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Farmers’ and academia’s views”

Integrating livelihood, and socioecological perspectives to understand rural change: a case study in Odisha, India

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Abstract

Farmers as the major socioeconomic actors in rural areas are needed to continue their life in a sustainable manner. To uncover how farmers select and shape their livelihoods and which driving forces influence them, and how livelihood change interplays particularly with broader socioecological dynamics is a crucial research topic especially in the Global South, and need more research on this area to achieve the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals. In India, which has been rapidly developed recently, livelihoods in rural areas have been reported diversified (Majumdar 2020), and therefore variety of rural situations emerges in different places.

Given the above situation, the research aims at examination of livelihoods of farm households on a case study from Odisha, India, by identifying and explaining livelihood strategies and their dynamics in their socio-ecological context in the past years.

The research plans to combine the following conceptual frameworks or perspectives. A primary analytical framework is the livelihood perspective as it is an established analytical perspective used to uncover how farmers came through their livelihood pathways as micro agency (Scoones, 2009). The geographical area of the case study was determined on a socioecological basis - the targeted farmers located in the same irrigation system, thereby the socioecological aspects of rural change is focused, adopting the Socioecological Systems (SES) framework (Colding & Barthel, 2019). To analyse more psychologically specific types of drivers for explaining their livelihood strategies, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (e.g., Ajzen, 1991) is also applied.

The method of the research uses semi-structured interviews with farmers in order to shed light on causal explanation for livelihoods, strategies dynamics, decision-making mechanism. Analysis employs standard techniques for processing and analysing qualitative data, Analysis also plans to combine with maps to locate the area, and direct observation of the rural settings. The result will argue nuanced situations of farmers of decision-making of their livelihoods with integration of psychological factors as well as socioecological dynamism.

Keywords: Global South, India, livelihood, psychological factors, rural development, socio-ecological framework