

AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY DELHI (AUD)
School of Liberal Studies
MA Programme in Sociology, 2017, Monsoon

Course Title:

Sociology of Agriculture

Credit: 4

Category: Elective

Coordinator and teacher: Dr. Santosh Kr. Singh

Attendance: As MA students you are expected to take responsibility for your own education, which includes class attendance. Regular absence from class is quite likely to reflect on your ability to participate in class and get a 'reasonable grade'. As the voice and participation of each individual student in class is crucial to collective classroom dynamics and flow, individual absence will also have a negative effect on the group. Hence, a regular record of your attendance will be maintained. Formal recording of attendance will not reflect directly on your grades. However, twice during the semester (mid-semester and end-semester), a student whose attendance falls below 50% will be informed about her/his/their absence record. Please note that attendance is linked to in-class participation, which has a formal grading component, the dates for which will not be pre-announced. Lastly, if you are unable to attend class because of some emergency or difficulty (medical or otherwise), you are expected to inform us immediately and communicate the reason for your absence. Making up in-class participation is not allowed in this class, unless accompanied by a 'valid reason' (which has to be promptly communicated within 7 days of the emergency or difficulty), which may or may not require evidence and documentation. Please also note that you will need to submit an application in case of prolonged absence from class as well as failure to submit assignment on scheduled date to MA PC, CC and EAC member.

Please also note that attendance is linked to in-class participation, which has a formal grading component of 25 percent.

Course Introduction

Agriculture has played a pivotal role in the progress of human civilization. In fact it is very fundamental to the emergence of human society and culture. 'Agriculture, wrote David Ludden very perceptively, 'is civilization at work on the land, humanizing nature and naturalizing the powers that human societies exert upon nature'. Before the term like agribusiness and agri-marketing gained currency, the idea of gain, profit making and surplus-motives were remote to the culture of agriculture. Traditional agricultural environment and its universe were woven into religion, caste, deities, symbols and values.

With modernization and then globalization, culture of agriculture has become more complex and a contested sociological site. Crisis that has set in, leading to farmer's suicide and overall decline in the universe of agriculture, has triggered new debates with regard to increased influence of "externalities", such as agribusiness MNCs, and consequent vulnerability of the peasant community across the world, but more so in the world South, including India. The course exposes the students to the relevant literatures and works dealing with Sociology and anthropology of Agriculture and prepares them, in this backdrop, to engage with the contemporary agrarian debates and empathize with the challenges.

1. Term paper (30 % weight age)
2. Compulsory Village visit (40%) followed by presentation
3. Book review/ term paper (30%)

UNITS:

I. Understanding CULTURE in agriculture

- History, civilizations and seeds
- Symbols , values and rituals
- Making of agronomic universe

Appadurai, A. 1989. Transformation in the culture of agriculture. In contemporary Indian traditions: voices on culture, nature, and the challenge of change (ed.) by C. Borden, Washington: Smithsonian Institution press.

Chopra, Radhika. 1984, 'voices from earth: work and food reproduction in a Punjab village' in Sociological Bulletin, 43 (I), March.

Ludden, David. 1999. The New Cambridge History of India, IV.4. An Agrarian History of south Asia, New Delhi: Cambridge University Press.

Srinivas, M.N. 1976. The Remembered Village, Delhi: Oxford India paper Books.

Vasavi, A.R. 1994. Hybrid Times, Hybrid people: Culture and Agriculture in South India, in MAN, the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute Vol. 29, No. 2, June 1994.

II. Hierarchy, Difference and structures

- Formation of classes
- Emergence of Peasantry
- Structures of inequalities(Land, Labor and capital)

III. Issues in 'Agrarian Question'

- Change and transformations
- Technology-capital intervention
- 'Death of the peasantry' debates

Bharadwaj, Krishna (1974) *Production Conditions of Indian Agriculture*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Byres, T.J. (2002) 'Paths of Capitalist Agrarian Transition in the Past and in the Contemporary World' in Ramachandran, V. K. and Swaminathan, M. eds. *Agrarian Studies: Essays on Agrarian Relations in Less-Developed Countries*, New Delhi, Tulika.

Bernstein, Henry (2002) 'Land Reform: Taking a Long(er) View', *Journal of Agrarian Change*, Vol. 2(4), pp.433-463.

Patnaik, U. (1971) 'Capitalist Development in Agriculture', *Economic and Political Weekly, Review of Agriculture*, Vol. 6(39); pp.123-130.

IV. (Two-day Village visit)

V. Green Revolution to Gene Revolution

- Factors and conditions
- Food security issues
- Environment debates
- Socio-economic implications (women, marginal, small farmers)

Nanda, Meera. 2004, *Prophets Facing Backward-Postmodernism, science and Hindu nationalism*. Delhi: Permanent Black.

Mies, Maria. 1987. *Indian women in subsistence and agricultural labor*, New Delhi: Vistaar Publication.

Shiva, Vandana, 1999, *The violence of the Green Revolution –third world Agriculture, Ecology and Politics*, Zed Books Ltd. Third World Network, Penang , Malaysia.

Sobhan, Rehman, 1993, *Agrarian Reforms and Social transformation, pre condition for Development*, Zed books, London/New Jersey.

VI. Globalization and Agriculture

- Marginalization of Agriculture/ Rural
- Export-oriented agriculture versus food security
- Institutional changes under reforms: credit, inputs and extension services
- Southern perspective on Development
- **Politics and economics of/ about SEEDS/GRAINS**

Patel, Raj, *Stuffed and Starved*, Melville House Publishing, 2008

Patnaik, U. 2002. 'Deflation and Déjà vu: Indian Agriculture in the World Economy' in V. K. Ramachandran and M. Swaminathan eds. *Agrarian Studies: Essays on Agrarian Relations in Less-Developed Countries*, New Delhi, Tulika.

Ramachandran, V. K. and M. Swaminathan. 2002. 'Rural Banking and Landless Labour Households: Institutional Reform and Rural Credit Markets in India', *Journal of Agrarian Change*, Vol.2 (4); pp.502-544

Panini, M.N. 1999. Trends in Cultural Globalization, From Agriculture to Agribusiness in Karnataka in the EPW, Vol. XXXIV, No. 31, July 31.

Gidwani, V. 2008. *Capital, Interrupted: Agrarian Development and the Politics of Work in India*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (Chapters 1-2).

Dubash, N. 2001. *Tube well Capitalism: Groundwater Development and Agrarian Change in Gujarat*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. (Introduction and Chapters 1-2)

Bhutani, Shalini. 2016. Two Countries, One Corporation and Its Intellectual Property Rights. EPW Vol. 51, Issue No. 37, 10 Sep, 2016

Lodhi-A. Haroon Akram and Cristobal Kay (ed.).2009. *Peasants and Globalization: Political Economy, rural transformation and the agrarian question*. London: Routledge. (Chapter 10, 12)

VII. Crisis in Indian Agriculture: Farmers' suicides / An over view

Gupta, Akhil, 1998, 'Post colonial development- Agriculture in the making of modern India, oxford university press, Delhi.

Vasavi, A.R. 2009. 'Suicides and the making of India's agrarian distress.' *South African Review of Sociology*. 40(1): 124-38.

Gupta, Dipankar, 2005, "Whither the Indian Village: Culture and Agriculture in Rural India," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Feb. 9, 2005.

Mohanty, B.B., 2005, we are like the living dead: Farmer suicides in Maharashtra. *Journal of Peasant Studies*. Vol. 32. No 2.

Levien, Michael. 2011. "Special Economic Zones and Accumulation by Dispossession in India." *Journal of Agrarian Change*. 11(4): 454-483.
