
Contemporary Nature of Agricultural Tenancy in Rural India: A study of Punjab and Andhra Pradesh

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Résumé

The recent increase in the incidence of agricultural tenancy in the Indian context is coupled with regional differences and also differences exist in the nature of contracts across different lessee from different socio-economic classes. This existing nature of tenancy is a complex outcome of agro-ecological and socio-political dynamics of each region of India. This paper attempts to look into the nature of tenancy along with the tendencies developing across participating classes in the lease-in market to grapple with the broader question of land and power in rural India. The on-going Bernstein-Byres debate regarding bypassing of agrarian question has emanated a crucial question within agrarian studies of recent times, i.e. whether land remains as *the* important factor behind the differentiation and accumulation trajectory of an agrarian economy. This paper theoretically locates itself as part of this debate and analyses the question of differentiation through analysing the agricultural land-lease market in two specific states of India.

The two broad objectives of this paper are to understand, the logic of leasing in land in different agro-ecological regions and how that logic varies across different socio-economic classes of the two states, namely Punjab and Andhra Pradesh. Secondly, to understand how the process of differentiation and accumulation is further linked or de-linked through the contemporary tenancy arrangements.

The empirical analysis is based on a large-scale sample survey and is supplemented with region-specific case studies in order to understand the role of the land-lease market in the processes mentioned. A broader finding of the study is that the importance of land in the process of differentiation in contemporary India still has its relevance and when historically marred with caste, it still creates scope for what is referred as conjugated oppression (Shah and Lerche, 2018) inside the formulation of agrarian question in India.

Mots-Clés: Tenancy, Agricultural Land, Agrarian Question, India

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