diagnosis was correct, but his prescription has to be updated, according to the main finding. Class-based inequality is a serious and expanding issue. Democratic reform—progressive taxes, labor safety, digital fairness, and social mobility initiatives—is the answer, not revolution. A just society where everyone has an equal opportunity to live a decent life should be the aim rather than a classless paradise.

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**Conflicts of interest**

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