

Agrarian and Rural Studies

The foundational pillars of Indian sociology were once anchored in rural and agrarian research, which diligently attended to the nation's paramount concerns during colonial period and in its nascent post-independence era. However, these pivotal domains have waned in prominence over successive decades within the Indian academic sphere. Nonetheless, the enduring salience of agriculture and significance of rural lifeworld remained undiminished. With a substantial majority of the Indian populace reliant on agriculture for sustenance and a significant proportion residing in rural enclaves, the socio-economic tapestry of the nation remains intricately interwoven with its agrarian fabric. However, this fabric has undergone substantial transformation, acquiring layers of complexity, particularly within the neoliberal capitalist paradigm.

Recent years have witnessed a burgeoning complexity within rural society and agrarian structures, epitomized by a substantial reshaping of traditional linkages between different caste communities, class and gender relations in the village setting. Economic globalization and liberalization have precipitated the disaggregation of agriculture from its erstwhile entwinement with rural existence. Concurrently, heightened rural-urban migration has compounded these complexities, blurring the dichotomy between urban and rural spaces. Indeed, the reciprocal interplay between rural and urban milieus renders a comprehensive understanding of either of it untenable without a concomitant analysis of its counterpart.

The contemporary analysis of rural and agrarian life necessitates an interrogation of their multiplicity and diversity, accounting for the confluence of neoliberal capital, technological advancements, environmental vicissitudes, social mobility dynamics, and evolving rural-urban relations. These intersecting forces engender a complex tapestry of realities requiring different analytical frameworks and methodological strategies in order to explain social and political processes in the Indian context.

The ramifications of these complex realities manifest differentially across societal strata, engendering multiple intersections of marginality. While the bottom echelons of the social hierarchy grapple with compounded adversities, the upper echelons encounter newfound opportunities. In this milieu, conventional categorizations such as 'farmer,' 'peasant,' and 'worker' falter in explicating the intricate web of social relations and power dynamics.

Professional bodies like the Indian Sociological Society play a crucial role in fostering research and scholarship in emerging areas of societal significance. By focusing on agrarian and rural studies, ISS can contribute significantly to the understanding of contemporary social complexities. Moreover, such initiatives can help bridge the gap between academic research and policy formulation, thereby facilitating evidence-based decision-making. Serving as a nexus for scholars, researchers, and practitioners, such a committee fosters collaborative endeavours aimed at unravelling the multifaceted realities of rural and agrarian existence. Through the facilitation of interdisciplinary dialogues and the dissemination of innovative

methodologies, the committee catalyses the generation of actionable insights into the evolving challenges and opportunities within these domains.

The evolving complexities within rural society and agrarian structures in contemporary India demand a concerted scholarly engagement from the academic community. By leveraging the collective expertise and resources of its members, the ISS can wield considerable influence in advancing knowledge, informing policy, and fostering transformative social change within agrarian and rural contexts.

The proposed agrarian and rural studies focus areas include:

1. Land Question in India
2. Agrarian movements with a focus on current farmers protests
3. Women's land rights in India
4. Agrarian Studies and Caste Question
5. Agrarian classes, caste and gender relations
6. Critical Agrarian Studies – Conceptual Debates
7. Migrant Labour and Social Mobility
8. Land, Ecology and climate change
9. Emerging Agrarian Crisis
10. State , Society and Agrarian Transformation
11. Agrarian Urbanism
12. Agricultural Markets in India
13. Adivasi Land Rights and Dispossession
14. Agrarian Futures