

India's Agrarian Crisis:

Notes from the field



The image of contemporary India today is that of an Asian economic powerhouse battling extreme inequalities. The country's perverse appetite for gold and the consumption of super luxury goods grows each passing year, while simultaneously overall food availability and per capita caloric intake are shockingly on the decline. With diverse ethnic, tribal, caste, religious and linguistic groups spread all across the vast country, social conflicts and movements as well as rural Maoist insurgencies pose major challenges to the Indian state.

At the same time, India has an unusually robust democracy, a relatively independent media, a progressive constitution and a fast growing economy.

The country is, arguably, moving from an electoral to a more participatory democracy where a new matrix of rights-based development is pushing for more transparency and accountability.

This presentation addresses the social landscape of the crisis -a damaging mix of governance deficit, agrarian crises, and displacement of tribals from their lands and forests- and its depiction in the media. The field notes reveal the running battles between an aggressive Indian State and its diverse publics over the very idea of development and democracy.

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Speakers:

4:00—6:00PM

304—305 Gordon Hall

Pleasant Street, UMass-Amherst, MA

Ajay Dandekar holds a Ph.D. in History, is Professor of Social Sciences at the Institute of Rural Management Anand, and is currently the Dean of International Studies, Central University of Gujarat.

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Vipul Mudgal holds a Ph.D. in Communication, has served as Resident Editor of Hindustan Times, and is currently the Director of Inclusive Media for Change at the Center for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi, India.