

Rethinking revolutions: soyabean, choupals, and the changing countryside in Central India

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Abstrak

This book is an ethnographic study of the processes of agrarian change in the Malwa region of central India over the last forty years, beginning with the introduction of soyabean cultivation in the 1970s, known as the yellow revolution, and new information technology based markets in the 2000s, called the choupals. Examining the claims of prosperity and empowerment of farmers through the yellow revolution and the information revolution, this book challenges the notion that science and technology can bring unparalleled economic growth and prosperity to rural India. It argues that both techno-managerial ways of understanding and evaluating agriculture as well as those which emphasize the lenses of caste, class, and gender are inadequate in capturing the diverse processes at work in shaping the lives of rural people. Highlighting the role of the environment and technology, not in deterministic ways, but as non-human forces working upon and with human agents, it suggests that both the social and the technical must be considered together to understand the specific trajectories of agrarian change and the possibilities of rural transformation. Drawing upon science and technology studies (STS), together with critical scholarship on the political economy of development and agrarian change, this book shows how people and things have reconfigured each other in producing the world they live in, thus contributing towards new theoretical framings of agriculture and rural transformation.