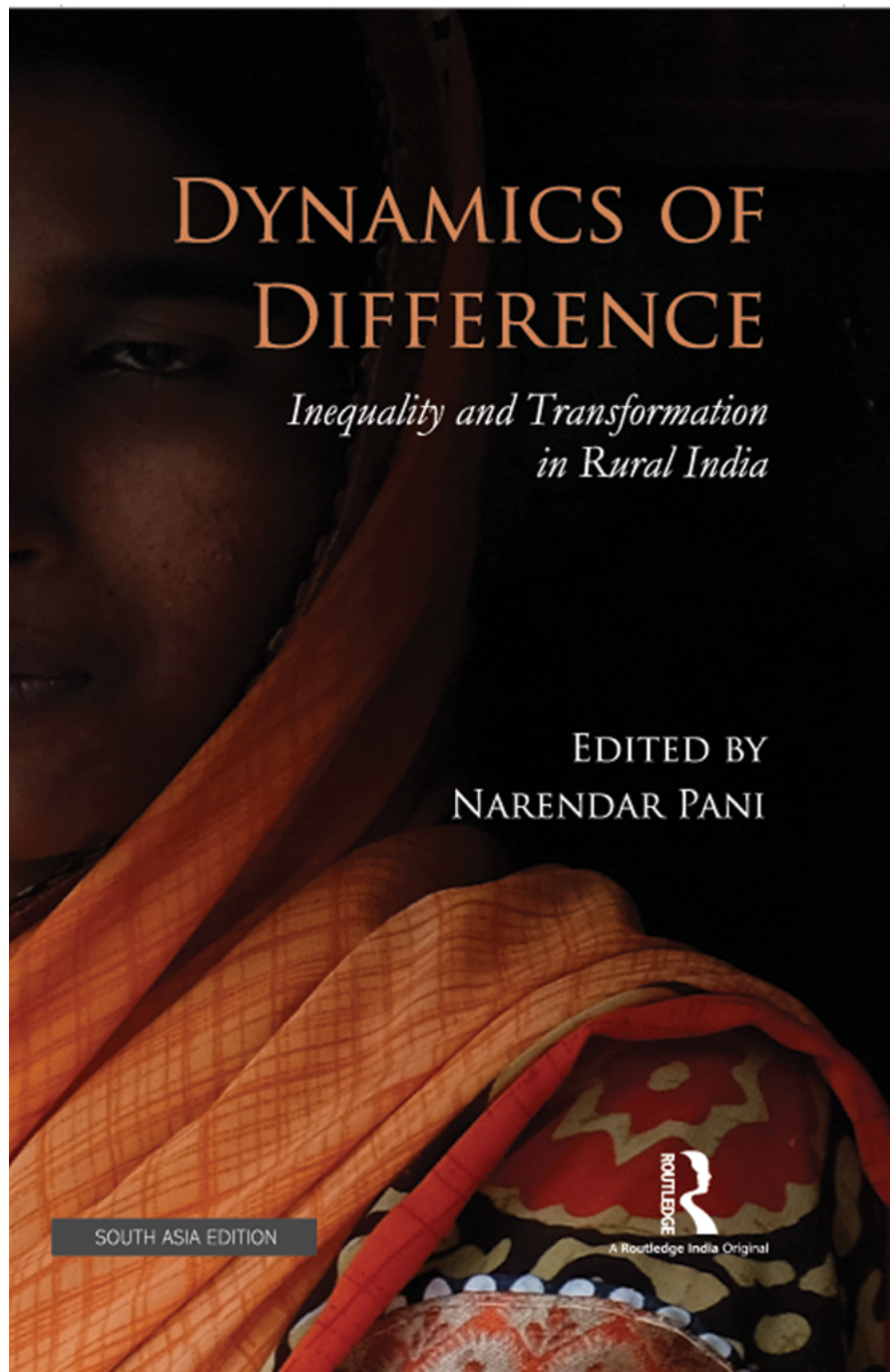


Book Launch Report



Public Affairs Centre (PAC)



National Institute of
Advanced Studies (NIAS)

Dynamics of Difference: Inequality and Transformation in Rural India

Designed By



Editor



Dr. Narendar Pani

Professor and Dean, School of
Social Sciences, Head, Inequality and
Human Development
Programme NIAS

Day and Date:

Saturday, May 14, 2022

Time:

4.30 to 6.30 p.m.

Venue:

IAS Officers Association, Infantry
Road



— Welcome

Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander, Head of Training, Resource Mobilisation, Policy Engagement and Communication, PAC, introduced Public Affairs Centre and National Institute of Advanced Studies. The Public Affairs Centre (PAC) and The National Institute of Advanced Studies co-organised a Book Launch for the new release—‘Dynamics of Difference: Inequality and Transformation in Rural India’ edited by Dr Narendar Pani, Professor and Dean, School

of Social Sciences, Head, Inequality and Human Development Programme NIAS and authored by several researchers from NIAS. The event took place on Saturday, May 14, 2022 at the IAS Officers Association Bengaluru. PAC began the event with a warm welcome to all panelists and the audience present and proceeded to invite Dr Shailesh Nayak, Director, NIAS to deliver the Welcome and Introductory Remarks.



-- Introductory Remarks

Dr Shailesh Nayak, shared his findings on social issues pertaining to hunger, inequality and poverty through the lens of science and technology. He reiterated the sustained necessity of environmental protection since the Stockholm Conference and emphasised aspects of inequalities in society that fuel environmental degradation.



Overview

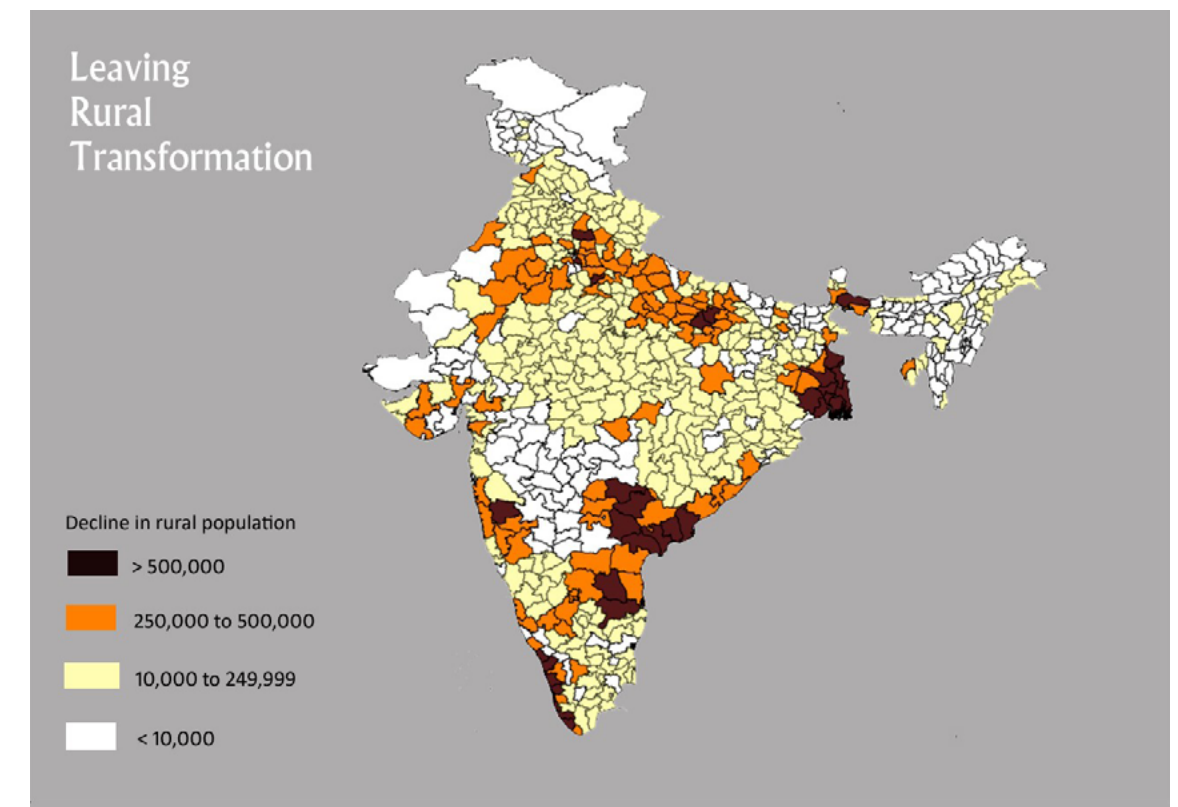
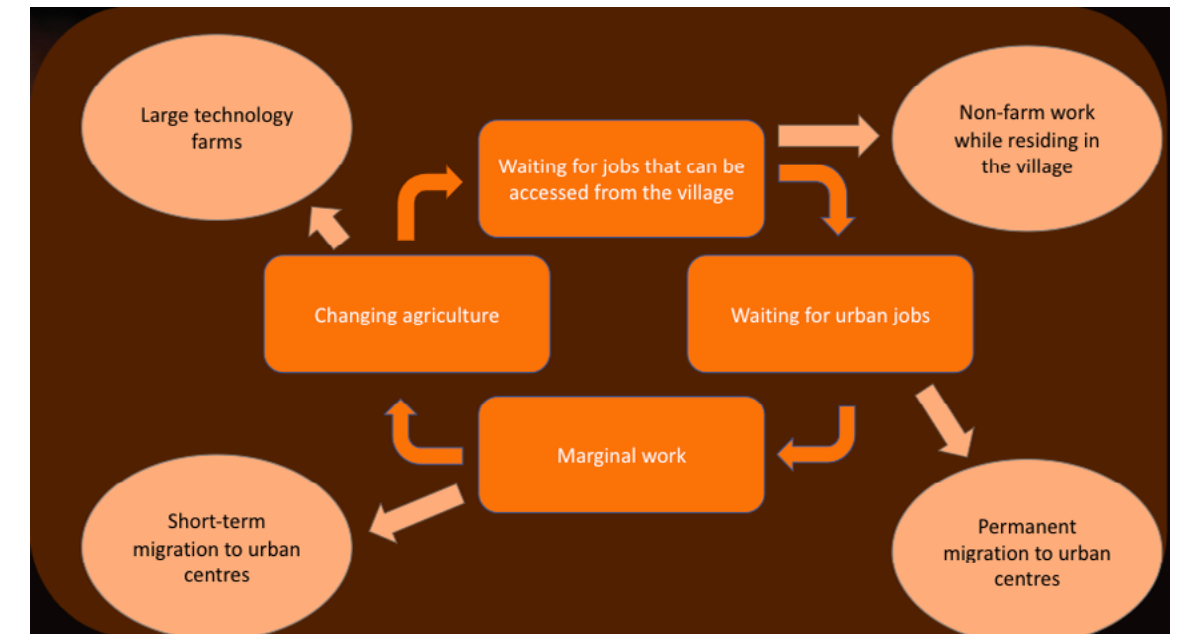


Dr Narendar Pani, the editor of the book, provided an overview of the book by stressing on the core aim of the book — to go beyond the traditional approach of studying inequality as a measurement and develop a direct methodology to examine the existing heterogeneity in society. He introduced the importance of understanding inequality, its role in transforming society, how it emerges in the process and its relevance in mainstream discussions.

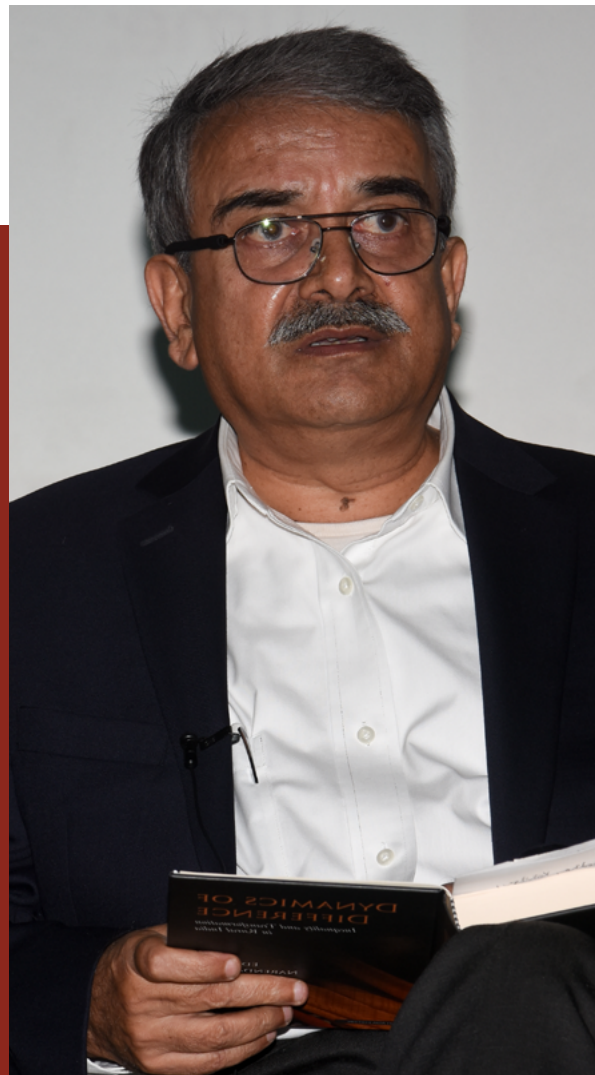
A look into the book

The intricacies of inequality were initially described through intergenerational and regional inequalities. As large tech farms emerge, people move out of villages to urban areas for better employment opportunities. This may be because they are in search of jobs which causes permanent migration or as marginal labour that results in short term migration. The decline in rural population is vast in states like Kerala, West Bengal and parts of Telangana (greater than 500,000) while the share of marginal workers is highest in Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar (greater than 40%).

Additionally, an increase in non-farm main workers is observed in Tamil Nadu and Gujarat (5,000 - 40,000) while a similar increase in main agriculture workers is seen in Maharashtra (greater than 40,000). These inequalities spill over to consist of inequalities within villages and households, all internalised in the form of personalised inequality over time. Most notably, the case of land fragmentation and its consequent reduction in land holding area per person given in the talk, is vital to understand the current cycle of migration that aims to escape the cycle of inequality by opting to be seasonal marginal labourers and go back to their villages during times of harvest.



In fact, a higher number of people moving back to their homes in rural areas is witnessed in Karnataka owing to a dearth of opportunities in the capital city, Bengaluru. His extensive study into the nature of social transformation and the change in narratives accompanied with the growing stance of victimhood brought to perspective the interlinked nature of different forms of inequality. He also mentioned how in India, economic disparity and gender discrimination prove to be major fuels for observable inequality in society which in itself is regionally varied. The gender gap in the workforce leaving rural areas and those comprising marginal workers remains at 66.3% and 71.4% respectively. However, the gap in education almost stabilises at levels greater than 55% irrespective of the situation. Thus making understanding social transformation not just limited to a reduction of factors like poverty, hunger and institutional mismanagement but impossible without addressing the presence of multiple inequalities.



To keep up the momentum of discussion, **G Gurucharan**, Director PAC, who was acting as the moderator for the event keenly spoke about the importance of the study and his takeaways on the same in light of the current structures of necessity in society. He began with acknowledging the unintentionally placed unequal panel that consisted of only men and maintained the importance of female participation and representation throughout the talk that followed. He spoke of the rational and attitudinal response to inequality that the book addresses and brought to light how processes of transformation affect migration and marginalisation of labour away from theories of classical economics. He branded the same as being essential to witness an epistemic humility that stems from the perspective of an experienced victim and not a scholar to understand the sheer precariousness that

vulnerabilities spell in one's escape from the inequalities they face. Further, he emphasised on the contribution of the book into understanding the dynamics of inequality in both variety and scope in case of its tangible and intangible elements through the rigorous methodology it employs.

In a vision for the future, **Dr D Rajasekhar**, Director ISEC, followed the talk by highlighting not just an ever increasing economic gap but one of stark contrast in access to basic health, education and other basic resources. While he mentioned that education continues to be the one factor bringing about positive transformation that leads to the least economic distress, in our way forward multiple inter and intra personal inequalities accompanied with intra group inequality must be contemplated to bring about a just and equitable future.



To better understand the perspective of policy makers and the Government, **Sri K Jairaj**, IAS (Retd), Former Additional Chief Secretary (GOK) took to his experiences with Anti-Poverty Programmes, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme and Small Farmers Development Agency to raise important questions pertaining to the efficiency of government policies and practices in addressing and understanding inequality in light of present facts and figures. If at all the



government’s idea of development being the creation of jobs in urban areas and a greater push for the secondary sector proved to be counterproductive and led to excess rural migration and increased pressure on agriculture was also pondered upon. He laid importance on the necessity of studying how far schemes like price floors, days of guaranteed minimum employment and even the latest trend of direct benefit provision go into truly reaching its beneficiaries and its future accommodation in policies. While he mentioned that the state could celebrate its success in the reduction of social inequalities and absolute inequalities, its real challenge ahead rests in the reduction of relative inequality that has continued to persist over many years.

The talk was followed by an engrossing question-answer session with the panelists into the depths of the matter, especially into the relevance of accepted practices that later formed institutions of operation and the true idea of inequality. The questions ranged from the perspective of witnessed realities, the mindset behind policy making decisions and existing and upcoming schemes in the face of the dynamic needs of society. As the launch was concluded with a vote of thanks, every member in the audience was left with an increasingly eager desire to read the book and be able to partake in the comprehension of the developing nature of the social fabric in India.

Annexure

Annexure 1



and



Co-organise a Book Launch

Dynamics of Difference: Inequality and Transformation in Rural India

Edited by: Dr. Narendar Pani

Professor and Dean, School of Social Sciences, Head, Inequality and Human Development Programme NIAS

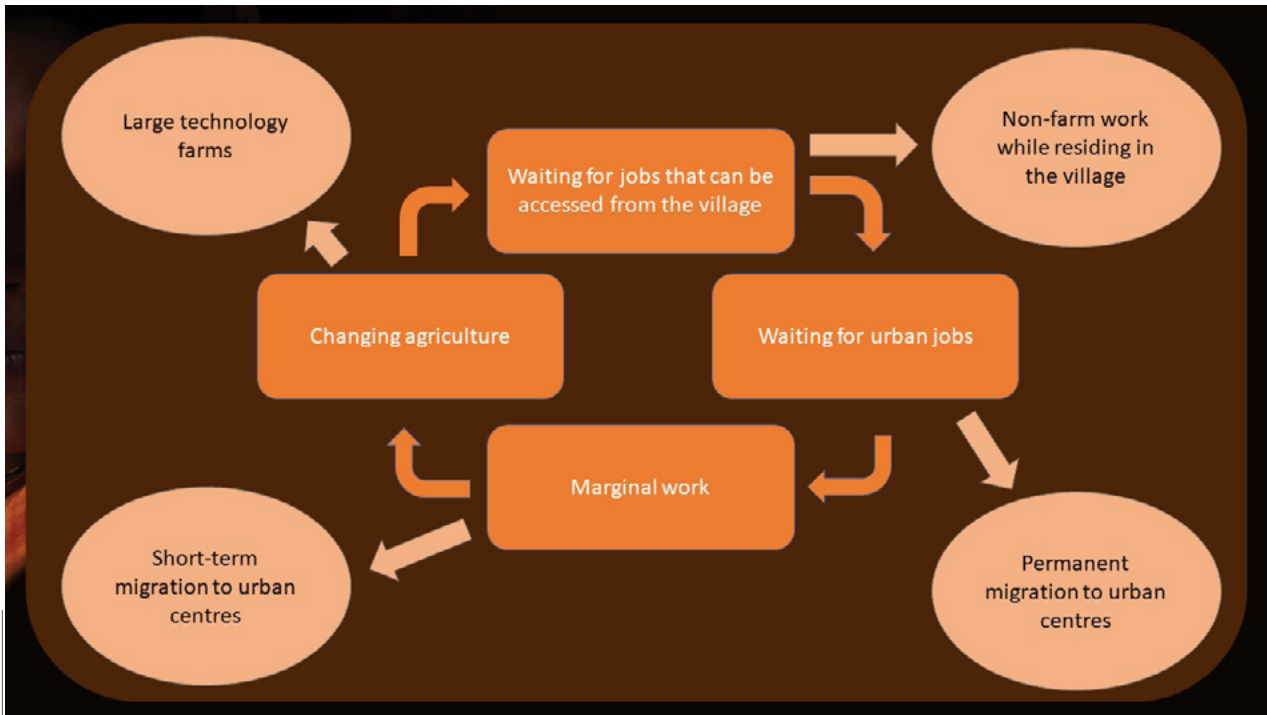
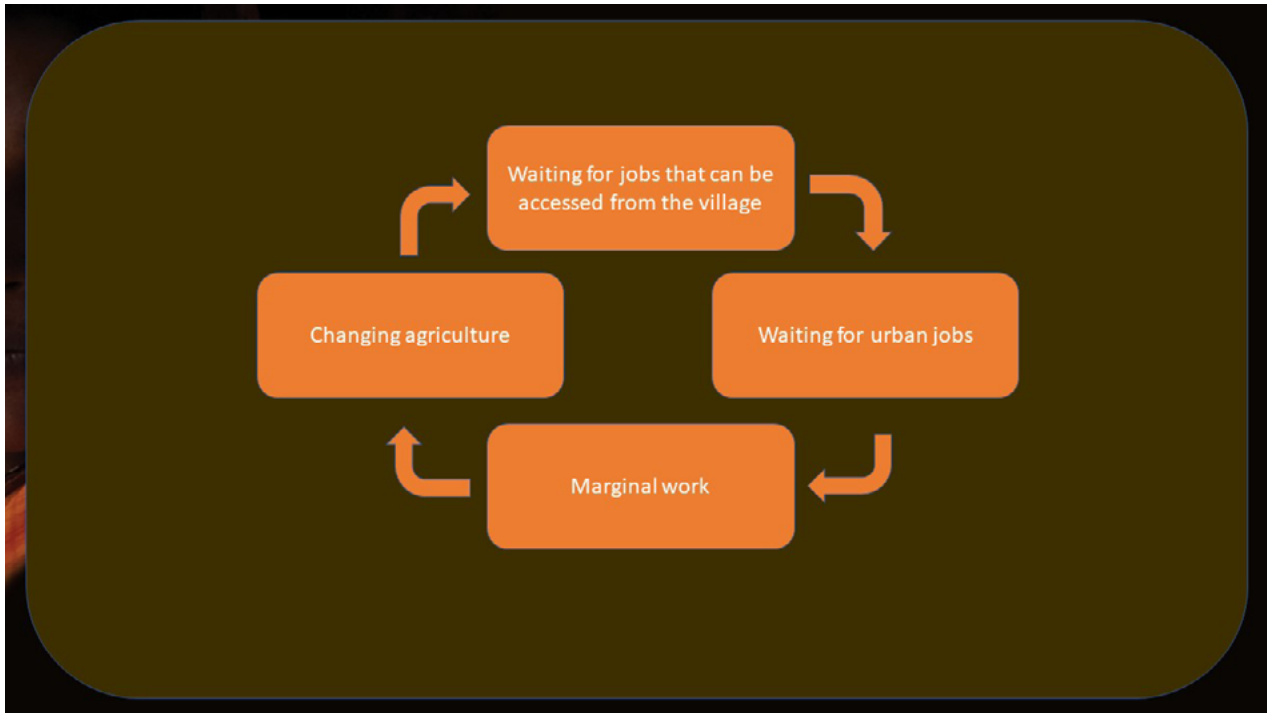
Saturday, May 14, 2022
(4.30 to 6.00 p.m.)

IAS Officers Association, Infantry Road, Bengaluru

Time	Description	Owner
4.15-4.30 p.m.	Registration and Coffee/tea and Snacks	
4.30-4.40 p.m.	Welcome and Introductory Remarks	Dr Shailesh Nayak, Director, NIAS
4.40- 5.00 p. m.	Presentation on the Book	Dr. Narendar Pani, Editor of the Book
5.00-5.45 p.m.	Session by Panelists – Moderator: G. Gurucharan, Director PAC	
Panelist 1	Dr. D Rajasekhar, Director, Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC)	
Panelist 2	Sri. K. Jairaj, IAS (Retd.), Former Additional Chief Secretary (GOK)	
Comments from Moderator	G. Gurucharan	
5.45-6.00 p.m.	Q & A	
Vote of Thanks		

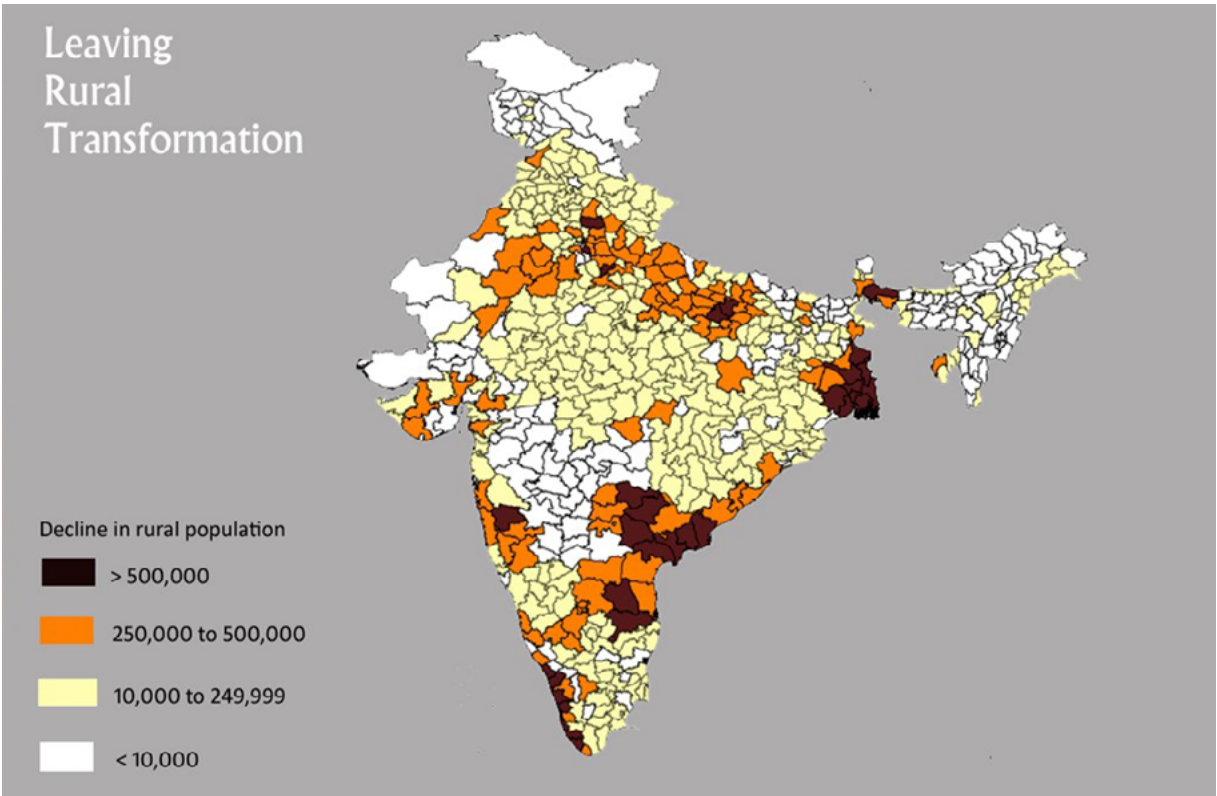
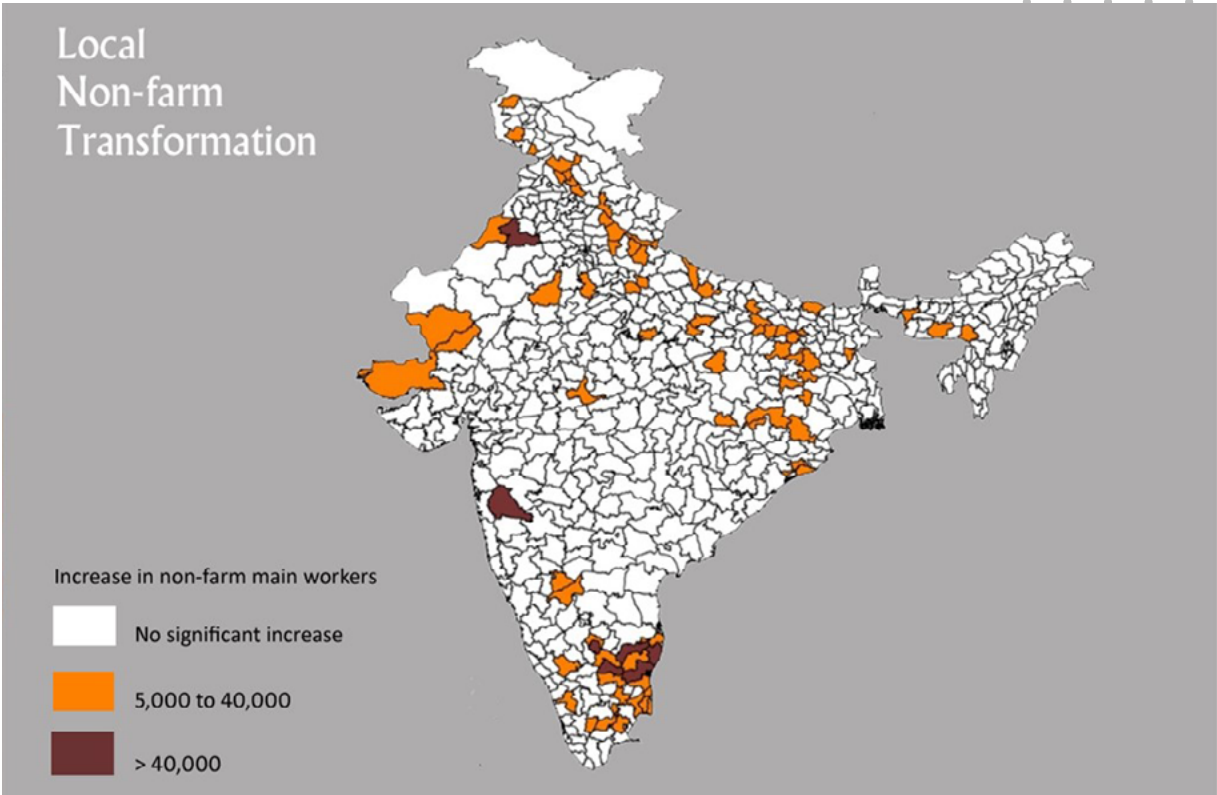
Annexure 2

Intergenerational inequality

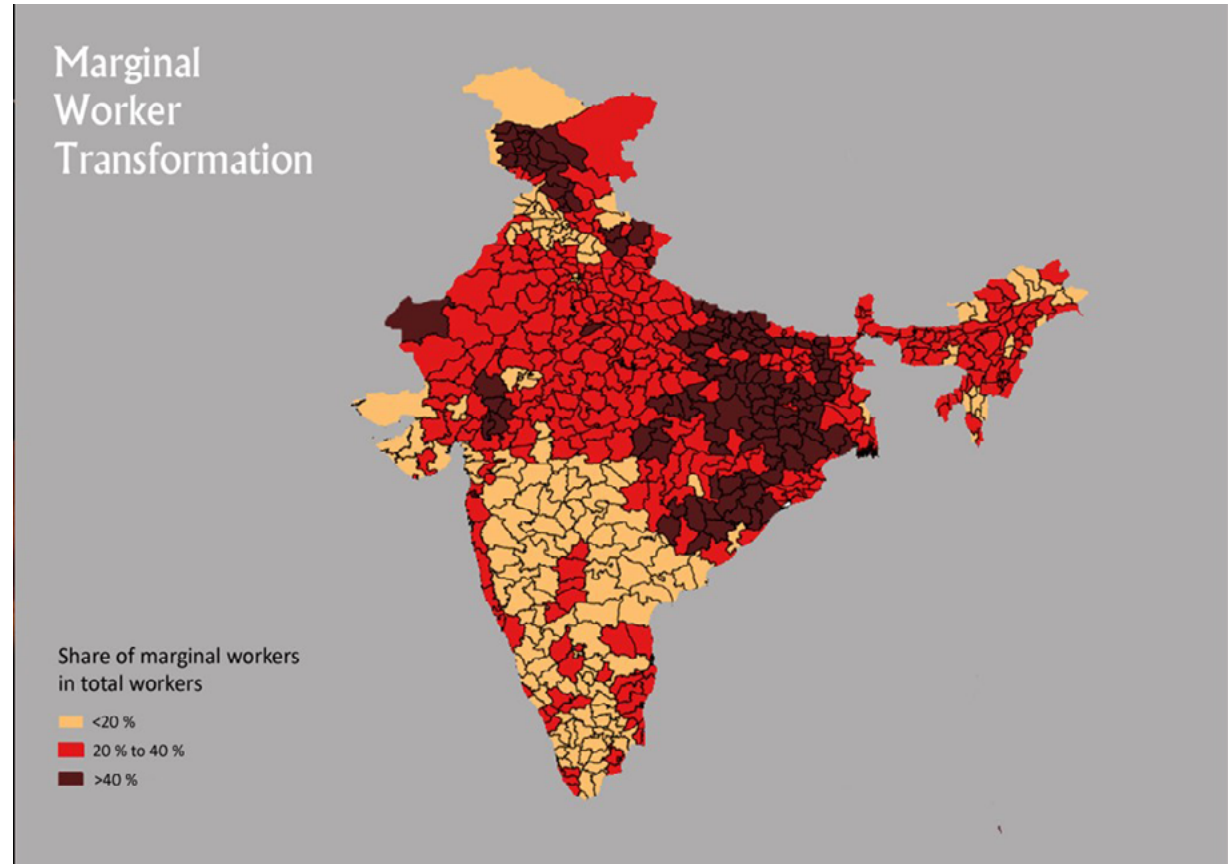


As large tech farms emerge, people move out of villages to urban areas for better employment opportunities. This may be in search of jobs that cause permanent migration or as marginal labour that results in short term migration.

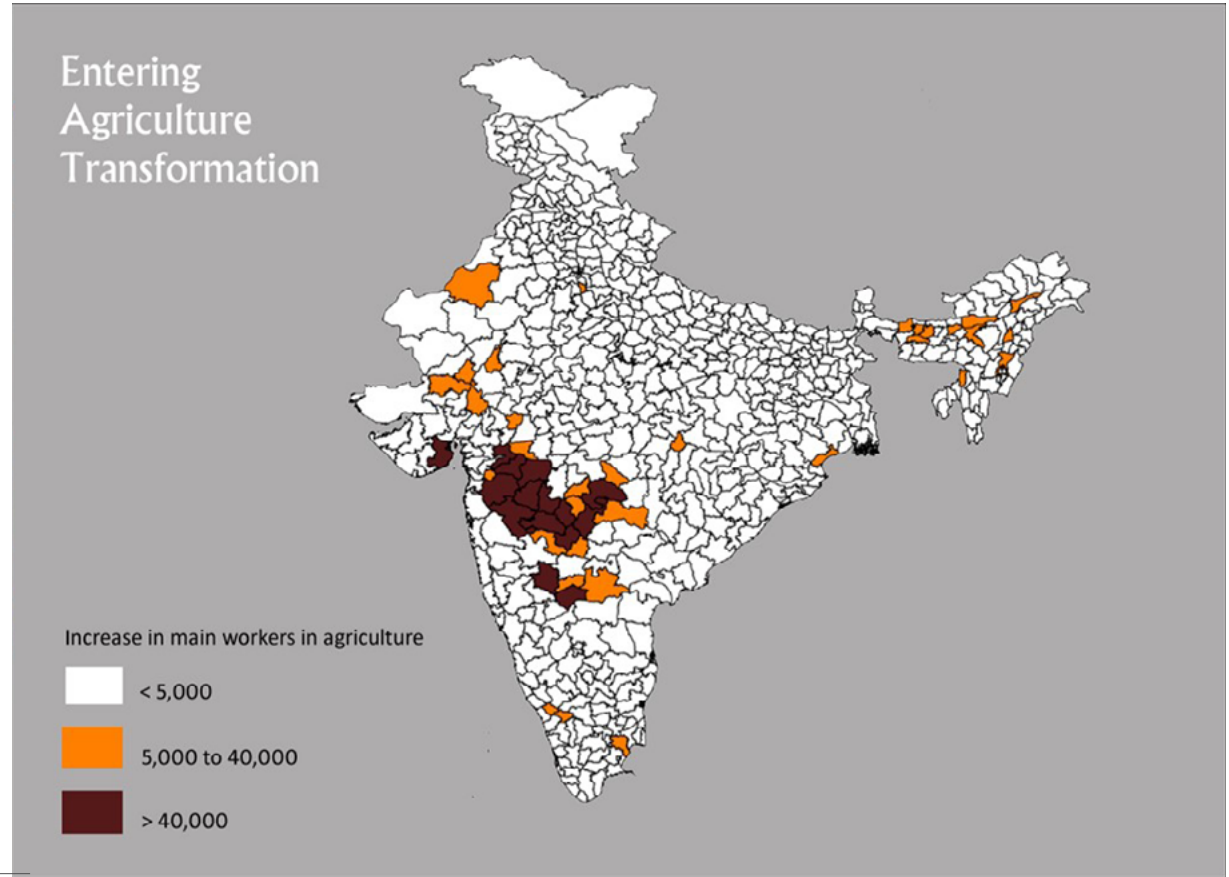
Regional inequality



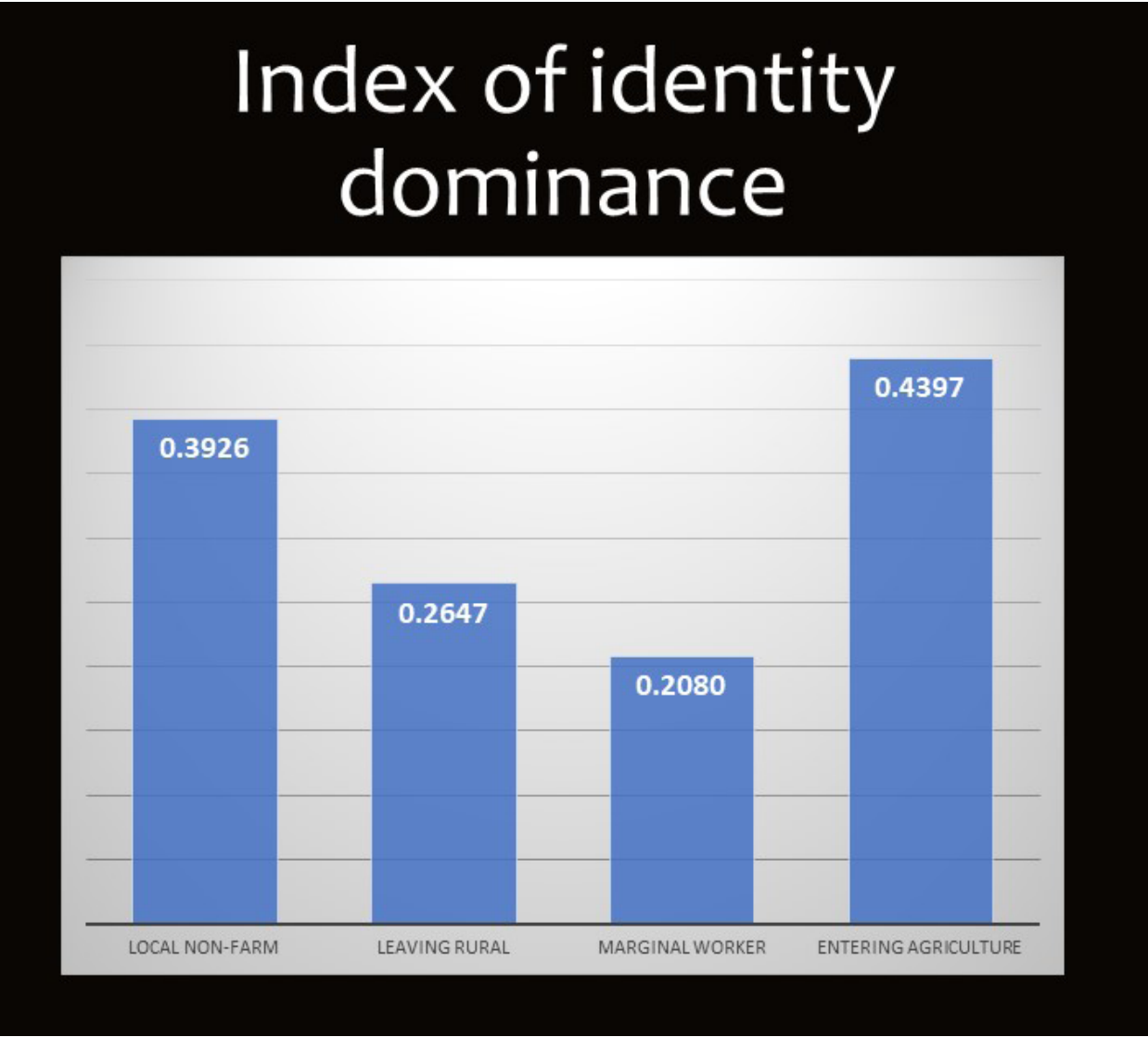
The decline in rural population is vast in states like Kerala, West Bengal and parts of Telangana (greater than 500,000). Additionally, an increase in non-farm main workers is observed in Tamil Nadu and Gujarat (5,000 - 40,000)



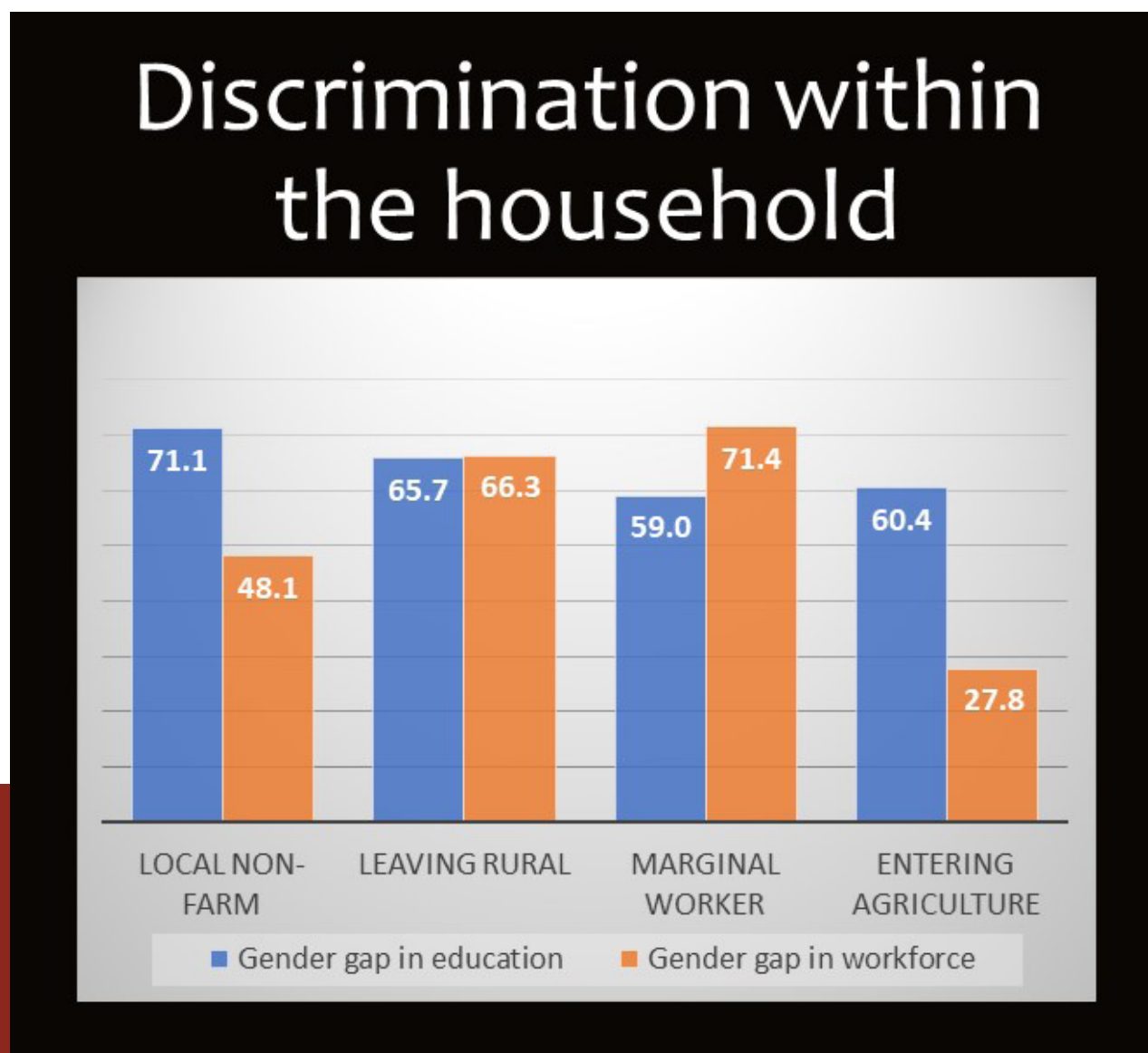
The share of marginal workers is highest in Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar (greater than 40%).



Inequality of dominance within the village

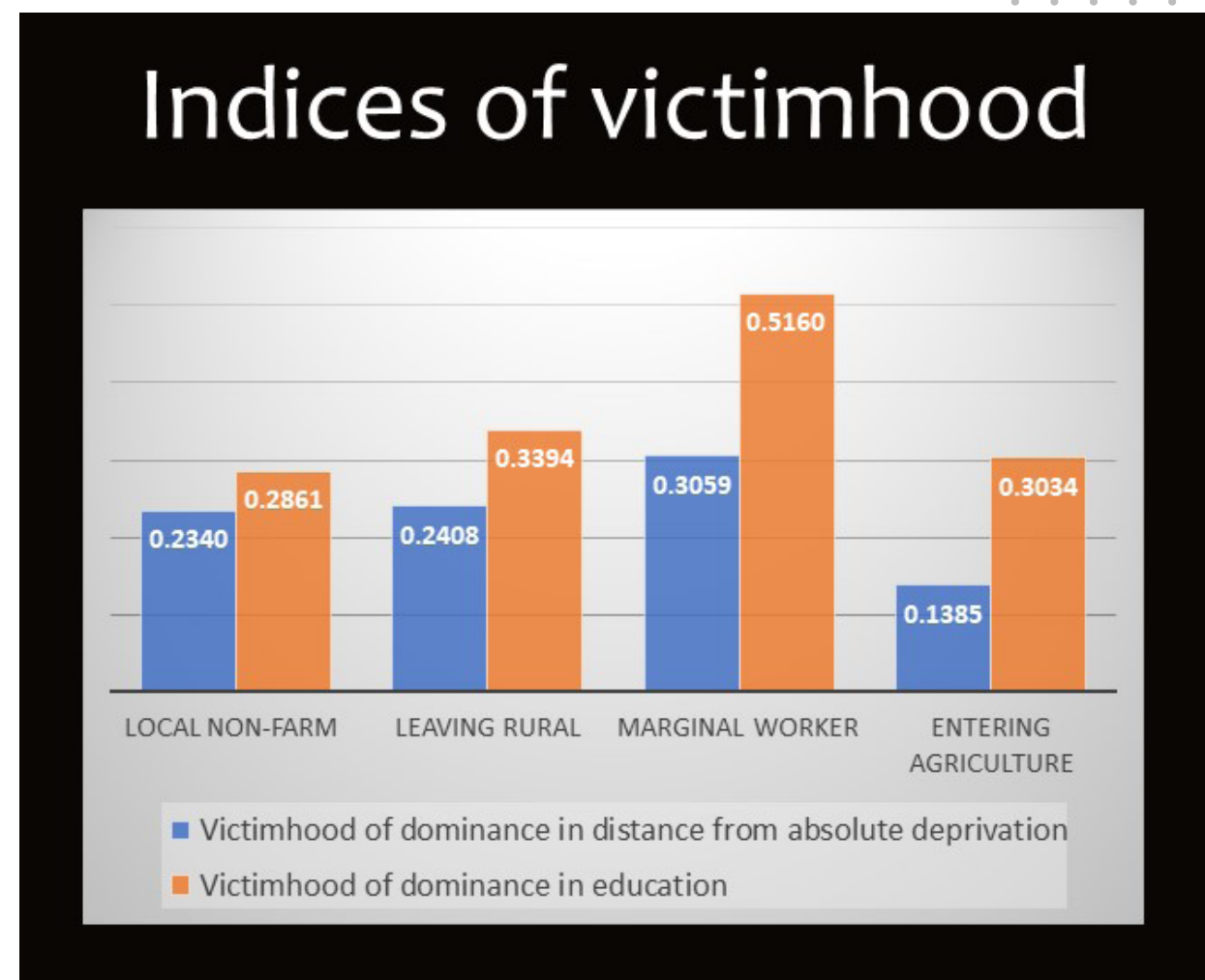


Inequality within the household



The gender gap in the workforce leaving rural areas and those comprising marginal workers remains at 66.3% and 71.4% respectively. However, the gap in education almost stabilises at levels greater than 55% irrespective of the situation

Personalised inequality



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