

Contextualising Agrarian Change in India: Debates and Themes

Nidhi Balyan

Abstract

Change is inevitable and an ultimate virtue of any society. Any kind of change, structural, social, economic or political in nature; invites academic scrutiny which may explain the factors that caused a certain form of change and the possible consequences that process of change may have. Following the same line of thought this article makes an attempt to present a consolidated view of history of agrarian change within sociology along with its prevalent trends in India. This article discusses major theoretical debates that have emerged in the field of agrarian studies initially in Russian countryside and gradually in other parts of the world. The debate is majorly between classical Marxist thinkers represented by Kautsky and Lenin and their opponents represented by Chayanov. The article also sheds light on the history of institutionalisation of agrarian studies after it covered a long journey from peasant studies to rural sociology. In the later parts of the article, the discussion proceeds towards Indian context, where major debates that prevail within Indian scenario are discussed. Along with this, it also highlights the new trends that have emerged in the agrarian context in India especially post green revolution period.

Keywords: Agrarian Change, Rural Sociology, Peasant Studies, Agrarian Studies, Green Revolution

Introduction

The idea of change has been conceptualised or explored in Sociology for the past many decades, and it remains to be one of the important projects since inception of the discipline. It was this process of change that has kept many sociologists and social thinkers engaged in deciphering its causes, its nature and the major implications it has on society. And it is the different ways of unfolding this process of change that distinguishes various traditions in Sociology. Though philosophical reflection upon many aspects of social life existed in the Indian tradition for a long time, historically the systematic study of Indian society, says Bottomore, began during the period of the British rule. In Sociology, because of

NIDHI BALYAN, Ph.D. Research Scholar, Centre for the Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi - 110067. Email: nidhibalyan90@gmail.com