

FELLOW PROGRAMME IN MANAGEMENT

RESISTING HISTORY?
AGRARIAN CHANGE AND FARMERS' MOBILIZATION IN WESTERN
UTTARPRADESH 1985-2015

By

SIDDHARTH JOSHI



भारतीय प्रबंध संस्थान बेंगलूर
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT
BANGALORE

2017

FELLOW PROGRAMME IN MANAGEMENT

**RESISTING HISTORY?
AGRARIAN CHANGE AND FARMERS' MOBILIZATION IN WESTERN
UTTARPRADESH 1985-2015**

By

SIDDHARTH JOSHI

A Dissertation submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Fellow Programme in Management of the

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT BANGALORE

2017

Prof. Rejie George Pallathitta
Chairperson
Fellow Programme in Management

Prof. Deepak Malghan
Chairperson
Dissertation Advisory Committee

Members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Prof. Deepak Malghan | Chairperson |
| 2. Prof. Rajlaxmi Kamath | Member |
| 3. Prof. M S Sriram | Member |

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank my advisors Prof. Deepak Malghan, Prof. Rajlaxmi Kamath and Prof M S Sriram for their guidance and support in helping me complete this dissertation. The final shape of the dissertation owes a lot to the sharp editorial suggestions made by Prof. M S Sriram. Prof. Rajlaxmi Kamath's assistance was extremely helpful in preparing me for my fieldwork. Working with Prof. Deepak Malghan as my Chairperson of my Dissertation Advisory Committee has been an enriching experience in more ways than just academic collaboration.

This dissertation also owes a lot to Prof Jagpal Singh whose extensive hands-on experience in conducting fieldwork in western Uttar Pradesh helped me plan and execute my own fieldwork in Muzaffarnagar.

I would also like to acknowledge the hospitality and assistance of BKU leaders, especially Sh. Rakesh Tikait, Sh. Naresh Tikait, Sh. Dariyab Singh, Sh. Dharmendra Malik and Sh. Raju Ahalawat from whose openness in sharing their memories, thoughts and archives of BKU and the issues facing farmer of the region, this dissertation has benefitted immensely.

During my stay in the Institute while working towards this dissertation, I have accumulated several debts. The constant support extended by Sharath sir (Sh. Sharath Kumar Rao) and Anjali madam (Smt. G S Anjali) in the FPM Office is one such debt. Their abiding and empathetic concern has made this journey less lonely for lot of us, and certainly myself. The staff at the hostel, especially Krishnamurthy sir, Rajamma madam and Jayamma madam, through their hardworking and light-hearted nature helped me realize the relative insignificance of struggles of doctoral life.

Lastly, this dissertation belongs to several other people besides me. The residents of Gangapur and Yamunapur, who welcomed me in their respective villages, accommodated me and my constant inquiries even when they sounded a bit esoteric. How I will ever be able to reciprocate their generosity is an ethical question that I have not yet been able to answer to. A special thanks is due to Sunilji, Mukeshji, Krishnaji, Masterji, Yashpalji, Ramaprasadji, Upendraji and Pramodji for inviting me to be a part of their evening *chaupal* meetings around the *hookah*. I owe several of the insights into the movement and the agrarian changes in the district of Muzaffarnagar to these discussions. I couldn't have found better collaborators to theorize about these issues with. Several arguments of the dissertation take inspiration from the heated debates that were routine during these evening sit-ins. In this sense, this dissertation is as much theirs as mine.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	13
1.1	Moore and the Peasant in History	14
1.2	India: An Expectation?	17
1.3	Emergence of ‘New’ Farmer’s Movement: The 1980s	21
1.3.1	Tamil Nadu	21
1.3.2	Maharashtra	24
1.3.3	Punjab	27
1.3.4	Karnataka	30
1.3.5	Uttar Pradesh	35
1.4	Agrarian Developments since the 1990s	38
1.4.1	The Unmaking of the National Agricultural Policy	38
1.4.2	Post-1990 decline of the movements	41
1.4.3	Public Development Expenditure in Rural Areas	48
1.4.4	Capital Formation in Agriculture	51
1.4.5	Income of Agricultural Households	53
1.5	Literature Review	56
1.6	Theoretical Approach of the Study	74
2	Research Questions and Plan of Study	81
2.1	A Brief Note on Terminology	84
3	Agrarian Change in Muzaffarnagar: 1840-1985	85
3.1	Muzaffarnagar: Profile	88
3.2	The Colonial Period	90
3.2.1	Land Revenue System in Muzaffarnagar	90
3.2.2	Evolution of Agrarian Structure of Muzaffarnagar	93

3.2.3	Canal Irrigation and Agrarian Change	103
3.2.4	Changes in the Social Framework of Agriculture: 1840-1940	111
3.2.5	Divergence between West and the East of United Provinces	118
3.3	Post-Colonial Agrarian Developments	120
3.3.1	Impact of the Land Reforms (1950-63)	121
3.3.2	Green Revolution and its impact (1965-1985)	128
3.4	Divergence between Western UP and other regions	139
4	BKU Phenomenon: The Rise (1986-1989)	143
4.1	The Beginnings	144
4.1.1	Shamli Agitation (1987)	145
4.2	The Rise	149
4.2.1	Meerut Agitation (1988)	149
4.2.2	Delhi Siege (1988)	161
4.2.3	Bhopa Agitation (1989)	165
4.3	The National Farmers' Movement	173
4.3.1	Kisan-Jawan Rally (1989)	176
4.4	Going Political	179
4.5	Support Base: Class and Caste Dimensions	180
4.6	Emergence of BKU: An Explanation	188
4.6.1	Explaining the Temporal Specificity: Why 1987?	188
4.6.2	Explaining the Spatial Specificity: Why upper <i>doab</i> ?	192
4.7	Construction of Shared Meaning, Collective identity and Action	196
5	BKU Phenomenon: The Decline (1989-96)	205
5.1	BKU and the Janata Dal regime in Uttar Pradesh	205
5.2	BKU and the Mandal Agitations	210
5.3	BKU and the Ramjanmabhumi Movement	213
5.4	BKU and The 1991 Elections	217
5.5	BKU and Globalization	227
5.6	BKU and the 1993 Assembly Elections	233
5.7	Explaining BKU's Decline: Post-Mandal Politics	249
5.8	Explaining BKU's Decline: Politicization of <i>Khaps</i>	258

6 Agrarian Transformation in Western UP: 1990-2015	265
6.1 Urbanization and its Correlates	277
6.2 Changes in the Social Framework of Agriculture: 1985-2015	284
6.3 Changing Sociology of Status and Power	293
6.4 The viability of <i>kisan</i> identity	300
7 Conclusion	303
8 Appendix A: Statistical Appendix	311
9 Appendix B: Questionnaire	329
9.1 General	329
9.2 Livestock	330
9.3 Tenancy Details	330
9.4 Hire in/Hire out of labour power/self cultivation	330
9.5 Wages	331
9.6 Migration	331
9.7 Agricultural Implements	332
9.8 Cropping Pattern and Input Use	333
9.9 Marketing Relations	333
9.10 Indebtedness	334

List of Figures

1.1	Trend in Share of Agriculture, Industry and Services in GDP	16
1.2	Trajectory of Agrarian Power (1947-2015)	17
1.3	Expenditure on Total Rural Economy as Percentage of Total Plan Expenditure	50
1.4	Trend in a) GCF in Agriculture as percentage of Total GDP; Percentage of b) Public and c) Private GCF in agriculture as percentage of Total GDP	52
1.5	Trend in Investment in Agriculture as percentage of Total and Agricultural GDP	53
1.6	Trends in Value of Industrial and Government-supplied inputs as percentage of Total Inputs at Constant Prices	69
1.7	Movement of Index of Net Barter Terms of Trade, 1965-66 to 1997-98 (Base: 1980-81)	72
1.8	A Dialectical Socio-Political Framework	80
3.1	Map of Muzaffarnagar District	89
4.1	Map showing districts and level of support for BKU after Meerut Agitation (1988)	160
4.2	Map showing districts of Western UP with level support for BKU after Bhopa agitation (1989)	171
4.3	Structural Factors and Historical Processes explaining BKU's Emergence in Upper <i>Doab</i>	194
5.1	Movement of Index of Net Barter Terms of Trade, 1952-53 to 1997-98	230
6.1	Percentage of Net Sown Area under Sugarcane in Muzaffarnagar (1980-2011)	275
6.2	Changes in Occupational Distribution in Muzaffarnagar (1961-2011)	279

List of Tables

1.1	Percentage of Workers Dependent on Agriculture (1972-73 to 2009-10)	16
1.2	Occupational Backgrounds of Lok Sabha MPs (percentage), 1952-1996	20
1.3	Share in Budgetary Expenditure (BE) of the “Rural Economy” (RE), 1950–51 to 2009–10 (at current prices)	49
1.4	Investment (Gross Capital Formation) in Agriculture (Triennial average, Rs crores in 1999-00 prices)	51
1.5	Average monthly income (Rs.) from different sources, consumption expenditure and net investment in productive assets (Rs.) per agricultural household by size class of land possessed	55
1.6	Agricultural Labourer Households	67
1.7	Rural Households, Operational Farm Holdings and Size	68
1.8	Landholdings and Operated Area	69
1.9	Estimated Marketed Surplus Ratio for various Agricultural Commodities, 1950-51 and 2001-02	71
2.1	Definitions of Class Categories	84
3.1	Changes in profitability of Agriculture in Muzaffarnagar District (1840-1924) . . .	86
3.2	Agricultural Development in Muzaffarnagar District (1827-1921)	87
3.3	Distribution of land holdings (area) across existing systems of proprietorship (1921)	95
3.4	Caste-wise distribution of ownership of land and population in Muzaffarnagar (1891-1921)	96
3.5	Changes in Proprietorship of Lands in those areas where transfers had taken place (1860-1891)	99
3.6	Distribution of area (acres) and percentage of cultivated land across various forms of tenures (1840-1921)	100
3.7	Development of Irrigation in Muzaffarnagar District (1840-1921)	103

3.8	Mode of Irrigation in Muzaffarnagar District (1860)	105
3.9	Changes in area irrigated by various sources in the <i>parganas</i> of Kali-Hindan <i>doab</i> .	108
3.10	Changes in area irrigated by various sources in the <i>parganas</i> falling in Hindan-Yamuna <i>doab</i>	109
3.11	Changes in Area (as percentage of gross cultivated area) under various crops (1840-1921)	114
3.12	Exports of wheat and sugar from Muzaffarnagar between 1881-91 (five-year averages in <i>maunds</i>)	117
3.13	Comparisons of Cropping Patterns in the eastern and Western UP: Averages of 1908-9/1909-10 crop areas in representative districts (in percentages of net cultivated area)	119
3.14	Comparisons of crop yields in representative districts of eastern and western UP: figures from Moreland's crop experiments conducted between 1896-1902 (in lbs per acre)	120
3.15	Classification of agriculturalists according to census categories (1951)	121
3.16	Distribution of Area under Cultivation across various tenures over the years	126
3.17	Percentage area under different tenures (1956-57)	127
3.18	Percentage of holdings wholly owned and self-operated in Muzaffarnagar (1970-71)	128
3.19	Distribution of Area according to different sources of irrigation (in '000 hectares) during 1954-57 and 1966-69	130
3.20	Average yield per hectare of different crops between 1954-57 and 1966-69	131
3.21	Percentage of Area Sown under Different Crops (1961-1981)	132
3.22	Changes in usage (nos.) of Various Agricultural Implements, 1951-1982	133
3.23	Effect of Land Consolidation	134
3.24	Per cropped acre value of Output, Input and Profit for various class categories . . .	135
3.25	Percentage Share of Labour Utilization (1954-57)	137
3.26	Percentage Share of Labour Utilization (1966-69)	137
3.27	Distribution of Operated Holdings across various Size Classes in Muzaffarnagar (1970-71)	138
3.28	Percentage Distribution of the Number of Holdings in various Economic Regions of Uttar Pradesh (1980-81)	140
3.29	Compound Annual Growth Rates of Output in Different Districts and Regions (1950-77)	141

3.30	Region-wise Development Indicators of Uttar Pradesh	142
4.1	Muslim Population in Districts of Western UP, 1981	159
4.2	Land Holdings and Level of Participation in 8 Villages of Meerut and Muzaffarnagar (1993)	181
4.3	Religion/Caste and Level of Participation in 5 Villages one each in Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur, Bijnore and Moradabad (1990)	184
4.4	Religion/Caste and Level of Participation in 8 villages of Meerut and Muzaffarnagar (1993)	185
4.5	Caste and Community-wise distribution of MLAs in Uttar Pradesh (in percent)	189
4.6	Region-wise Distribution of Area and Number of Holdings wholly owned and self-operated (1981)	193
4.7	Differentiation Produced by Land Tenure and Revenue Policies (1803-1892)	195
5.1	Region-wise Result of the 1991 Assembly Elections in UP	219
5.2	District-wise Results of the 1991 State Assembly Elections of Western UP	220
5.3	Incidence of Various Cognizable Offences in Muzaffarnagar District over the years	222
5.4	District-wise Results of the 1993 State Assembly Elections of Western UP	236
5.5	Caste Composition of various regions in United Provinces (1931)	251
5.6	Coalition Government in UP since 1989	252
5.7	Caste Composition of Selected UP Governments (in percent)	253
5.8	Electoral Performance of Party/Factions led by Ajit Singh	256
5.9	Seats won by various parties in Muzaffarnagar, 1985-2012	257
5.10	Seats won by various parties in Meerut, 1985-2012	258
5.11	Khap affiliation of Jat MLAs in Muzaffarnagar, 1977-2007	260
6.1	Caste-wise distribution of the households in Gangapur and no. of households in the sample from each caste group	270
6.2	Caste-wise distribution of households in Yamunapur and no. of households in the sample from each caste group	271
6.3	Land Use Classification for Gangapur and Yamunapur (2015)	273
6.4	Changes in Percentage of Gross Sown Area under Different Crops in Muzaffarnagar (1981-2012)	274
6.5	Yields (Qtls/hectare) of major crops in Muzaffarnagar	277

6.6	Percentage of Population classified as Rural and Urban in UP and Muzaffarnagar, 1961-2011	278
6.7	Growth rate of rural and urban population over the previous census year in UP and Muzaffarnagar, 1971-2011	278
6.8	Percentage of Working Population Engaged in Agriculture over various Census Years	280
6.9	Increase gap between Incomes per worker employed in Agriculture and Non Agriculture Sector, Muzaffarnagar, 2001-2011	281
6.10	Changing Structure of Landholdings in Muzaffarnagar, 1990-91 to 2010-11	282
6.11	Average Size of Land Holdings by Size Group, Muzaffarnagar, 1991-2011	283
6.12	Family Labour and Hired Labour as percentage of Total Labour Utilized by Size Group	285
6.13	Average Number of working adults per household by size class	288
8.1	State-Wise Marketed Surplus-Output Ratios	311
8.2	Comparison of Support Price for Wheat recommended by APC and that Fixed by the Government	312
8.3	Rate of return over cost for wheat cultivation in Punjab	313
8.4	Share of various heads of development in plan expenditure in Rs crore, at current prices	314
8.5	State-wise annual average share of expenditure on the "Rural Economy" (RE) in aggregate expenditure of respective States in per cent	316
8.6	Investment (Gross Capital Formation) in Agriculture (Annual average, Rs crores in 1999-00 prices)	317
8.7	Movement of Index of Net Barter Terms of Trade, 1952-53 to 1997-98 (Base: 1980-81)	319
8.8	Caste-wise distribution of population in Muzaffarnagar (1891)	320
8.9	Linear Growth Rates in Percent of Area, Production and Productivity During 1950-51 to 1970-71 (Wheat)	321
8.10	Linear Growth Rates in Percent of Area, Production and Productivity During 1965-66 to 1970-71 with 1965-66 as base year (Wheat)	322
8.11	Linear Growth Rates in Percent of Irrigated Area under Wheat in all the three zones of the State	323
8.12	District-wise Agricultural Productivity (in Rs. per hectare) in Western UP	324

8.13 District-wise Cropping Intensity in western Uttar Pradesh, 1962-65, 1970-73 and 1978-81 in percent	325
8.14 District-wise Consumption of Fertilizer (in kg/hectare) in western UP (various years)	326
8.15 Net irrigated area as a percentage of Net cultivated area (1986)	327
8.16 Sugar Mills in Muzaffarnagar and Shamli	328