

CENTRE FOR POLITICAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
MONSOON SEMESTER 2021

M.PHIL. OPTIONAL COURSE: PO 622

COURSE TITLE: AGRARIAN MOVEMENT AND POLITICS IN INDIA

INSTRUCTOR: DR. SUDHIR SUTHAR

Credits 4

Scheme of evaluation: Review Essay (50%), End-semester exam (50%)

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 rural 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 its 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

Moore, Barrington. 1993. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Beacon Press, Reprint

Shanin, Theodor. 1971. *Peasants and Peasant Societies*. Ed. Penguin Books

Suggested Readings

Polanyi, Karl. 2001. *The Great Transformation*. Beacon Press. NY

Wacquant, L. (2005) *Habitus*. *International Encyclopedia of Economic Sociology*. J. Beckett and Z. Milan. London, Routledge.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). 'The Forms of Capital'. *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Capital*. J. G. Richardson. New York, Greenwood Press: 241-58.

2. History of Agrarian Politics in India

Essential Readings

Bhattacharya, Neeladarai. 2019. *The Great Agrarian Conquest: The Colonial Reshaping of Rural World*. New Delhi. Orient Blackswan.

Ludden, D. 1999. *An Agrarian History of South Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dhanagare, 1983. *D N Peasant Movement in India, 1920-50*. Sage: Delhi

_____, *Populism and Power: Farmers' Movements in Western India*. Routledge

Guha, Ranjit. 1999. *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*. Duke University Press

Suggested Readings

Nadkarni, M. V. 1987. *Farmers' movements in India*. Allied Publishers. New Delhi

Ludden, D. 1990. "World Economy and Village India, 1600-1900: Exploring the Agrarian History of Capitalism." In *South Asia and World Capitalism*. Edited by Sugata Bose. Oxford University Press, Delhi, pp.159-77.

3. Agrarian Politics after Independence (1950-1980)

Varshney, Ashutosh. 1998. *Democracy, Development and the Countryside: Urban-Rural Struggles in India*. Cambridge University Press

Frankel, Francine. *India's Political Economy. 1947-2004: The Gradual revolution*. Oxford University Press.

_____. *India's Green Revolution: Economic Gains and Political Costs*. Princeton University Press

Jodhka, Surinder and James Manor. 2017. *Contested Hierarchies, Persisting Influence: Caste and Power in Twenty First Century India*. Orient Blackswan

Parnaik, Utsa. 2007. *The Republic of Hunger and Other Essays*. The Merlin Press Ltd.

Vasavi, A R. 2012. *Shadow Space: Suicides and Predicament of Rural India*. Three Essays collective. New Delhi

4. New Farmers Movements

Brass, Tom. 1995. *New Farmers' Movements in India*. Routledge

Gupta, Dipankar. 1999. *Rivalry and Brotherhood: Politics in the Life of Farmers in Northern India*. Oxford University Press

Suthar Sudhir K. 2018. Contemporary Farmers' Protests and the 'New Rural-Agrarian' In India. *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol 53, Issue 26-27.

Bernstein, Henry and Terence J Byres. 2001. From Peasant Studies to Agrarian Change. *Journal of Agrarian change*. Vol 1, No 1. January 2001 (For an overview of agrarian studies)

5 Methodological Concerns and Contemporary Issues

Scott, James. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*

Lerche, Jens, Alpa Shah and Barbara Harris-White. 2013. Introduction: Agrarian Question and Left Politics in India. Journal of Agrarian Change. Vol. 13. No 13. Pp 337-350

Aggarwal, Bina. 1994. A Field of One's Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia. Cambridge University Press

-----1988. Who Sows? Who Reaps? Women and Land Rights in India. Journal of Peasant Studies. 15(4): 531-81

Joshi. P. C. 1981. Fieldwork Experience relieved and reconsidered. JPS 8(4): 455-87

Suggested Primary Resources

Planning Commission Documents available on www.planningcommission.in

Niti Aayog documents on Agriculture available on www.nitiayog.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