



Call for Papers

International Conference on

Development, Agrarian Change, and Gender in India: Exploring Interdisciplinary Approaches

February 6-7, 2018

Organised by

**Gujarat Institute of Development Research,
Ahmedabad, India**

In collaboration with

**Australian National University,
Canberra, Australia**

Sponsored by

**Australian Research Council, Canberra, Australia
Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi, India**

Theme of the Conference

Significant changes have swept the agrarian landscape of rural India during the last few decades. These transformations encourage us to revisit some long-standing debates on changing social and gender relations within the overall caste and class structure, household food security, and the nature of rural development. A deep crisis – caused by rising costs of cultivation, inability to cope with vagaries of rainfall, indebtedness and bottlenecks in agricultural marketing, to mention only a few – has stymied the viability of agriculture as a livelihood option leading to acute distress of farmers. The depression of the rural sector has resulted in farmer suicides, marked reduction in self-cultivation, and a significant increase in the proportional labour contribution by women in agriculture.

Social scientists conventionally have treated the analyses of these problems within their respective disciplinary methodologies and tools, treating agricultural, gender, economic and socio-cultural aspects of change in rural India as discrete problems. Similarly, policy interventions in rural development have tended to treat farming and farmers separately. This conference proposes to explore the complex issues around rural change in India and its regional dynamics, to enable conversations across disciplinary boundaries that can frame/re-frame rural change through interdisciplinary approaches. The significant – and growing – proportion of women in agriculture (around 67 per cent, as per Census of India, 2011) either as cultivators or as agricultural labourers reflects a broader economic, social and political malaise, and calls for serious attention be paid to gender relations in agriculture and rural development. As with the changes in the agrarian

structure, the involvement of women in agriculture is being 'broadened and deepened', efforts to enhance women's agency without addressing rural crisis will achieve only limited outcomes. Similarly, agrarian policies that were instrumental in exacerbating gender, regional, social, and also rural-urban inequalities need to be revisited in the light of the growing empirical evidence. This conference aims to develop a holistic analytical framework that might be relevant for scholars and policy-makers alike. The goal is to go beyond the conventional sectoral or disciplinary thinking in order to gain a wider understanding of how rural societies are changing under a host of pressures, and develop a robust and more socially and gender nuanced interpretation that can contribute to the reimagining of policies and actions by all actors involved in the process of development.

An important aim of this conference is to capture the wider patterns by linking agrarian changes with greater attention to class, caste and gender, and present the complex and diverse regional specificities that are beginning to emerge at different spatial scales of analysis. The trajectory is neither uni-directional nor smooth and certain, and is in fact, likely to be influenced by a complex interplay of natural, socio-economic, political and cultural factors. The ultimate goal is to gain a larger understanding of rural societal change that goes beyond the conventional sector or disciplinary thinking, and which allows the development of a refined and socially nuanced interpretation of empirical data gathered at the primary and secondary levels. Critical understanding of the research conducted at different geographical scales would help in linking farm production with the people involved in it and their changing

Guideline for Extended Abstract

roles. Recognising the gender roles and relations in agriculture would be a crucial pre-requisite towards redesigning policies.

To this end, we invite scholarly contributions based on unpublished original research, providing insightful analyses of both primary and secondary empirical data at both macro and micro levels that, by linking rural development and changing gender roles in agriculture in both pre and post-harvest phases, can further our understanding of contemporary agrarian change in India.

The sub-themes and possible research questions to be explored at the conference are (but not limited to):

- » **Social dynamics of agrarian transformation in India**
- » **Changing livelihoods: Strategies and gender relations in rural areas**
- » **Male outmigration: Implications for household asset creation and food security**
- » **Gendered labour: Wages and productivity**
- » **Methodological innovations: Rural and gender studies**
- » **Gender disaggregated data: Gaps and challenges**

The extended abstract should reflect the content of the paper including context, objectives, methodology and findings. The extended abstract should be of **500 words**. Please send the electronic version of the abstract to conference conveners.

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Travel and Accommodation

Accommodation and local hospitality will be provided to the delegates by Gujarat Institute of Development Research (GIDR), Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Depending on the availability of funds, travel expenses will be borne by conference organisers for those whose papers are accepted for presentation. However, the organising committee will appreciate if individuals can manage funds for their travel.

Important Dates

- » Last date for submission of extended Abstract
1st August 2017
- » Intimation for acceptance of extended Abstract
30th August 2017
- » Last date for submission of the full paper
15th December 2017
- » Dates of the Conference
6-7 th February 2018

Advisory Committee

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Conference Conveners

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