



Talk: Small Farm Dynamics in Diverse Urbanising Spaces - Designing a Treatise

Speaker:

Seema Purushothaman, Sheetal Patil, Siddhartha Lodha, Azim Premji University

Date / Time:

April 11, 2014 - 2:00pm - 3:30pm

Venue:

Activity Room, Azim Premji University

Abstract:

Indian agricultural scene is unique with its persisting large number of small holders who do not conform to the bi polarity of classical 'peasants' or capital accumulating entrepreneurs. Though they seem to be of diverse attributes, they do share some commonalities like small land size (own or leased) and dependence on non-farm livelihoods. Together they are large in number (still un-organised) and form a large chunk of occupational migrants (seasonal or permanent) joining the growing informal sector of neo-liberal India.

While it is true that there are many policies targeting them, there also are implicit arguments both in policy and academic discussions (Gulati et al (2008), speeches by ministers and statements from the planning commission as reported in the media) on the need to wean millions from small farming in order to fuel both economic growth and poverty reduction. How do small farmers in the periphery of diverse urban cores take their livelihood decisions? Does the agenda of growth (along with governance strategies) dispossess small holders of their occupational identity? What are the outcomes in livelihood, ecological, cultural and food security of this large section of Indians? Our study aims to evolve a framework around the dynamic and diverse small holder, so as to inform any process to integrate them into a rapidly changing society. This dialogue aims to generate discussion on how best to design the empirical part of this study in Karnataka.

A Note on the Speaker:

Seema Purushothaman: A Professor at at Azim Premji University, Seema has spent nearly 20 years in a research dominated career - across government, corporate & not-for-profit organizations. Prior to joining the Azim Premji University, Seema was a faculty at Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology & the Environment (ATREE), Bangalore. Her research spans across sustainability & livelihood issues in forests, forest peripheries, farming and the urban.

Sheetal Patil: Trained formally in computer application and then in economics streams, Sheetal Patil is placed at Research Center of Azim Premji University. At the Research Center, she is involved in activities related to capacity building and research support with statistics and data analysis methods. At the same time she is also part of a research project aiming at exploring small-farms dynamics in urbanizing spaces. Her research interests include applying different assessment tools and modeling dynamics of different social and ecological systems particularly in cultivating landscapes.

Siddhartha Lodha: Siddhartha recently completed his M.A Development from Azim Premji University, and is part of the research team studying small farmers, urbanisation and their dynamics, headed by Prof. Seema P