

ABSTRACT

This thesis delves into the multifaceted dynamics of agrarian transformations in the Himalayan region of Kashmir, India, within the broader context of agrarian studies in the global South. It contextualizes the significance of these transformations amidst global economic shifts, policy changes, and technological advancements, emphasizing the unique challenges smallholder farmers face. Drawing upon diverse intellectual traditions, including new interpretations of the agrarian question, the thesis navigates through the theoretical landscape of agrarian political economy to frame its inquiry. It seeks to answer the central research question: How do contemporary agricultural transformation processes intersect and shape smallholder farming dynamics in rural Kashmir? The empirical investigation unfolds through comprehensive fieldwork in Kashmir, employing mixed methods tools to trace the changing agrarian landscape. The findings reveal the drivers behind the rapid adoption of commercial farming practices and underscore the significant role of public extension services in promoting new initiatives like high-density plantation schemes among small-scale farmers. The thesis emphasizes how state policies, extension services, and institutional support are pivotal in facilitating these transformations while exposing the challenges of extractivist practices to smallholder livelihoods and land rights. Furthermore, it sheds light on the socio-economic implications of agrarian extractivism, including shifts in land use patterns, concentration of landownership, and displacement of smallholders. Examining the nexus between global trade policies and local agricultural practices elucidates the vulnerabilities faced by small-scale farmers amidst evolving agrarian landscapes. In response to these challenges, the thesis suggests targeted policy interventions that prioritize the rights and well-being of smallholders and promote sustainable agricultural practices. By offering valuable insights into the complexities of agrarian transitions in the region, this research contributes to a broader understanding of agrarian developments and informs strategies for building resilient agricultural systems in mountain economies.

Keywords: Agrarian transformations, Smallholder farming dynamics, State intervention, Agrarian extractivism