Are we not peasants too? Land rights and women’s claims in India

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Abstract
This edition of SEEDS explores the critical elements in securing effective and independent land rights for women in South Asia. The author presents a range of cooperative strategies for enabling women to retain and cultivate the land and shows how micro-credit and other programs can be redirected to increase the amount and productivity of land women control. Recognizing that new policies and political will are required to foster and sustain such experiments, the author ends with a summary of how women are organizing to place women’s access to land at the center of national and global agendas.

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60 years of fighting Indian poverty. India’s government is well aware that poverty is a giant barrier to overcome if it is to fully develop the nation. Consistent poverty reduction in India has failed, especially in largely agricultural states such as Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, because investments in rural literacy, education, technology and infrastructure were insubstantial. This explains the structure of the Indian economy: as agriculture evolves, it frees labor for manufacturing and commercial industries, but since this hasn’t happened the country has focused on the services sector instead, which employs far fewer people. And thus rural poverty in India has subsisted up until today while at the same time the services sector accounts...