Introduction

This course aims at making the research students familiar with the nature of agrarian politics in India since independence. Agrarian politics of India witnessed significant change in view of the changing nature of rural political economy and the society since the introduction of the Green Revolution in the 1960s. A new era of agrarian politics ushered in the late 1980s with the emergence of the “new farmer movements.” The nature of peasant political mobilization, strategies of electoral mobilization by various political parties and groups, and the rise and decline of political actors are few markers of change in the nature of agrarian politics in the 1960s and late 1980s. During the 1990s, the policy of Indian state towards the rural and agrarian made a structural shift, resulting into emergence of an informal labor economy, emerging urban and rurban centres of political and economic power, and above all massive labor migration from rural to urban industrial areas. Increasing demand for land for real estate development, special economic zones and mega industrial projects also provided a new economic context of change to agrarian politics. Unlike the organized, left leaning agrarian unionism of the early decades after independence, India has seen emergence of a more scattered, discrete and ‘non-partisan’ agrarian politics. In the past few years, India has further witnessed a more hybrid form of agrarian movements. Overall, these changes in the nature of agrarian politics and movements determine and get determined by the nature of the Indian political process and the emerging global political economy at large. This course is an effort to encourage research students to understand the Indian agrarian politics within the context of India’s democratic polity as well as situating it in the larger global political economy settings.

Objectives of the course

This course makes an attempt to understand agrarian politics in the historical context. It also engages with the changing nature of economic policy regime towards agriculture and rural in the past seven decades. In this changing policy context, it also attempts to explain the recent nature of political mobilization, and protests by groups associated with the agrarian sector. It also attempts to explain the role of youth, women and marginalized groups in the emerging forms of agrarian politics. The course will also engage with the global agrarian politics and it's linkages with Indian agrarian scenario.
Methodology

Methodologically, the course will largely engage with empirical studies available on the subject. In addition, it will also include few theoretical studies. One section of the course will be dedicated to methodological challenges in conducting research in agrarian politics. Largely the focus would be on ethnographical methods, historical approach and political economy approach.

Scheme of the course

The course is divided into five major units. The list of essential readings is given below. A separate list of additional readings will also be provided during the classes.

1. Understanding the emergence of agrarian studies

Essential readings


Suggested Readings


2. History of Agrarian Politics in India

Essential Readings


______, Populism and Power: Farmers’ Movements in Western India. Routledge
Suggested Readings


4. New Farmers Movements


5 Methodological Concerns and Contemporary Issues


Suggested Primary Resources

Planning Commission Documents available on www.planningcommission.in

Niti Aayog documents on Agriculture available on www.nitiaayog.in

Swaminathan Committee reports. Available on http://agricoop.nic.in/sites/default/files/NCF3%20%281%29.pdf

Annual reports of ministry of agriculture

Annual reports of ministry of rural development

Important Journals

Economic and Political Weekly

Journal of Peasant Studies

Studies in Indian Politics

Journal of Agrarian Change