

# University of Mumbai



## Department of Sociology

(Centenary year 1919-2019)

## National Seminar

On

*Understanding agrarian crisis in India: perspectives from gender and other marginalized locations*

21<sup>st</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2019

Keynote address: **Dr. Gail Omvedt and Dr. Bharat Patankar**

Eminent Social Scientists

Thursday, February 21, 2019 at 9:30 a.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

Valedictory address

**Prof. Vibhuti Patel**

Advanced Centre for Women's Studies, TISS, Mumbai

Friday, February 22, 2019 at 4.30 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Venue: ICSSR Conference Hall,**

**J. P. Naik Bhavan,**

**University of Mumbai,**

**Mumbai**

Dr. Ramesh Kamble  
Head, Department of Sociology

Dr. Sonali Wakharde  
Seminar Co-ordinator

National Seminar on  
***“Understanding Agrarian crisis in India: perspectives from gender and other  
marginalized locations”***

21 and 22 February, 2019

Department of Sociology, University of Mumbai

**Concept Note**

In recent times the compelling images of farmers committing suicide have characterized the agrarian scene. The notion ‘suicide’ is reflected not only in farmers killing themselves but also in the situation where they are destroying their produce due to economic failure or also when they declare that they would cease to be farmers. This is thus ‘death’ of a farmer.

Undoubtedly the contemporary agrarian crisis is rooted in economic changes occurring since last three decades. The neo liberal economic policy introduced in 1991 brought Indian agriculture sector in the orbit of liberalization, privatization and globalization. Indian farmers were integrated into new market economy and pushed towards commercial cropping. They are forced to use modern technologies, high yield seeds, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation facilities for cash crop cultivation. It has increased economic burden on farmers, male and female. This policy of liberalization reduced the government financial assistance and subsidies to the farmers. In this situation the big farmers could manage to do better by investment in irrigation and inputs and adopting new technologies but the small and marginal farmers were trapped into indebtedness. Of course as pointed out by Bina Agarwal, the Indian farmer is a heterogeneous category. There are differences on account of income, land ownership and gender.

Prominently the agrarian crisis is seen as material in nature. Many scholars have explained the economic failure of agriculture and its material consequences but agrarian crisis is not merely economic in nature. It has consequences beyond economic issues and concerns. The nature of the agrarian crisis is also social and cultural. The growth of capitalism in agriculture has reshaped the agrarian social structure and relations. Agrarian crisis impacted the social relations, affected the identities and cultural life of community. Farmers are selling their land and cattle and migrating towards urban and industrial areas. Poor farmers and labourers pushed in the informal sector on low wages. The big farmers and landowners possess power but the small and marginal farmers and landless labourers are struggling with poverty, lack of resources, accesses to clean water for drinking and sanitation, issues of health and education etc. Bina Agarwal further points out to two different processes - dissatisfaction and distress affecting the politically vocal farmers and poor farmers respectively. She suggests that the policies should, as a priority, address the concerns of the vulnerable sections who are in distress. We can further point out to another category, the ‘dispossessed’, the sections losing lands to commercial non-agricultural sector.

More specifically, women who are already marginalized, vulnerable and deprived in patriarchal society are the victims of the agrarian crisis. Their access and claims to livelihood, resources and rights are threatened. A large number of women in rural areas are engaged in agriculture but they never been recognized as farmers. Traditionally land and resources are controlled by men. The

structural discrimination within agriculture deprives women from land ownership and claim to resources. As a result these women cannot access government schemes and credit facilities which are for the farmers. When farmers commit suicide women single handedly are forced to manage survival and livelihood of the family. These women are struggling to meet basic needs without any support system at family and societal level.

This seminar thus wishes to focus on the impact of agrarian crisis on gender relations; the ways in which women have responded to the crisis, various negotiations and strategies they adopt in dealing with the crisis. This seminar also wishes to focus on the impact of caste and gender in understanding the consequences of and responses to the agrarian crisis. We wish to understand the agrarian crisis from perspectives of women. When rural economy fails what happen to women who equally contribute in agriculture? How they are negotiating with the crisis? This attempt might help to understand the lived realities of women in agrarian community. Some of the concerns mentioned above could be articulated in the form of following broad questions.

1. What is the nature of agrarian crisis?
2. What are the social and cultural dimensions of agrarian crisis?
3. Impact of agrarian crisis on agrarian society and marginalized communities?
4. Impact of agrarian crisis on social relations, identities and cultural life?
5. How gender relations are impacted?
6. How gender identities are affected?
7. How women are responding to it?
8. How have state policies and NGOs interventions affected women in rural areas?

We expect to have deliberation on the following broad sub themes.

#### **Sub themes of the seminar –**

- 1. Nature and dimensions of the agrarian crisis and its consequences**
  - **Neo liberal economic reform and agrarian structure**
  - **Impact of the agrarian crisis on the agrarian society, especially on the marginalized groups and communities**
- 2. The responses to the agrarian crisis**
  - **State, NGOs and the agrarian crisis**
  - **Negotiations, strategies and struggles of the agrarian community**
- 3. Women and the agrarian crisis**
  - **Impact of the agrarian crisis on women**
  - **Women's response to the agrarian crisis**
  - **Agrarian crisis and women's movements, initiatives: Rights to resources and livelihoods**

Dr. Sonali Wakharde  
Seminar Co-ordinator

## ***Programme schedule***

**Day 1- 21.02.2019**

**9.00 a.m.** *Breakfast and Registration*

### **9. 30 a.m. Inaugural Session**

Welcome: **Ramesh Kamble, Head**, Department of Sociology, University of Mumbai

Introduction: **Sonali Wakharde**, Seminar Co-ordinator

**Keynote address: Gail Omvedt and Bharat Patankar**, Kasegaon, Maharashtra. *Agrarian crisis in India: Necessity of a multilinear perspective*

**10.45 a.m.** *Tea*

**11.00 a.m.** Special Lecture by **Kumar Shiralkar**, Nandurbar. *Agrarian Crisis: Outcome of an in-built discriminative system*

### **11.45 a.m.** Session I: *Nature and dimensions of agrarian crisis*

Chair: **Indra Munshi**, Former Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Mumbai

**M. T. Joseph**, University of Mumbai. *Understanding Risk and Crisis in Neo-Liberal Context.*

**12.30 p.m.** *Special Lecture by Anand Patil*, Goa University. *Agro –slavery of Women, Problem of Identification*

**1. 15 p.m.** *Lunch*

### **2.00 p.m.** Session II: **Responses to agrarian crisis: State interventions and social movements**

Chair: **P.G. Jogdand**, Former Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Mumbai

**Vishal Jadhav**, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth. *Agrarian Distress and the Maratha Kranti*

*Morcha: Contesting Narratives on Caste*

**Girija Godbole**, IIT, Bombay. *We are living in sinister times: Perspectives of rural agrarian women on increasing land sale in western Maharashtra*

**3. 00 p.m.** *Special Lecture by Ranjana Padhi*, Narratives of women's struggle and survival: *The social implications of the agrarian crisis in Punjab*

**3. 45 p.m.** *Tea*

**4. 00 p.m.** *Special Lecture by Ghanashyam Yelne*, S. R. T. M. University. *Women, Technology and Agriculture*

### **4:45 p.m.** Session III: **Women in Agrarian economy**

Chair: **B.N.Kendre**, Department of Sociology, University of Mumbai

**Swati Priya Jha**, Research Scholar, University of Mumbai. *Life histories of Famer Widows: A capability approach*

**Programme schedule - Day 2**

**22.02.2019**

**9.30 a.m.** *Breakfast*

**10. 00 a.m.** *Special Lecture by **R. Ramakumar**, TISS, Mumbai. Sources of the contemporary agrarian crisis in India*

**10. 45 a.m.** *Tea*

**11. 00 a.m.** **Session IV: Impact of agrarian crisis on women**

Chair **M.H. Makwana**, Former Professor, Department of Sociology, Gujarat University

**Baburao Jadhav**, S. R. T. M. University. *Exploring barriers in Accessing Livelihood sources: Personal narratives of women in the aftermath of Farmer Suicides*

**Surrendra Thakur**, Govt. College of Arts & Science, Aurangabad. *Agrarian Crisis and Role Conflict among the wives of Suicide committed farmers in Marathawada*

**12.15 p.m.** *Special Lecture by **Ritu Dewan**, Vice President of the Indian Society of Labour Economics. The State, the Agrarian Crises, and the De-Equalisation of Women*

**1. 00 p. m.** *Lunch*

**2.00 p.m.** *Special Lecture by **Wandana Sonalkar**, TISS, Mumbai. Collective Use of Commons: Theory, Experiments and Possibilities*

**2.45 p.m.** **Session V: Women's movements and responses to agrarian crisis**

Chair: Ramesh Kamble, Department of Sociology, University of Mumbai

**Vaishali Patil**, Social Worker, Raigad. *Women's Leadership at the grassroots movement*

**Anurekha Chari Wagh**, University of Hyderabad. *Gendered Citizenship, Agrarian crisis and widow farmers*

**3. 45 p.m.** *Special Lecture by **Seema Kulkarni**, SOPPECM, Pune. Organizing women farmers from farm suicide districts of Maharashtra*

**4. 30 p.m. Valedictory Session.**

Chair: Gautam Gawali, Amity University, Mumbai

Valedictory Address: **Vibhuti Patel**, TISS, Mumbai. *Current agrarian scenario and predicaments of women farmers and agricultural workers*

Vote of Thanks

**5.30p.m. High Tea**