

The Instrumentality of Inequality in Rural India

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Abstract

The study of inequality in India has focused primarily on the nature and extent of this phenomenon. This talk will focus on what inequality does. It will do so by viewing the transformation in rural India through the lens of inequality. Based on empirical and conceptual work carried out by a team of researchers over a period of three years, it will connect a wide range of processes in rural India, from the transformations generated by workers moving out of agriculture to the inequalities of short-term migration; from the aspirations of escape from a failing agriculture to competitive victimhood as an instrument of political action.

About the author

Narendar Pani is a professor at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru, India, where he is also the Dean of the School of Social Sciences, and heads the Inequality and Human Development Program. After a PhD in economics, he moved into transdisciplinary research which allowed him to explore diverse, but interconnected, aspects of the Indian reality. His work over the last four decades has thus ranged from agrarian reform to urban processes, confronting challenges of method along the way. His books include: *Gandhian Method and Contemporary Policy Inclusive Economics* (Sage 2002) and *The City as Action: Rethorizing Urban Studies* (Routledge 2022). He has also edited *Dynamics of Difference: Inequality and Transformation in Rural India* (Routledge 2022).