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Neo-liberal agenda and study of institutions

Kuldeep Mathur

Abstract

In an effort to promote economic development the neo-liberal agenda is taking at least two directions. One is to roll back the state and allow for greater play of the market to enforce a private property regime. The other is a search for alternative ways of organizing for development. It makes a distinction between institutions that are codes of conduct of behaviour and organizations which are decision-making mechanisms. Considerable efficiencies can be achieved if both are supportive of each other. Institutions and organizations can differ according to social purpose and therefore research concerns must be focused on flexibility of design rather than a single solution.

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Socio-economic characteristics of villages in North Arcot: an exploratory study

A. Vaidyanathan

Abstract

This paper is a preliminary exercise to explore the potential of using village level data from the population censuses to understand the nature of variation in terms of select socio-economic features as well as the factors which account for such variations and changes in them over time.

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Employment and unemployment trends in Kerala: a study based on National Sample Survey data

E.T. Mathew

Abstract

Worker-population ratio (inclusive of usual principal and subsidiary status workers) in Kerala has risen moderately over the years. There has, however, been a decline in the proportion of usual subsidiary status workers. While the shares of self-employment and regular employment have fallen, there has been an impressive growth in the- are of casual employment, almost entirely accounted for by non-agriculture. Although manufacturing industry has been passing through a phase of deceleration, construction industry has proved to be a major source of incremental employment. The percentage of usually unemployed excluding subsidiary status workers doubled during 1972-73 to 1987-88. Unemployment rates according to usual principal status fell significantly during 1977-78 to 1983 but rose less sharply during 1983 to 1987-88. Educated unemployment in Kerala has assumed alarming proportions. Its rate increased from 29.3 to 35.0 per cent and the number of educated unemployed from 3.5 to 6.3 lakhs during 1983 to 1987-88.

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Diffusion as a process: the case of plywood boats in marine fishing

John Kurien

Abstract

This paper attempts to analyse a concrete case of diffusion as a process, highlighting the dynamics by which an innovation courses its way in time and over space through the structure of a social system engendering a process of social change. This is followed by a reflection on the various perspectives in diffusion research in an attempt to assess their relevance and limitations in undertaking such an enterprise.

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Regulated public trust utilities: a case for restructuring the State Electricity Boards

R. Hema

Abstract

The inefficiencies and imbalances in the electricity supply industry in India, that have persisted for over two decades now and reached crisis proportions, clearly indicate that a major restructuring of the present institutional arrangement is called for. The present government policies aimed at restructuring this sector are, however, *ad hoc* and based on exigent needs for investment financing. The potential for both market failure and government failure in the electricity industry are quite high, given its unique technological and demand characteristics. Hence, *ad hoc* institutional changes might result in the cure being worse than the ailment. This paper presents the case for an alternative institutional framework and regulatory structure which would optimise social welfare.

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Doctoral work

Traditional agriculture: a systemic presentation

J. Jeyaranjan

Abstract

Empirical and theoretical studies by economist and sociologists abound in the literature on the rural transformation. Though both approaches would readily concede that there was something commonly described as 'the traditional system' and that it has been undergoing transformation, only few studies try to capture the pattern of interrelationships between the physical and social in the traditional set-up. A detailing of a traditional system in terms of the intricate relationships is necessary for an understanding of the process of change. Our attempt in this paper is an analytical description of a particular village community and its activities.

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