



## FARMER'S PROTEST 2020

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### Abstract

At the end of September 2020, the government of India presented three bills in farming sector. These were Farmer produce trade and commerce (promotion and facilitation act), Farmers (empowerment and protection) agreement on price assurance and Farm services act & Essential commodities (Amendment act). The farmers of nation started protest at Delhi Border for revealing these bills. The government said with the help of these bills, the farmer's income will become double and the farmer said, the government is giving their land and crop in the hand of private corporates (Ambani and Adani's).

**Keywords:** - Farmers, protest, 2020, produce trade, commerce, agreement, bill.

### I. Position of Indian farmers

India is called the land of farmers. The Indian farmer is a living idol of India. It would not be wrong to say that the farmer of India is the backbone of the economy. The condition of the farmers is mostly terrible. About 80% of farmers in India are marginal category.

Farmers in India have small land holdings so they are not able to meet their primary needs. This is identified in the year 2014, during the time of agriculture census in India. The census also revealed that 2/3 of the land holding in the country is less than one hectare. According to the World Bank, India's more than 40 % workforce is engaged in agriculture.

In 2017, a government committee reported that incomes for farmers would need to grow by 10.4% each year from 2015 to double by 2022. It was also said in the report that the government needed to invest 6.39bn rupees in the agricultural sector.

In 2011 & 12, total investment stood at 8.5%. It rose to 8.6% in 2013-14 and then fell, staying more or less flat at between 6% and 7% since 2015.

Furthermore, one another issue is to commit 'suicide by farmers' due to heavy loans on their lands. During 1995 and 2015, India reported a total 296,438 Indian farmer's committed suicide and in 2019, 10,281 people who worked in farming sector committed suicide.

On 5 June 2020, amidst growing concern over the seismic fall down of the economy and widen of the Covid-19 pandemic, the center government promulgated three ordinances relating to farmer sector.

### II. Three agriculture bills

In 2017, the central government released the model farming acts. A committee consisting of seven chief ministers was set up in July 2019. By that committee, they were discussing the implementation of bills.

#### What is there in these bills

##### 1. Farmer' produce trade and commerce (promotion and facilitation act)

According to union government, this bill will give freedom to farmers to sell their crops / product on any price and anywhere in India. They can sell online also.

##### 2. Farmers (empowerment and protection) agreement on price assurance and farm services act.

With this bill, the government said that farmers can sell their product to companies through contracts. The government said that they will have written contracts which will give protection to farmers. In this way, the farmers can enter into "written agreements" with anyone in the nation. They can sell their product for a certain period after executing written agreements with the companies. In this way, they can set the price of crops, the standards and qualities and other legalities can mention beforehand.

### 3. Essential commodities (Amendment act)

Essential commodities Act was first brought in decades back in 1955. This bill basically controls the production, supply and the distribution of certain commodities that are known to be essential. In this way, we said that if a product come under this bill for instance a crop or drug then companies and supermarkets cannot hoard these items when these items are in shortage. They cannot artificially increase the prices etc. the new amendment has removed food stuff like potato, cereals, pulses, edible oilseeds and oils, from the list of essential commodities which means unless, there is a dire circumstances like a war or famine or an extraordinary price rise, these commodities will not be considered under the essential commodities list.

### III. Protest by farmers

This protest started in September 2020 when the Prime minister of the nation, Narendra Modi, passed the new farmer's produce Trade and Commission Act in Lok Sabha.

Protests against new agriculture laws proposed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi started in several states including Punjab and Haryana. Farmers are fighting against three laws passed in September, 2020. These protests were started by Kisan Sangharsh Co-ordination committee. In Punjab, The Farmers had launched The 'Rail Roko' Movement before they decided to take their agitation to Delhi.

On 26 November, 2020 Farmers of Punjab and Haryana reached border where Haryana and Delhi police stopped them. The Standoff between police and farmers continued For few days with more farmers arriving at the Delhi border.

Farmers from all across the country have been protesting outside the Delhi. As we know, more than half of India's working population comes from the agricultural sector. Farmer arrived by tractors and on foot in Delhi, where they blocked roads and set up makeshift camps.

Some farmers slept on the road or in their tractors, and several places of worship offered protesters food. They said that it affects common man's pantry, so it is not the protest of farmers, it's the protest of common man. Common man also supported the farmer protest. In Punjab, people of Punjab give their full support to farmers. The youth wrote the slogan in their bikes and car "No Farmers No Food".

The Agitation has been joined by Farmers from Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand. People of the world also supported farmers of India. People of world have been protesting to show their support and stand with the farmers of India. This is the protest of the people who feed all of us. India is the world's largest producer, consumer and exporter of spices; according to spices board India, ministry of commerce and industry, government of India. Farmers sat in Covid period also.

### IV. Government's point of view about these bills

Thousands of farmers have been camping at Delhi border since 26 November 2020. They are demanding a repeal of three farm laws. On the other hand, the government said that the new farmer's bills will do twice farmer's profits. Even the prime minister of nation, Narendra Modi, said that we promised in 2016 for introducing these bills and now it's time to fulfill the same.

With the passing of the bills, the Union government has planned to liberalize farming with the short-term goal of doubling-up their current average monthly income. The government aspires to deregulate the sector and offer farmers the freedom of alternative to trade their produce without restraint.

These farmer bills will allow farmers through greater market access and extended opportunities for profitable outcomes. By eliminating the APMC control, the bills do away with the old challenge of middlemen. The bills could also lead to an open bazaar; enable better price finding, supply string efficiencies and active market linkages.

The liberalization of the market will introduce business and private savings in the manufacturing. These funds can reinforce infrastructure, improve tools and modernize the sector. The open-market arrangement also allows the farmers to sell their manufacture online.

The increase in competition can potentially work to increase prices for farmers who are at present at the pity of middlemen. In addition to these profits, the accessibility of agreement farming provides farmers with a price guarantee instead of subjecting them to market uncertainty. There is also the possibility of firms providing farmers with input material as a part of contracts, thereby reducing input costs.

By amending the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, the government does away with stockpiling limits on several supplies. In doing so, the government intends to stabilize prices by heavy supply chain efficiencies through entrance to supply.

These bills have the possibility to create a similar impact as the New Economic Policy of 1991. By loosening the hold of APMCs, the government risks the opportunity of farmers receiving prices below the minimum support price (MSP). A similar law was passed in Bihar in 2006 when the state abolished APMCs. A recent study conducted by the National Council for Applied Economic Research reported an increased volatility in grain prices.

According to government of India, these bills grant farmers more freedoms by dismantling the APMC and allowing them to sell their crops to anybody for any price and anywhere in the nation. Now, the attitude as well as stand of government is clear that they are not going to change anything in these bills because already it has been termed as masterstroke.

The Government said that farmers will be free to choose their markets and the MSP System will continue. However, The Farmers argued that the Corporates will have an upper hand in setting the price and in resolving disputes in Court. While the Government said that the mandis will become more competitive. Farmers said that the entire mandi system will eventually collapse.

As the agitation amplified drawing support from opposition parties, Former allies of The ruling BJP as well as from various celebrities, The Central Government held several rounds of talks with the representatives of the

Farmers' groups emphasizing that it may consider some amendments, However, the impasse continues as farmers insist on a complete repeal of all three farm laws.

#### V. Farmers point of view about these bills

Farmers believe that the three Farm Laws are "Pro corporate and "Anti-Farmers". They demand that the three farm laws must be withdrawal which deregulates the sale of their crops. The Farmers unions could also settle for a legal assurance that the MSP System will continue. The country's farmers disagree with these bills and arguing that it actually leaves them more vulnerable than even before, as it allows major corporations to drive down the costs of certain crops by the time and moreover, while crafting and proposing these bills, the government got even no input from farmer's community.

#### VI. Ugly side of protest

National highway 09 which is also known as "Tikro Border" has been shut for the past eight months with alleged farmers protesting against farm laws. The day Ichhadhari 'protestor' Yogendra Yadav in an opinion piece claimed that the farmer protest is protesting the idea of India," as sting operation by ZEE Hindustan show the ugly side of the protest.

In a shocking revelation, a Zee Hindustan reporter disguised as a farmer unearthed rampant sex trade taking place at the protesting sites. It is shameful thing about the protest. The sex worker revealed that she regularly gets customers from protesting site. She is sitting just outside the bushes on Rohatak Highway.

After this sting operation, Haryana police takes cognizance of the matter. SHO Vijay Kumar said that this is not the first time that cases of flesh trade from near protesting sites have come to the fore, a farmer in an interview with the news channel said that the BKU leader Rakesh Tikait is a fake farmer. He gets people for Rs 300 to sit at the borders. He added that the people who sit at borders have drugs.

Other farmers said that the farm laws are very much in favor of farmers and the real ones are toiled hard in the field.

He said no one is farmer there. They are mafias. On 26 July, the historic morcha at the border of Delhi completed their eight months. The Kisan Sansad addressed some of the real as well as orchestrated anxieties associated with the republic day protest on 15 August 2021.

#### VII. Discussion

The opposition political parties also supported farmers. Some of poplar leaders like Rahul Gandhi chose to drive a tractor to parliament with a banner opposing the three farm laws. The question is not what the farmers can secure for themselves. The prime issue is not about if and when the farmers would succeed in the immediate objective of repealing anti-farers law and securing legal guarantee of minimum support price. A similar system was already introduced in America as well as some of European countries, where it has failed miserably. Therefore at the end, we can only hope, this will not happen in India and disturbs the economy again.

Bihar witnessed fractured growth in agriculture after the repeal of the Mandi system in 2006. These experiences have influenced a few agricultural economists, who believe that rebuilding the existing system might be a better course of action than tearing it down to introduce a new system altogether.

Another weakness in the plan is the lack of policy-level support for transporting farmer produce. At least 85 per cent of the Indian farming community comprises marginal farmers who do not have access to markets or transportation facilities.

The bills also create a sudden power vacuum in the market, thereby creating uncertainty in the production market. In case of gradual collapse in APMC systems, the government has not currently envisioned an alternate price setting mechanism.

Agriculture falls in the state list under the Constitution of India. However, the existence of Entry 33 in the concurrent list gives both the Centre and states the power to control production, supply and distribution of products in trade and commerce related to agriculture. With several state governments expressing dissent over the bills, it is likely that they would undermine the bills by exercising their power.

Rajasthan did this by designating all potential market areas as state-controlled areas. This blocks the Centre's intention to create an open market in the absence of state regulations. Rajasthan is an example of how states might circumvent the bills by utilizing their existing power.

It is also difficult to ensure that the big corporate do not enslave the already marginalized farmers. By allowing both verbal and written contracts, the Centre places the farmers at the susceptible end of the good deal with no redress.

Farmers and consumers are under the risk of use by placing the market in the hands of big businesses. It is extremely probable that big businessmen conceal the farmers in an landslide of legal income. There is no denying that there is a broadly unequal access to legal resources between farmers and corporate and there seems to be no actual law in place to defend the welfare of the farmers.

#### VIII. Conclusion

Despite being thinker in intent, the bills come with their own share of loopholes. In rushing the bills through assembly on the strength of numbers, the Union government seems to have handed the short end of the stick to the states and farmers.

A greater degree of discussion could have provided much wanted momentum for the realization of the vision for change. By not consider the voices of main stakeholders, the government has sown the seeds of doubt and is currently facing a reaction.

Some states are contesting the bills in the Supreme Court, while others are trying to avoid their way around them. In order to in fact transform agriculture in India, the central government needs to be far broader in their preparation and decision-making process.

It also needs to assure the farmers that the bills are not an attempt to phase out government procurement. Overall, the bills need significant amendments before vision can turn into reality.

To build trust between farmers and the states would be to include a mandate for MSP, as optional by the Swami Nathan Committee, within the ambit of the bills. Another would be to stop the holes in the current system instead of trying to dismantle and bring in a new construction.

The government also needs to make it compulsory for firms to draw up in print contracts in dialect languages and do away with oral contracts. It may also be essential to deciliter the complexities nearby export and import of agricultural produce, in place with the new bills.

The agricultural zone could also benefit very much if the bills achieve accord with the necessities related to self-help groups and farmer producer organizations to incentivize collectives, aimed especially at marginal and small holding farmers.

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