

Review of
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Political changes in Tamil Nadu: evolution or involution?

T V Sathyamurthy

Abstract

The paper focuses on the ideological shifts in the Dravidian movement over a period of six decades. The emergence of the DMK as a consequence of the most decisive of these shifts resulted in the transformation of an essentially radical socio-cultural movement into a political party competing for power in Tamil Nadu. During its first decade in power, the DMK had lost its ideological cutting edge and become scarcely distinguishable from other political parties. The split that gave rise to the AIADMK carried only a marginal ideological significance, because it introduced into the political arena a form of populism that was exclusively based on a cinematic personality as a hero figure. The political atmosphere generated by the AIADMK as the ruling party was rife with the arbitrary anti-social activities of lumpen and criminal elements, whilst the upper echelons of the bureaucracy, the legislature and the executive were steeped in corruption. In the final analysis, the political offshoot of an influential socio-cultural movement presided over a process of involution instead of creating conditions favourable to the emergence of substantive democracy in the Tamil Nadu polity.

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Promotional and protective social security during economic reform: a study of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu

K. Seeta Prabhu

Abstract

The paper examines the role of promotional and protective measures in providing social security for the rural poor, particularly during a period of economic reform, in the context of the experience of two Indian States, viz., Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. The trends in government expenditure at the State and district levels on rural employment, social security and welfare and nutrition during the period 1987-88 and 1994-95 indicate significant changes in the pattern of expenditure in both the States. An analysis of perceptions of the beneficiaries of various schemes in selected villages points to the inadequacy of any single measure in providing the required level of social security. The paper points to the need for an integrated package that maximises the synergies accruing from a balanced provision of both promotional and protective measures.

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Consequences of aquifer over-exploitation: prosperity and deprivation

S. Janakarajan

Abstract

Groundwater has emerged as one of the most critical inputs in Indian agriculture in particular, after the widespread adoption of the modern bio-chemical technology. In this context, the present paper

examines the implications of the massive development of groundwater irrigation in the particular context of hard-rock zones of Tamil Nadu. First, there has been a progressive lowering of the water table which has resulted in the increase of fixed as well as operating costs of well irrigation. Moreover, in the race of competitive deepening, every additional cost on wells falls disproportionately on the resource poor farmers. Second, along with land wells also get sub-divided into several shares. This has serious managerial problems in so far as taking decisions pertaining to well deepening and sharing of available water from a well. Third, the rapid development of groundwater irrigation has also witnessed the broad polarisation of farmers into those who have access to own well water and those who have not. The latter category of farmers are primarily poor in terms of their resource endowment, who have had no access to own wells or who have lost in the race of competitive deepening. It is this section which constitutes the class of water purchasers. These water purchasers given their vulnerability get into interlocked transactions in which water market is interlinked with several other agrarian markets. This brings us to the crucial issue of examining social relations of production in a highly dynamic context in which groundwater has proved to be the most expensive and important productive resources as well a commodity for-commercial transactions.

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Household composition in Madras' low-income settlements

Penny Vera-Sanso

Abstract

The objective in this paper is to show how household composition in Madras' low-income settlements is the consequence of three factors: first, the struggle over resources within and between families; second, a concern for *maanam* (honour/reputation) and third, housing form and tenure. The argument is that dominant principles regarding domestic relations combine with housing form and tenure to condition individuals' access to particular households. The comparison of household composition in Slum Clearance Board tenements, government allotted land and a squatter settlement indicates that who is included as a member of the household and on what terms is strongly shaped by housing form and tenure.

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Lesser citizens: social exclusion of Dalits in Tamil Nadu

Manabi Majumdar

Abstract

Though some individual members of the Dalit community have attained high positions in government, business and education that would have been unimaginable thirty or forty years ago, as a group Dalits are far from reaching parity with the so-called 'forward' communities. The Dalits represent a group of 'social unequals' afflicted with a variety of overlapping inferior statuses in social, political and economic terms. This paper is an exploratory effort to examine, through the conceptual prism of social exclusion, some of the processes which drive Dalits to the social margins and to discern their effects on Dalit attainments, with special reference to their experience in Tamil Nadu.

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Agricultural transformation and poverty: some issues for discussion

V. Chandrasekara Naidu

Abstract

This paper tries to examine the impact of differential pattern of agricultural growth on the economic conditions of households belonging to the weaker sections in two selected villages of Tamil Nadu. On the basis of field surveys and resurveys, the paper argues that the explanation for the high levels of absolute poverty prevailing in the rural areas lies not in technological developments but in the institutional structures. The paper argues that though the modernisation of agriculture trickles down and benefits the poor, the extent of benefits derived by them depends very much on the threshold level of productive assets owned by them. This precondition holds good not only in the matter of deriving benefits from agricultural growth, but also in deriving benefits from common property resources, public programmes and the opportunities in the neighbouring urban and industrial growth centres. The paper ends with a suggestion that the lasting solution to the problem of poverty can be found only by providing minimum amount of productive resources to the poor.

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Organisation for sustainable common property resource development

Madhushree Sekhar

Abstract

This paper examines, on the basis of a field study, the extent to which local organisations through 'organised participatory development' can help in the management of common property resources. It identifies the basic assumptions underlying organised participatory development; analyses them in the context of the implementation of a social forestry programme; and outlines a path for greater organisational effectiveness in enhancing peoples' involvement for effective management of community resources.

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Doctoral work

Economic transformation of tribals in Tamil Nadu: subsistence to commercialisation 1976-1995

V. Saravanan

Abstract

This paper examines an interesting feature of economic transformation of tribals in Tamil Nadu from a self-subsistence economy to commercialisation (market oriented), since the sub-plan period (1976-77). A detailed account of the factors which were involved in the process of commercialisation has been approached in a historical perspective. It elucidates the external factors, which restricted the traditional source of livelihood of the tribals, the measures undertaken by the state for the development of tribal areas, and the role of internal factors accentuating the process of commercialisation in the tribal economy of Tamil Nadu.

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