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REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-56618

Title: Distribution of Agricultural Landholdings in India – With Special Reference to Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision.....

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓		
Techn. Quality		✓		
Clarity	✓			
Significance		✓		

Reviewer Name: Faheem Abdul Muneeb

Reviewer's Comment

This manuscript examines the distribution and structural changes in agricultural landholdings in India, with particular focus on the states of Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. The study analyzes patterns of ownership and operational holdings using data from National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) rounds spanning several decades. By comparing the agrarian structures of the two states, the paper seeks to understand how demographic pressures, land fragmentation, and institutional factors have influenced agricultural land distribution.

The topic addressed in the manuscript is significant within the field of agrarian studies and rural development. Land distribution remains a critical factor influencing agricultural productivity, rural inequality, and socio-economic development in India. The comparative approach adopted in the study allows for an examination of regional variations in agrarian structure and provides insights into the dynamics shaping landholding patterns in two economically and geographically distinct states.

Overall, the study contributes to the literature on agrarian change by presenting empirical evidence on the increasing dominance of marginal and small landholdings and the evolving patterns of land ownership and operational control in Indian agriculture.

REVIEWER'S REPORT**Scientific Contribution and Empirical Strength**

The manuscript provides useful empirical insights into the transformation of agrarian structures in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh over several decades. The analysis demonstrates a clear trend toward increasing fragmentation of agricultural landholdings, primarily driven by population growth and inheritance-based subdivision of land.

The data presented in Table 1 (page 6) indicates that marginal landholdings have increased significantly over time in both states. In Uttar Pradesh, marginal holdings rose from approximately 65.6 percent in 1971–72 to 82.4 percent in 2017–18, while in Tamil Nadu the proportion remained consistently high, reaching 73.8 percent in the most recent period. These findings illustrate the growing prevalence of small-scale farming and the gradual decline of medium and large landholdings.

The study also examines operational holdings, as presented in Table 2 (page 8), which shows that marginal operational holdings increased substantially in both states. For instance, in Uttar Pradesh marginal operational holdings grew from 49.8 percent in 1971–72 to 84.4 percent in 2017–18, indicating increasing fragmentation of cultivable land. Similarly, in Tamil Nadu the share increased from 60.1 percent to 78.9 percent during the same period.

Another important dimension of the analysis is the use of the Gini coefficient to measure inequality in land distribution. As illustrated in Table 3 (page 10), the Gini values fluctuate over time but remain relatively high, indicating persistent inequality in land ownership despite the increase in marginal holdings. The data show that by 2017–18 the Gini coefficient rose again to 0.589 in Uttar Pradesh and 0.542 in Tamil Nadu, reflecting renewed concentration of land in fewer hands.

The graphical representations presented on pages 6–11 help illustrate the changing distribution of land ownership and operational holdings across different size classes. These figures effectively support the empirical analysis and provide a clearer visualization of long-term trends in agrarian structure.

However, while the empirical data are extensive and well presented, the analytical discussion could be expanded further by connecting these findings more explicitly to broader debates in agrarian political economy and rural transformation.

Methodology and Analytical Approach

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The study is based on secondary data derived primarily from NSSO surveys covering the period from 1970–71 to 2017–18. The use of multiple rounds of nationally representative data provides a strong empirical foundation for analyzing long-term changes in land distribution.

The methodological approach includes comparative statistical analysis of ownership and operational landholdings across different size classes. The study also employs the Gini coefficient as a measure of inequality in land distribution, which is a widely accepted indicator in agrarian economics.

The use of tables and graphical representations enhances the clarity of the empirical findings and allows readers to easily identify trends in land fragmentation and ownership patterns.

Nevertheless, the methodology section could be elaborated further to clarify the analytical procedures used to process and interpret the NSSO data. Providing additional explanation regarding the construction of indicators, statistical comparisons between states, and any limitations of the data would strengthen the methodological rigor of the research.

Structure, Style, and Presentation

The manuscript follows a clear and logical academic structure, beginning with an introduction to the agrarian context of India and the importance of land distribution in agricultural development. The subsequent sections provide historical background, empirical analysis, and discussion of findings.

The presentation of statistical tables and charts enhances the clarity of the analysis. For example, the charts on pages 6–9 visually depict the changing distribution of land ownership and operational holdings, while Table 4 (page 11) summarizes the mean distribution of landholdings across size classes in the two states.

However, several minor improvements could enhance the overall readability of the manuscript. Some sections contain lengthy paragraphs that could be reorganized for greater clarity. Additionally, minor grammatical and formatting inconsistencies should be addressed during revision.

Final Recommendation

Overall, the manuscript addresses an important topic in agrarian studies by examining long-term changes in the distribution of agricultural landholdings in India. The study provides valuable empirical evidence

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on land fragmentation, inequality in land distribution, and the growing dominance of marginal farmers in both Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

With minor revisions focusing on strengthening the analytical discussion, clarifying methodological details, and improving language and presentation, the manuscript would make a useful contribution to research on agricultural development and rural transformation.

Decision: Accepted with minor revisions.