

Lyndon B Johnson Presidency and India's Green Revolution

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Abstract

The historiography of American role in India's "green revolution" is deep and enduring. Historians previously considered the nature of American pressure brought on India through the former's food aid policies in the 1960s and the role that such persuasion played in India's march towards HYV (high yield variety seeds) agriculture. Recent accounts of global histories of the green revolution have introduced new elements into the historiography, which characterizes U.S.-India contacts in the field of agriculture as politically innocent. Over the last decade or so such a perspective has assumed the status of a revisionist account. This paper challenges that narrative by re-materializing the history of U.S. food aid and gesturing towards the harnessing of political role by certain interest groups connected with agriculture in the United States. Using new material from the archives of the United States Department of Agriculture and in Missouri, Kansas, and Texas, this paper re-analyses the motives of interest groups that saw potential for specific interventions in India. It disaggregates those groups among legislators, the representatives of trade groups and corporations, and farming lobbies to assess their respective motives in India in order to highlight efforts made at seeking political outreach and economic advantage.

Speaker Profile:

Prakash Kumar is an Associate Professor of History and Asian Studies at Pennsylvania State University. He is a specialist of the history of South Asia, history of science, and Development Studies. His interest lies in the agro-ecological history of colonial and postcolonial India. Kumar is currently writing a book on the place of American expertise in agricultural and rural projects of development in India in the twentieth century and is the author of *Indigo Plantations and Science in Colonial India* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).