

National Seminar on Tradition, Technology and Transformation: Paradigms of Social Change in Rural India (7 & 8 January, 2026)



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**Indian Council of
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**M.P. Institute of
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(Autonomous Institute of
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About the Institute

The Madhya Pradesh Institute of Social Science Research, located in Ujjain, was founded in 1983 and serves as a leading research institution supported by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, the Ministry of Education, Government of India, and the Ministry of Higher Education, Government of Madhya Pradesh.

MPISSR focuses on research, evaluation, monitoring, and training concerning the issues of social, economic, cultural, administrative, and civic dimensions. The core activities of MPISSR address challenges and issues pertinent to Madhya Pradesh and its neighbouring states. Recognising the significance and relevance of researchable areas, MPISSR has identified several thematic areas to guide its research endeavours: Studies in Panchayat Raj and Rural Development; Studies in Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes; Studies in Democracy and Electoral Behaviour; Studies in Social Justice and Human Rights; Studies in Education; Gender Studies; Studies in Environment; Studies in Information Technology and Society; Studies in New Economic Policy and Society, and Studies related to Corporate Social Responsibility.

MPISSR caters to the needs of policy planners, academia, government officials, legislators, non-governmental organisations, students, teachers, doctoral and post-doctoral scholars, other research institutions, and national and international organisations. The Institute, since its inception, has been carrying out systemic studies in the form of research projects on issues of topical importance. Most of these studies are commissioned/ sponsored by the various ministries/agencies of central and state governments, national and international organisations. Full academic freedom and high professional quality are the hallmarks of the Institute's research works and environment.

MPISSR strives to make a strong impact on society through the dissemination of the results of its research studies. Since its inception, the Institute has completed more than 200 studies on wide-ranging topics in the social sciences. These cover applied and policy-related studies on various economic, social, political, and administrative issues of Madhya Pradesh and adjoining states. The faculty members of the Institute have published about 40 books and also 250 articles in national-level refereed journals. Besides these, the faculty has been regularly contributing to leading newspapers to stimulate serious public debate and to create public opinion on many contemporary issues.

MPISSR has been publishing two biannual journals, one in English (Madhya Pradesh Journal of Social Sciences) (UGC-CARE Listed-Group-I) since 1995, and the other in Hindi (Madhya Pradesh Samajik Vigyan Anusandhan Journal) (UGC-CARE Listed-Group-I) since 2003. Both journals disseminate views, debates, research findings, and book reviews related to contemporary social science issues. MPISSR has been regularly organising several training and capacity-building programmes and workshops for research scholars and faculty members of social science disciplines related to research methodology. MPISSR has been organising seminars/conferences regularly on contemporary issues. The faculty members have been engaged in national and international seminars to disseminate the findings of their research work among the academic fraternity.

The Institute is overseen by a Governing Body, which serves as the highest decision-making and executive authority. This body comprises 17 members, including distinguished social scientists, representatives from ICSSR, and government officials from Madhya Pradesh. In addition to this, the Institute has a General Body and a Finance and Administration Committee. The academic initiatives are organised and monitored through the IQAC of the Institute.



About the Seminar

Rural India stands at a pivotal crossroads where technological advancement, structural transformation, and entrenched traditions converge to shape the trajectory of social change. While agriculture remains central to rural livelihoods, its declining share in employment and GDP, coupled with persistent challenges of low productivity, climate vulnerability, and social inequities, underscores the urgency for innovative pathways of development. The recent proliferation of digital agriculture, artificial intelligence, geospatial tools, and ICT-enabled services signals a paradigm shift in the rural economy. However, technology alone cannot guarantee transformation; its success is contingent on addressing structural barriers of access, affordability, digital literacy, and institutional capacity.

This seminar proposes to interrogate the critical interface between technological innovations and social change. It seeks to unpack how digital and climate-smart interventions can be embedded within broader processes of social inclusion, governance reform, and participatory development. By situating the discussion at the intersection of sociology, economics, and development studies, the seminar aims to fill an important research gap: the insufficient understanding of how technological transitions interact with social hierarchies, community structures, and local agency in shaping rural outcomes. Drawing on national policy frameworks as well as case studies of public-private partnerships and grassroots innovations, the seminar will critically evaluate both achievements and limitations of India's rural transformation agenda. It will further identify the theoretical and practical implications of balancing modernity with tradition, efficiency with equity, and global opportunities with local realities.

By fostering interdisciplinary dialogue, the seminar aspires to generate fresh insights into the paradigms of rural change, offering conceptual clarity and policy directions for building resilient, inclusive, and future-ready rural economies in the 21st century. Rural India is undergoing a profound transformation, shaped by technological innovations, policy interventions, and evolving socio-economic realities. While agriculture continues to sustain nearly half of the rural workforce, its share in national output has steadily declined, raising concerns over productivity, sustainability, and inclusivity. At the same time, the rise of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, precision farming, and geospatial analytics offers unprecedented opportunities to redefine the contours of rural development. These innovations, however, cannot operate in isolation. Their effectiveness depends upon social structures, equity of access, cultural acceptance, and institutional support.

The seminar seeks to critically examine how technology and tradition interact in the context of rural transformation. It will investigate the role of digital and climate-smart interventions in reshaping agriculture, livelihoods, and community life while foregrounding the challenges of inequality, affordability, and cultural adaptation. By situating rural change within the broader paradigms of sustainability, inclusivity, and resilience, the seminar aims to provide conceptual clarity and policy insights into India's rural development trajectory. India's rural transformation has been propelled by landmark government initiatives such as the Digital Agriculture Mission, e-NAM, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), BharatNet, and skill development schemes. These interventions have expanded connectivity, enhanced agricultural productivity, and diversified rural livelihoods. Yet, persistent barriers remain. A significant digital divide separates rural and urban India, with gaps in infrastructure, internet access, and digital literacy. Smallholder farmers often lack the financial capacity to adopt advanced technologies such as drones, IoT devices, or AI-driven solutions. Moreover, entrenched social hierarchies and cultural traditions influence patterns of adoption, creating unequal outcomes across gender, caste, and class lines.

This duality-opportunity and exclusion-necessitates a deeper inquiry into the paradigms of social change in rural India. A critical question emerges: Can technology serve as an equalizing force, or will it exacerbate existing inequalities unless complemented by deliberate social and institutional reforms? The seminar will thus act as a platform to bridge academic analysis, policy frameworks, and grassroots perspectives. It will bring together scholars, policymakers, development practitioners, and community representatives to explore how India can navigate the tensions between technology, tradition, and transformation in shaping its rural future.



Thematic Tracks and Sub-Themes of the Seminar

Track	Themes	Sub-themes
1.	Technology, Innovation, and Agriculture	Technological Innovations in Agriculture, Biotechnology and the Future of Food Systems, Geospatial Technologies and Precision Agriculture, Climate-Smart Agriculture and Sustainability, Cooperative Farming Models and Collective Action.
2.	Digital Transformation and Rural Inclusion	Digital Divide and Rural Connectivity, Rural Women's Empowerment and Digital Inclusion, Youth, Skills, and Rural Employment, Education, Digital Literacy, and Capacity Building, Data Privacy, Ethics, and Farmer Rights.
3.	Economy, Livelihoods, and Entrepreneurship	Livelihood Diversification and Rural Entrepreneurship, Financial Inclusion and Digital Payment Systems, Market Access, Value Chains, and Agri-Business Models, Social Entrepreneurship and Impact Investment in Rural Areas, Role of Self-Help Groups and Cooperatives.
4.	Society, Tradition, and Social Change	Tradition, Culture, and Social Change, Indigenous Knowledge and Local Innovation, Social Inequalities, Caste, and Access to Technology, Migration, Urban Linkages, and Rural Transformation, Media, Communication, and Information Dissemination in Rural Areas.
5.	Governance, Institutions, and Policy	Governance, Institutions, and Policy Frameworks, Public-Private Partnerships in Rural Transformation, Role of Civil Society and NGOs in Rural Development, Local Governance, Panchayati Raj, and Rural Transformation, Environmental Governance and Natural Resource Management.
6.	Sustainability, Resilience, and Global Perspectives	Health, Nutrition, and Technology in Rural Communities, Rural Infrastructure: Transport, Energy, and Digital Access, Food Security, Nutrition, and Inclusive Growth, Resilience Building in the Face of Climate Change and Disasters, Global Experiences and Comparative Perspectives.

The expected outcomes of the seminar will be - A comprehensive understanding of the interlinkages between technology, tradition, and transformation in rural India; Identification of best practices and innovative models for inclusive rural development; Policy recommendations for bridging digital divides, ensuring equitable access, and promoting sustainability; An interdisciplinary research agenda linking social sciences, technology studies, and policy frameworks, and Strengthened collaboration among academia, policymakers, practitioners, and rural communities.

The transformation of rural India is not merely a technological question but a profound social challenge. While innovations in digital agriculture, AI, and geospatial systems hold immense promise, their success depends on inclusivity, cultural sensitivity, and institutional strength. This seminar will critically engage with the paradoxes of rural change-modernity and tradition, opportunity and exclusion, growth and sustainability. By fostering dialogue across disciplines and stakeholders, it will contribute to reimagining India's rural economy as resilient, equitable, and future-ready.

We invite academicians/scholars to participate in the **National Seminar on Tradition, Technology and Transformation: Paradigms of Social Change in Rural India**. We propose to bring out an edited volume of the selected papers presented in the seminar from a reputed publisher. MPISSR will reimburse travel costs and will arrange local hospitality for the invited delegates.

Submission of FULL PAPER (5000-7000 words)
along with ABSTRACT (100-200 words)

December 8, 2025

All communications may please be sent to: mailboxmpissr@gmail.com

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