

FROM FARMERS TO FARM LABOURERS, A TRANSCULTURAL STUDY OF INDIAN FARMERS

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Abstract

India is an agrarian country with nearly 70% of the entire population depends directly or indirectly upon agriculture. The worrying thing is the continuous suicide of farmers and agrarian crisis. India is a land of diverse Cultures. Though the author was born in Andhra Pradesh, a different culture from other Indian states, depicts the struggles of entire Indian farmers by narrating the life and death battles of a farmer from a Rural village Mityala, in the state of Delhi against his inheritance of despair through her non-fictional work and also make to understand the pain of farmers who are being, forced due to circumstances, employed as farm labourers in the land which once they owned. This paper tries to socialize the alienated ideology and mindset of current technological generation about farmers and agriculture. This differentiation in our perception about farmers and agriculture in contemporary, so called, transcultural India forms the main platform for this paper through Kota Neelima's Shoes of the dead.

Keywords: transcultural, farmers, study, laborers etc

Full Paper

Once in your life you need a doctor, a lawyer, a policeman, a teacher but every day, three times a day, you need a farmer. However the above words forgotten by many modern generations, however, those words in a different manner fixed in an unforgettable way within the life of Indian farmers. It goes as such, once in your life time you see a doctor, a lawyer, a policeman, a preacher suffers and commits suicide but every day, unsurprisingly even three times a day, you can see a former suffers and commits suicide in India. "If the farmer is poor then so is the whole country" says a polish proverb. Farmers were considered next to god for ages but things are entirely different in the technology drowned age in the 21st century where they are treated worse widely than a beggar. Farmers are being treated as aliens in the modern generation and the so called farming as a profession considered as an outdated and cheapest, unprofitable one in the contemporary societies.

Kota Neelima's *Shoes of the dead* gives voice about the modern day farmers. The book discusses the contrasting life of a rural poor young educated farmer and the life of an urban rich young politician fighting for their own and fellow people's survival in their respective areas is a chilling parable of modern-day India. The story exposes the poverty, indebtedness, land fragmentation, private money lending, technological stagnation and lack of follow-up on welfare schemes faced by the Indian farmers through the young educated farmer Gangiri Bhadra. However it also portrays the arrogance, pride, vanity, power, money, politics and corruption through the young rich politician Keyur Kasinath. As stated earlier it gives a contrasting view of how the brilliant farmer battles against his inheritance of despair against the arrogant politician fights to keep his inheritance of power. At the end, there can be only one winner and that was conveyed by the author of the book.

The base of the plot revolves around a rural village called Mityala in New Delhi and the indigenous people of that place. The story communicates the horrible side of farmer's life through constant increase of suicide due to inability to pay debt, damaging of crops due to erratic weather conditions such as drought and floods, unfavorable government policies, inability to meet the demands of the family and personal issues. Even though the novel discusses about a life of particular farmer from a particular place but it is easily related with the entire farmers life in India since the above pathetic incidents are the major reasons for every farmer in India irrespective of their village and state. Though, we used to say India is a land of diverse culture but the suffering and struggling culture of farmers remains same all over India. The statistics visualize the rapid increase in the suicide rates of farmers. India exist with nearly 29 states and every state differs from other with their tradition, culture, quality of education and its system, life style, representatives and climate. However, the pathetic unsecured life remains same for every farmer in India with some exceptional. The analysis shows the horrible perspective of farmers as aliens from the technological world. This alienated attitude towards farmers and agriculture in India forms the base for the decline in the life of farmers and in the field of agriculture.

The foremost notion of this paper is to evaluate the way farmers migrate to be farm labourers due to agrarian crisis in India. The result census of India gives a bleak picture of Indian farming. The number of farmers has dipped by over 8.6 million in the past technological decade. The pathetic data is that it shows more than 37 million people have taken to farm labour in the past decade. It rings the alarm on agrarian crisis in our country. The statistics released by the union home minister portrays the migration as 54.6 per cent of total workers in India are now part of agriculture sector with a decline and there has been increase of 44 per cent in the male agricultural labourers, while for the female it has increased by 24.5 per cent. This paper and statistics attributes this rise in agricultural labour to the falling size of land holdings over the time. It shows most have abandoned farming of their own and employed to do farming by others and for others. In India, If million people are

engaged in the agricultural sector and over half of them are now agricultural labourers, a new trend observed in recent decade.

An official statement released by the central agricultural ministry as follows “while the census has not been able to explain the reasons behind the migration of farmers from the agricultural sector, if agricultural labour is increasing in the country and number of cultivators is decreasing it can be because of two reasons. One is that farmers are losing their land and are being forced to work as labourers in the field of others. The second can be that people are trying to work under government schemes as MGNREGA so that they can live in their village and work as agricultural labour.”

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