Abstract

In the land of five rivers water is growing scarce. Since long, technology in use for harnessing groundwater has undergone many changes and it has affected other segments of agrarian society. The proposed study intends to investigate the role of developments in water technology in shaping agrarian social relations. By exploring this terrain a modest contribution is made in this regard. The study based on primary data collected through extensive fieldwork spread over three socio-cultural regions of Punjab was selected from three villages namely, Bal Labe Darya, Bhajjal and Lehal Kalan. An effort was made to include cases from all classes of peasants. Care was also taken to include those who owned wells/technology individually as well as shared. In all 19 cases were studied.

The present study has been divided into seven chapters. First chapter is on Introduction and the second covers the review of literature. Third one discusses the Green Revolution in Punjab. Fourth describes the village profiles and the case studies. Fifth chapter is on emerging patters in each region. The sixth chapter entitled ‘Technology and Changing Social Relations: A Sociological Analysis’ is about the findings of the study. The last chapter concludes the study.

Results show that with developments in water technology ‘Utthan-baithan di sanj khatam ho gayi’. Adoption of new technology has weakened the social ties. New water pump technology enhanced the social status of the owner. It has become a prized commodity in the agricultural community. The findings reveal that traditional system of sharing of goods and services, be it within the family or outside, changed with diffusion of new technology. Emergence of informal water market is an indicator of commoditization of social relations. Cooperation and harmony characteristic of lihaji system are disappearing. Self interest has replaced altruism. ‘Cash-for-water’ has become the order of the day. Hence with the diffusion of new irrigation technology, social relations got commercialized and estranged both within and outside the family and the community.