

## **Agrarian India: Past and Present**

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### **Syllabus**

This course will use interdisciplinary texts to give students a historical overview of agrarian India starting from the pre-colonial period, colonial impact and recurring famines to the community development programs and land reforms after independence. It will explore various dimensions of development in agriculture including the advent of the agricultural sciences and the birth of the agricultural extension system, the myth of the ignorant farmer and the idea of the self-sufficient village. It will then analyse the advent of the green revolution, and its consequences, especially the neglect of rainfed / dryland regions and the rise of farmers' movements. New technologies in agriculture, the role of agribusiness and the linkages between the market and the state in contemporary agriculture will be discussed. The growing social and geographical disparity with ecological distress and the threat of climate change, farmer suicides, and debt spirals on the one hand, and a risky but rewarding cash crop economy on the other, will also be explored. The course will end with a discussion on the aspirations of rural youth, opportunities for livelihoods, and gender and caste dimensions of the growing urbanization of rural centres.

### **List of Required Readings**

Pre-Colonial India and Colonial Transformations

1. Senapati, Fakir Mohan, and Rabi Shankar Mishra. *Six Acres and a Third: The Classic Nineteenth-century Novel about Colonial India*. Univ of California Press, 2005.  
(Selections)
2. Davis, Mike. *Late Victorian holocausts: El Niño famines and the making of the third world*. New York: Verso, 2002. (Selections)

### Independent India: Community Development, Land Reforms

3. Jodhka, Surinder S. "Nation and village: Images of rural India in Gandhi, Nehru and Ambedkar." *Economic and Political weekly* (2002): 3343-3353.
4. Jodhka, Surinder S., ed. *Village Society*. Orient Blackswan, 2012. Introduction

### Hunger and the Green Revolution

5. Sen, Amartya. *Poverty and famines: an essay on entitlement and deprivation*. Oxford university press, 1981. (Selections)
6. Akhil Gupta. *Postcolonial developments: Agriculture in the making of modern India*. Duke University Press, 1998. (Selections)
7. Cullather, Nick. *The hungry world*. Harvard University Press, 2010. (Selections)
8. Rudolph, Lloyd I., and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph. *In pursuit of Lakshmi: The political economy of the Indian state*. University of Chicago Press, 1987. (Selections)

### Liberalisation and the New Market Economy

9. Hanumantha Rao, C.H. 2006. *Agriculture, Food Security, Poverty and Environment: Essays on Post-reform India*. New Delhi, Oxford University Press. (Selections)
10. Vasavi, A. R. *Shadow space: suicides and the predicament of rural India*. Three Essays Collective, 2012. (Selections)
11. Gupta, D. 2005. "Whither the Indian Village: Culture and Agriculture in 'Rural' India." *Economic and Political Weekly* 40(8).

### **Additional Readings (Suggestions)**

1. 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.
2. Ludden, D. 1999. *An Agrarian History of South Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Ludden, D. 2001. "Subalterns and Others in the Agrarian History of South Asia," In *Agrarian Studies: Synthetic Work at the Cutting Edge*. Edited by James C. Scott and Nina Bhatt. Yale University Press, 2001. pp.206-235.

4. Mukerjee, Madhusree. *Churchill's Secret War: the British empire and the ravaging of India during World War II*. New York: Basic Books.
5. Sainath, Palagummi. *Everybody loves a good drought: stories from India's poorest districts*. Penguin Books India, 1996. (Selections)
6. Frankel, F. 2006. *India's Political Economy: The Gradual Revolution (1947-2004)*. New Delhi: OUP.
7. Herring, Ronald J. 1983. *Land to the Tiller: The political Economy of Agrarian Reforms in South Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
8. Shah, M. et al. 1998. *India's drylands: tribal societies and development through environmental regeneration*. New Delhi: OUP
9. Raina, R.S. 2003. "Institutions and Organizations: Agricultural Policy, Research and Extension" in Suresh Pal, Mruthyunjaya, P. K. Joshi and Raka Saxena (Eds) *Institutional Change in Indian Agriculture*. NCAP.
10. Ahuja, Narender L. "Commodity derivatives market in India: Development, regulation and future prospects." *International Research Journal of Finance and Economics* 2, no. 1 (2006): 153-162.
11. Kumar, R. "Mandi Traders and the Dabba: Online Commodity Futures Markets in India." *Economic and Political Weekly* (2010): 63-70.
12. Stone, G.D. 2007. "Agricultural deskilling and the spread of genetically modified cotton in Warangal." *Current Anthropology* 48(1).