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Echoes of Dissent: Unravelling India's Farmer Protests from 2020 to Present

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At the outset of India's independence, the agricultural sector found itself in a state of stagnation, exacerbated by the significant portion of fertile land lost to Pakistan. However, over the initial two decades post-independence, the agricultural landscape experienced a surge in production thanks to the Green Revolution, although the benefits were not adequately distributed to small-scale farmers. Per capita food production witnessed a steady rise well into the 21st century until the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. In response, in May 2020, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled measures as part of the third tranche of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan economic package to mitigate the ensuing fallout.¹ Subsequently, the government introduced three Farm Laws Bills, triggering massive protests from farmers throughout 2020-21, demanding the withdrawal of the bills and legal assurances for Minimum Support Price (MSP) on crops to safeguard their livelihoods.² After a year-long standoff, the government acceded to the demands and repealed the contentious laws, pledging to address the farmers'

¹ 'In third tranche, relief for agriculture and allied activities' *The Indian Express* (15 May 2020)

<<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/nirmala-sitharaman-agriculture-allied-activities-governance-and-administrative-reforms-6411274/>> accessed 07 February 2024

² *Ibid*

concerns. However, as the government's efforts to fulfill its promises have been delayed, farmer unions have once again converged at the Punjab-Haryana borders, renewing their agitation to secure legal guarantees for MSP and other concessions.³

Keywords: *mSP, Delhi-chalo, shambhu border, singhu border, farmers protest, samyukt kisan morcha.*

INTRODUCTION

Despite India's self-sufficiency in food production, with abundant crops like wheat, rice, fruits, vegetables, milk, and meat, the country continues to grapple with serious challenges of malnutrition and hunger. One significant factor contributing to this paradox is the prevalence of small land holdings among Indian farmers, as highlighted in the 2014 Agriculture Census, where two-thirds of land holdings were less than one hectare. This limitation, compounded by the rarity of part-time farming, exacerbates the struggle for farmers to meet their needs.

The situation is further complicated by alarming rates of farmer suicides, with 296,438 reported between 1995 and 2015. Since the ascent of the Narendra Modi government in 2014, an average of 30 farmers have tragically taken their lives daily, according to the National Crime Records Bureau.⁴ However, the response to these suicides has raised concerns among experts, who criticize the government's tendency to depoliticize the issue and overlook its underlying economic roots. Instead of addressing systemic issues, the response often leans towards pathologizing the problem as solely a mental health issue, or promoting corporate-led initiatives that advocate for a 'neoliberal entrepreneurial mentality'.

This backdrop has fueled recent farmer protests, particularly against farm laws and the Minimum Support Price (MSP) system. These protests represent a broader dissatisfaction

³ 'Why Farmers Are Protesting Again And What Are Their Demands?' *Business Outlook India* (14 February 2024) <<https://business.outlookindia.com/economy-and-policy/explained-why-farmers-are-protesting-again-and-what-are-their-demands>> accessed 08 February 2024

⁴ 'Marathwada: 1,088 Farmers Died by Suicide in 2023, 65 More Than 2022' *The Wire* (23 January 2024) <<https://m.thewire.in/article/agriculture/marathwada-1088-farmers-died-by-suicide-in-2023-65-more-than-2022/amp.>> accessed 08 February 2024

among farmers, who feel marginalized by policies that prioritize corporate interests over their own economic stability and well-being.

FARM LAWS

The ordinances later enacted as laws in September 2020, transformed India's agricultural sector from government-controlled to private-led. The bills were passed swiftly without a full vote in the Rajya Sabha, where the government lacks a majority. The laws include the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce Act, the Essential Commodities Amendment Act, and the Farmers' Agreement on Price Assurance Act.⁵ These changes have been dubbed the APMC Bypass Ordinance, the Freedom of Food Stocking by Agribusinesses Ordinance, and the Contract Farming Ordinance respectively. This shift has sparked significant controversy and protests among farmers across the country.

The differing interpretations underline the complex dynamics at play within the agricultural landscape, reflecting broader debates surrounding the balance between market liberalisation and state intervention in ensuring the welfare of farmers.

GOVERNMENT'S CONTENTION

The government's stance emphasizes the potential benefits of the new laws, envisioning a scenario where farmers break free from the monopolistic grip of Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) mandis and circumvent the rent-seeking practices of traditional intermediaries known as arhatiyas. Under this perspective, farmers would gain autonomy in choosing buyers and negotiating prices, leading to increased earnings compared to the past when middlemen in APMC mandis allegedly exploited them.

⁵ 'Making sense of the three Farm Bills 2020' *Indian Express* (29 November 2020) <<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/agriculture-ordinances-punjab-haryana-farmers-protest-explainspeaking-6603039/>> accessed 10 February 2024

THE VIEW FROM PROTESTORS

In contrast, protesters hold a starkly different viewpoint. They argue that the shift towards greater reliance on free markets is a tactic by the government to distance itself from its traditional role as the guarantor of minimum support prices (MSPs). It's noted that MSPs operate within the formally regulated APMC mandis and may not apply to transactions in the private sector. Farmers, particularly in regions like Punjab and Haryana where MSPs are prevalent, express scepticism about the fairness of market dynamics and fear potential mistreatment by large corporations. Unlike dealing with governments where they wield electoral influence, farmers perceive themselves as comparatively powerless against corporate entities, lacking effective bargaining leverage.

TIMELINE

On September 27, 2020, the Farm Bills received presidential assent⁶ and were officially published in the Gazette of India, thereby becoming enacted as Farm Laws.

On November 25, 2020, following intermittent protests against the newly enacted farm laws, which included a nationwide road blockade on November 3, farmer unions from Punjab and Haryana, issued a call for the 'Delhi Chalo' movement.⁷ Despite their request to march to the capital city, the Delhi Police declined, citing Covid-19 protocols.

On December 3, 2020, the government conducted the initial round of discussions with farmer representatives⁸, yet the meeting ended without reaching a resolution.

⁶ 'President gives assent to three farm Bills, Badal calls it "dark day" for India' *The Indian Express* (27 September 2020) <<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/president-ram-nath-kovind-gives-his-assent-to-three-farm-bills-amid-farmer-protests-6618201/>> accessed 10 February 2024

⁷ 'Delhi police rejects requests for farmers' march to city on Nov 26-27' *The Indian Express* (25 November 2020) <<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/delhi-police-rejects-requests-for-farmers-march-to-city-on-nov-26-27-7065968/>> accessed 10 February 2024

⁸ 'Farmers protest: Centre calls for another meeting on Saturday as talks remain inconclusive' *Indian Express* (3 December 2020) <<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/farmers-protest-centre-calls-for-another-meeting-on-saturday-as-talks-remain-inconclusive-7087327/>> accessed 10 February 2024

On December 8, 2020, farmers issued a nationwide call for Bharat Bandh⁹, which garnered support from farmers in other states as well.

On December 11, 2020, the Bharatiya Kisan Union filed a petition in the Supreme Court challenging the validity of the three farm laws. On December 16, 2020, the Supreme Court indicated the possibility of forming a panel comprising representatives from both the government and farmer unions to resolve the impasse surrounding the contentious agricultural laws. On January 11, 2021, the Supreme Court criticised the Center for its management of the farmers' protest and announced its intention to establish a committee led by a former Chief Justice of India to address the impasse.¹⁰ On January 12, 2021, the Supreme Court¹¹ halted the enforcement of the three controversial farm laws and formed a four-member committee tasked with gathering input from all stakeholders and providing recommendations on the legislation.

On Republic Day, January 26, 2021, clashes erupted between police forces and thousands of protestors participating in the tractor parade organised by farmer unions, who were demanding the repeal of the agricultural laws. Following a deviation from the planned route by several protestors from Singhu and Ghazipur, they proceeded towards Central Delhi's ITO and Red Fort. At these locations, police resorted to teargas and baton charges¹², while some protesters vandalise public property and assaulted police personnel. At the Red Fort, a group of demonstrators climbed poles and walls, raising the Nishan Sahib flag. Tragically, one protester lost their life amid the chaos.

⁹ 'Bharat Bandh highlights: Mixed reaction to strike; several Opposition leaders detained' *Indian Express* (08 December 2020) <<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/bharat-bandh-highlights-farmers-protest-farm-laws-oppn-bjp-centre-punjab-up-haryana-7096015/>> accessed 10 February 2024

¹⁰ 'Pushing the envelope, Supreme Court stays farm laws, names panel for talks' *The Indian Express* (13 January 2021) <<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/pushing-the-envelope-sc-stays-farm-laws-names-panel-for-talks-7144076/>> accessed 10 February 2024

¹¹ 'Constitutionality of Farm Laws Rakesh Vaishnav & Ors v Union of India & Ors.' (*Supreme Court Observer*) <<https://www.scobserver.in/cases/rakesh-vaishnav-union-of-india-constitutionality-of-farm-laws-case-background/amp/>> accessed 10 February 2024

¹² 'The events of January 26 and a narrative of convenience' *The Indian Express* (7 February 2021) <<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/web-edits/the-events-of-january-26-and-a-narrative-of-convenience-7178339/>> accessed 10 February 2024

November 19, 2021: Prime Minister Narendra Modi announces the repeal of the farm laws. In a national address,¹³ He expresses sincere apologies to the citizens, acknowledging a possible shortfall in efforts to convey the truth effectively to some farmers, akin to the illumination of a lamp. He notes the auspicious occasion of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's holy Prakash Parv and emphasises the need to refrain from blaming anyone during this time. November 29, 2021: Both Houses of Parliament passed the Farm Laws Repeal Bill, 2021, through voice votes without any deliberation.

December 8, 2021: The government forwards a draft proposal to the farm unions, highlighting proposed concessions, including the unconditional withdrawal of all police cases against protestors during the agitation¹⁴. It asserts that given the proposed concessions, there is no justification for the continued protest, urging the unions to call it off. December 9, 2021: The leaders of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) convene following receipt of the official proposal from the government. They decided to conclude the protest at Delhi's borders, with farmers expected to vacate the protest sites by December 11. A 'Vijay Diwas'¹⁵ (victory day) will be commemorated on the same day at all borders, toll plazas, and protest locations nationwide, followed by the return of protesters.

FARMERS PROTEST 2024

The 2024 Indian farmers' protest commenced on the morning of February 13th, 2024, as farmers mobilised once again to advocate for governmental assurances regarding minimum support prices (MSP) for their crops, echoing the sentiments and demands of the 2020–2021 Indian farmers' protest. 'Gathering at various border points, the farmers aimed to march towards the National Capital Region (NCR), specifically New Delhi, after negotiations between their leaders and government representatives on February 12th failed to produce a resolution. With tens of

¹³ 'PM Narendra Modi says sorry, announces repeal of three farm laws' *The Indian Express* (20 November 2021) <<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/three-farm-laws-repealed-pm-modi-7630405/>> accessed 10 February 2024

¹⁴ 'Centre agrees to withdraw cases, farm stir set to be called off today' *The Indian Express* (09 December 2021) <<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/centre-agrees-to-withdraw-cases-farm-stir-set-to-be-called-off-today-7663229/>> accessed 10 February 2024

¹⁵ *Ibid*

thousands of farmers en route to the capital, law enforcement authorities took measures to prevent their entry, sealing borders and erecting barricades¹⁶. At certain points, the police resorted to using tear gas canisters and water cannons to disperse the crowds, comprised of farmers arriving on tractors, trucks, and on foot. To maintain public order, authorities implemented Section 144, a regulation prohibiting gatherings of three or more people, effective for a month¹⁷. The Section 144 Shambu border, located between Haryana and Punjab, emerged as a focal point of tension as thousands of farmers congregated, prompting authorities to suspend internet services in seven districts of Haryana. Additionally, borders between Haryana and Delhi were heavily guarded and blocked. Primarily hailing from Punjab, Haryana, and western Uttar Pradesh, the protesting farmers remained resolute in their demands for MSP guarantees, highlighting the persistent grievances within India's agricultural sector.¹⁸

DEMANDS UNDER PROTEST 2.0

In 2021, following extensive farmer protests, the Modi government repealed contentious farm laws and pledged to establish a committee comprising farmers and government officials to explore avenues for ensuring support prices across all agricultural produce¹⁹. However, farmers assert that the government has been sluggish in fulfilling this commitment. Farm union leaders are pushing for legally backed guarantees of minimum support prices (MSP) for crops. While the government annually announces support prices for over 20 crops as a reference point²⁰, state agencies predominantly purchase only rice and wheat at these levels, benefitting just a fraction of farmers, approximately 7%. These purchases serve the dual purpose of maintaining reserves

¹⁶ 'Police use tear gas against Indian farmers marching to New Delhi to demand guaranteed crop prices' *AP News* (13 February 2024) <<https://apnews.com/article/india-farmers-protests-modi-fb01da65634b532d92bc017cc3be730b>> accessed 14 February 2024

¹⁷ 'Farmers Protest Updates: Protesters clash with Haryana Police at Jind, Shambhu borders' *Live Mint* (13 February 2024) <<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/farmers-protest-delhi-farmers-protest-news-farmers-protest-today-chalo-delhi-delhi-chalo-march-section-144-13-february-11707756389130.html>> accessed 14 February 2024

¹⁸ 'Farmers protest 2.0: What do they want? What is their strategy?' *Economic Times* (20 February 2024) <<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/farmers-protest-2-0-what-do-they-want-what-is-their-strategy/articleshow/107623281.cms?from=mdr>> accessed 20 February 2024

¹⁹ 'Delhi Chalo' protests | Why farmers are marching to Delhi?' *The Hindu* (14 February 2024) <<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/delhi-chalo-protests-why-farmers-are-marching-to-delhi/article67845138.ece>> accessed 15 February 2024

²⁰ *Ibid*

for India's massive food welfare program, which provides free rice and wheat to 800 million citizens. This subsidy amounts to a substantial \$24.7 billion (over ₹2,000 crore) annually, constituting the government's largest outgoing subsidy.²¹

Despite calls for extending support prices to all agricultural produce, farm policy experts argue that such a move would be economically unsustainable.

The demands other than that of Minimum Support Price included:

1. Farmers are calling for the reinstatement of the Land Acquisition Act of 2013²², asserting their rights to fair compensation for land acquired by the government for various projects. Additionally, they are advocating for a provision that allocates 10% of the developed land to be reserved for their families. This demand underscores their concerns regarding not only adequate compensation but also the preservation of their livelihoods and generational well-being in the face of land acquisition for developmental purposes.

2. Farmers are seeking redress for the tragic loss of four of their fellow farmers in the violent events that unfolded in Lakhimpur Kheri.²³ Their demand for justice echoes the deep-seated grievances within the farming community, as they grapple with the devastating impact of the loss of lives in the pursuit of their rights and livelihoods. The call for compensation extends beyond mere financial restitution; it represents a plea for recognition of the sacrifices made by those who have fallen while defending their interests. Additionally, it underscores the urgent need for accountability and measures to prevent similar tragedies from recurring in the future, fostering a sense of security and justice within farming communities nationwide.

²¹ *Ibid*

²² 'Farmer protests: Serious demands to modernise Indian agriculture are woefully missing' *Economic Times* (15 February 2024) <<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/opinion/et-commentary/farmer-protests-serious-demands-to-modernise-indian-agriculture-are-woefully-missing/articleshow/107732264.cms?from=mdr>> accessed 15 February 2024

²³ Saurav Pandey, 'FARMERS PROTEST 2024: 6 KEY DEMANDS OF FARMERS THAT STUDENTS TO KNOW' *Times of India* (14 February 2024) <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/education/web-stories/farmers-protest-2024-6-key-demands-of-farmers-that-students-must-know/photostory/107692109.cms>> accessed 15 February 2024

3. Farmers are urging the government to withdraw all legal proceedings initiated against the protestors who participated in the nationwide demonstrations spanning 2020-2021²⁴. This plea for amnesty encapsulates the broader sentiment of solidarity among the farming community. Beyond seeking exoneration for the individuals facing charges, this call for withdrawal underscores the farmers' pursuit of reconciliation and the restoration of trust between the agricultural sector and governmental authorities. It also reflects a broader societal aspiration for peaceful resolution and acknowledgment of dissenting voices within the democratic fabric of the nation.

4. Farmers are advocating for the country's withdrawal from the World Trade Organization (WTO) and a cessation of bilateral agreements with other nations²⁵. This demand reflects a deep-seated concern within the agricultural community regarding the perceived adverse impacts of international trade agreements on domestic farming practices and livelihoods. The call for withdrawal from the WTO underscores farmers' apprehensions about the organization's influence on agricultural policies and market dynamics, which they believe have disproportionately favoured multinational corporations over small-scale producers. Additionally, the insistence on refraining from entering into further trade agreements signals a desire to safeguard domestic agricultural interests and promote self-sufficiency in food production. This stance underscores the farmers' commitment to protecting their autonomy and advocating for policies that prioritise the welfare of local farming communities.

5. Farmers are increasingly advocating for the adoption of the Swaminathan Commission recommendations²⁶, which encompass a comprehensive set of strategies aimed at enhancing the

²⁴ 'Explained: Why Farmers Are Protesting Again And What Are Their Demands?' *Outlook* (14 February 2024) <<https://business.outlookindia.com/economy-and-policy/explained-why-farmers-are-protesting-again-and-what-are-their-demands>> accessed 15 February 2024

²⁵ 'Farmer protests: Serious demands to modernise Indian agriculture are woefully missing' *Economic Times* (15 February 2024) <<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/opinion/et-commentary/farmer-protests-serious-demands-to-modernise-indian-agriculture-are-woefully-missing/articleshow/107732264.cms?from=mdr>> accessed 15 February 2024

²⁶ 'Farmers protest highlights: "Will march to Delhi on Feb 21 if..." farmer leader issues warning' *Hindustan Times* (20 February 2024) <<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/farmers-protest-live-updates-delhi-chalo-march-haryana-kisan-andolan-agitation-latest-news-today-20-february-2024-101708389166012.html>> accessed 20 February 2024

income and well-being of farmers. These measures encompass enhancements in infrastructure, substantial investments in research and development, and reforms in agricultural markets. The implementation of these recommendations is seen as crucial for addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by farmers and fostering sustainable agricultural practices. Along with the settlement of the MSP formula along the lines of recommendations of the Swaminathan Commission that suggests that MSP should be set at 50% over the cost of production.²⁷

6. The farmers have articulated their call for the provision of pensions for both farmers and agricultural labourers, alongside advocating for a comprehensive farm debt relief program.²⁸ These demands underscore the pressing need to address the financial vulnerabilities faced by those involved in agriculture, aiming to provide them with essential social security measures and alleviate the burden of debt. Furthermore, such initiatives are essential for promoting equitable growth in rural communities and ensuring the livelihood sustainability of those engaged in farming activities.

INCIDENCES OCCURRED

The preceding three meetings convened on the 8th, 12th, and 15th of the month failed to reach any definitive resolutions²⁹. Since February 13th, farmers hailing from Punjab have been encamped along two specific stretches – Shambhu-Ambala and Khanauri-Jind – positioned on the inter-state boundary between Haryana and Punjab. Their 'Delhi Chalo' march was thwarted from entering Haryana due to extensive security measures, including the deployment of multi-layer barricades. Spearheaded by the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha and the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha (Non-Political), which collectively represent around 200 farmers' and farm labourer unions, the

²⁷ Harikishan Sharma, 'What Swaminathan panel said on MSP, where its ideas echoed scrapped farm laws' *Indian Express* (19 February 2024) <[https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-economics/what-swaminathan-panel-said-9165707/#:~:text=The%20Minimum%20Support%20Price%20\(MSP\)%20should%20be%20at%20least%2050,serve%2C%E2%80%9D%20the%20report%20said](https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-economics/what-swaminathan-panel-said-9165707/#:~:text=The%20Minimum%20Support%20Price%20(MSP)%20should%20be%20at%20least%2050,serve%2C%E2%80%9D%20the%20report%20said)> accessed 19 February 2024

²⁸ 'Farming consensus: On the government and the farmers on protest' *The Hindu* (15 February 2024) <<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/farming-consensus-on-the-government-and-the-farmers-on-protest/article67846219.ece>> accessed 15 February 2024

²⁹ 'Farmers' protest 2024 updates | Union Ministers hold talks with farmer leaders in Chandigarh' *The Hindu* (18 February 2024) <<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/farmers-protest-live-updates-february-18-2024/article67859773.ece>> accessed 18 February 2024

call for the 'Delhi Chalo' march was issued with the intention of besieging the national capital to demand fulfillment of their grievances. In an endeavour to resolve the ongoing standoff, the central government engaged in its fourth round of discussions with leaders of the farming community on a recent Sunday. The primary aim of these discussions was to seek a swift resolution to the protests occurring at the borders of Delhi. Following the deliberations, the farmer representatives opted to temporarily suspend the 'Delhi Chalo' march until further notice³⁰. However, they remained steadfast in their assertion that their demands must be addressed expeditiously. It was agreed that the farmer leaders would evaluate the proposals put forth by the government, and a decision regarding the same would be communicated by February 20th while on February 19th, the Indian Government extended an olive branch by offering guaranteed price support for pulses, corn, and cotton³¹ in a bid to break the deadlock and facilitate an agreement with the farmers which the farmers have rejected saying that it was not in the interests of the farmers and consequently announced the Delhi Chalo march on 21st February to march to the National Capital Delhi for the fulfillment of their demands.³²

CONCLUSION

The 2024 Indian farmer's protest has not been a stark contrast to the one in 2020-21 which was held by the farmers demanding the withdrawal of the Farm Laws Bill introduced through the ordinance and then in parliament, also the farmers emphasised the demand for protection of MSP. While the earlier protest was made to end by the repeal of the farm laws bill, the government had also formed a committee in July 2022 with the mandate to explore more ways to make MSP more transparent and effective³³; the farmers have again gathered to agitate with the similar demand of legal guarantee for minimum support price on crops from the

³⁰ Farmers protest highlights: "Will march to Delhi on Feb 21 if..." farmer leader issues warning (n 26)

³¹ 'Indian farmers reject support price contract offered by government' *Reuters* (19 February 2024) <<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-offers-protesting-farmers-support-prices-corn-cotton-pulses-2024-02-19/>> accessed 19 February 2024

³² 'As farmers resume Delhi march today, MHA asks Punjab Government to take action against lawbreakers' *The Hindu* (21 February 2024) <<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/as-farmers-resume-delhi-march-today-mha-asks-punjab-government-to-take-action-against-lawbreakers/article67869684.ece>> accessed 21 February 2024

³³ Why Farmers Are Protesting Again And What Are Their Demands? (n 3)

government. Assembling at various border points, their objective was to march towards the National Capital Region (NCR), particularly New Delhi. The Shambu border, straddling Haryana and Punjab, became a focal point of tension as thousands of farmers amassed there. Additionally, the borders between Haryana and Delhi were heavily guarded and barricaded. The stance of the government and the farmers on the respective issue are the two sides of the same coin where the farmers contend that the government has not fulfilled any of the promises made to end the previous protest and the government contends that the major farmers union Samyukta Kisan Morcha which spearheaded the earlier protest never nominated their member to the committee formed in order to pursue with the discussions³⁴. Discussion and deliberations are the basis of democracy because it is the government of the people, by the people and for the people; hence the way out of the deadlock is discussion following which the central government has convened its fourth round of talks with the farmers on 19th February to quell the protests at Delhi borders promptly. After discussions, the farmer leaders have decided to temporarily suspend the Delhi Chalo march until further notice, stressing the urgency for their demands to be swiftly met. However, the march has been re-announced by the farmer leaders after rejecting the offer by the government, as it was not in their interests. Eventually, the way to resolution lies in a healthy discussion between the government and the farmer leaders and thus agreement at the consensus of both the parties because the demands of either side cannot be fulfilled completely as it will result in continuation of this deadlock and the protest of farmers at the border areas of Punjab and Haryana which has been disrupting the usual course of activities at the regional level since the educational, economic and various other institutions along with the transportation have been halted which will further affect the normal course of action.

³⁴ *Ibid*