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.

Comments
Issue no. 21 of SEEDS, a pamphlet series developed to provide information about innovative and practical program ideas to address the economic roles and needs of low-income women.

Recommended Citation

Are We Not Peasants Too? Land Rights and Women's Claims in India. by Bina Agarwal. About the Author. Bina Agarwal is Professor of Economics at the Institute of Economic Growth, University of Delhi, and author of the award-winning book A Field of One's Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia. where progressive social movements and legal reforms have recognized them, such as in India. To tackle such obstacles, Professor Agarwal 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. Women's rights are the rights and entitlements claimed for women and girls worldwide, and formed the basis for the women's rights movement in the nineteenth century and feminist movement during the 20th century. In some countries, these rights are institutionalized or supported by law, local custom, and behavior, whereas in others they are ignored and suppressed. They differ from broader notions of human rights through claims of an inherent historical and traditional bias against the exercise of Land Reforms before Independence: The permanent Settlement of 1793 created a class of superior proprietors who usurped the unwritten but age-old rights of tenants in their lands. In some States, tenants possessed permanent and transferable rights and it was not necessary to confer further rights upon them. These included Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Bhopal and Vindhya Pradesh. This is well brought out by the fact that while official documents claimed total abolition of Zamindaris, in U.P. alone. 10% of the families were still holding something like 50% of the land in 1955. While this had a favourable effect on agricultural production, land ceilings did not solve the problem of land-less peasants or those with too little land. (c) Tenancy Legislation