

An Anthropological Insight into Farming Practices and Cultural Life of Farmers in Sarawan Village, District Faridkot, Punjab

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Abstract : Farming is one of the most influential traditions which started around 10000 BC and has revolutionized human civilization. It is believed that farming originated at a separate location. Thus it has a great impact on local culture, which in turn gave rise to diversified farming practices. Farming activities are influenced by the culture of a particular region or community as local people have their own knowledge and belief system about soil and crops. With the inception of the Green Revolution, 'a high tech machinery model' in Punjab, various traditional farming methods and techniques changed. The present research concentrates on the local knowledge of farmers and local farming systems from an anthropological perspective. In view of the prevailing agrarian crisis in Punjab, this research is focused on farmer's experiences and their perception regarding farming practices. Thus an attempt has to be made to focus on the local knowledge, perception, and experience of farmers for eco-friendly and sustainable agricultural development. Farmers voices are used to understand the relationship between farming practices and socio-cultural life of farmers in Faridkot district, Punjab. The research aims to comprehend the nature of changes taking place in the socio-cultural life of people with the development of capitalism and agricultural modernization. The study is based on qualitative methods of ethnography in Sarawan village of Faridkot District. Inferences drawn from in-depth case studies collected from 60 agricultural households lead to the concept of the process of diffusion, innovation, and adoption of farming technology, a variety of crops and the dissemination of agricultural skills regarding various cultural farming practices. The data is based on random sampling; the respondents were both males and females above the age of 18 years to attain a holistic understanding across the generations. A Quasi-participant observation related to lifestyle, the standard of living, and various farming practices performed by them were done. Narratives derived from the fieldwork depicts that farmers usually oppose the restrictions imposed by the government on certain farming practices, especially ban on stubble burning. This paper presents the narratives of farmers regarding the dissemination of awareness about the use of new varieties of seeds, technology, fertilizers, pesticides, etc. The study reveals that farming systems have developed in ways reflecting the activities and choices of farmers influenced by environmental, socio-cultural, economic, and political situations. Modern farming practices have forced small farmers into debt as farmers feel pride in buying new machinery. It has also led to the loss of work culture and excessive use of drugs among youngsters. Even laborers did not want to work on the land with cultivating farmers primarily for social and political reasons. Due to lack of proper marketing of crops, there is a continuum of the wheat-rice cycle instead of crop diversification in Punjab. Change in the farming system also affects the social structure of society. Agricultural modernization has commercialized the socio-cultural relations in Punjab and is slowly urbanizing the rural landscape revolutionizing the traditional social relations to capitalistic relations.

Keywords : agricultural modernization, capitalism, farming practices, narratives

Conference Title : ICSACBP 2019 : International Conference on Social Anthropology, Cultural Behavior and Practices

Conference Location : Vancouver, Canada

Conference Dates : August 07-08, 2019