Social Sciences – Sociology and Anthropology 2013



"I've tried to do social anthropology at three levels." Basically research and teaching related to contemporary issues in India, but I've also tried to take some of this research to the field. I've tried to see how people who are not in academics engage with and understand some of these issues. I'm also now trying to set up a new initiative, which is an alternative learning program for rural youth."

Aninhalli R. Vasavi Senior Fellow, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi

- M.A. in Sociology from the University of Delhi
- M.Phil. in Sociology from the University of Delhi
- Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from Michigan State University

Prof. Aninhalli R. Vasavi's wide-ranging, distinctive and pioneering research spans four fields: agrarian society as the intersection of economy, culture and environment; school education in varied regional contexts; moral economy of globalized, glamorized occupations like the IT industry, and interface between (western) social sciences and (vernacular) intellectuals in India. Her two most important contributions enrich our understanding of farmer suicides and rural schooling.

Studying the effects of globalization on agrarian societies



Mahatma Gandhi once said that India lives in her villages. India is still primarily an agrarian society. Over the past few decades, however, more people have moved to cities and semi-urban areas, and society and the economy have changed rapidly.



Traditional ways of life have been replaced by new social experiences. Burdens that were earlier shared in a community are now increasingly borne by individuals. This has changed the landscape of the country in previously unimagined ways.



industrialization have also changed people's aspirations. Prof. Aninhalli R. Vasavi has been conducting research in a wide range of areas including how globalization affects agrarian societies. She has delved deeply into the phenomenon of farmer suicides that has led to the unexpected revelation that it is not just debt and other financial pressures that lead to these suicides but it is also farmers' experience of social and cultural change. This change in the social order has forced farmers to manage their problems by themselves, without the traditional community support.



Prof. Vasavi has also studied emerging new global economies such as the Information Technology industry and its significance. The concept of moral economy looks at economics as tied to moral behavior and its links to power, dominance and cultural norms.



In addition to her work on agrarian societies, Prof. Vasavi also examines school education and its impact in various regional contexts. Her work helps us understand the functioning and culture of schools as institutions especially in rural areas. Her work could help decide how disadvantaged students can be provided with better schooling options.



notable for the various research methodologies she employs which include documentary film making and classical ethnography. She has also drawn on various Indian languages as part of her research. She believes that the biggest incentive for young social science researchers is the opportunity that it provides to be deeply involved and engaged with the societies that they themselves live in.