



INDIAN FARMERS HAVE A MESSAGE FOR THE WORLD

A REPORT OF THE FARMER STRIKES IN INDIA
BY MONIKA MONDAL

26th February 2021 marked three months of protest by Indian farmers on the border of the country's capital. After multiple talks, strikes and hundreds of arrests, the government and the farmers have failed to reach a common consensus to resolve the issues. The government emphasises that the three Indian laws, passed in September 2020, will open the agriculture market, increase private companies' capacity to trade and increase farmers' income. On the other side, the Indian farmers believe the laws would concentrate the power in the hands of few industrialists and would leave them on their behest.

The government's agenda to modernise and liberalise the poverty ridden agriculture sector is futuristic however fails to consider the fair apprehensions of the farmers. Their realisation comes from experiences of countries like the UK, Europe and USA, where open market policies and removal of price regulations led the small farmers to leave the business.

With open market policies, industries start to dominate the food industry, and complex farming decisions are taken in meeting rooms of big corporates. Today, in the UK only a few food corporations rule and many small farmers are going out of business.

The effect of big corporates running agri businesses is also visible on the food system and ecology. While increasing the productivity, big intensive farms have led to the loss of nutritious soil and polluted water resources, while the use of chemicals has compromised the quality of the food. Industrialised systems promote industrially feasible products, which reduces the scope of diversity and local food.

The small farmers in the global south not only feed half the world, they also ensure biological diversity in the food system. Conserving food biodiversity helps in fighting ecosystem degradation, provides enough options to adapt to the changing climate and ensures nutritional quality. According to studies,,





micronutrients and protein are mostly produced on such diverse agricultural landscapes. With diverse, local and indigenous food options, the small farmers ensure sustainable and nutritional food production, along with maintaining the biodiversity of the world

While developed countries get the majority of their food from large farms, countries in Asia and Africa, source a larger proportion of their food from small and marginal farms. About 86% of farmers in India are small (<2 hectares) and marginal (<10 hectares) farmers. Indian farmers demand a legal mandate for a minimum price that could at least cover their investment and save them from exploitation.

The food policies across the world need a revisit to ensure better ecological systems while saving the livelihoods of people. The current food system needs to eliminate unfair corporate trading, unhealthy practices in agriculture and unequal growth in society, which is what the Indian farmers stand for.

THE SCOOP IS A NEW JOURNALLING PROGRAMME PUT TOGETHER BY SCOOP, THE SUSTAINABLE COOPERATIVE TO SHARE FOOD STORIES ABOUT TRANSITIONING TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM. COVERING FOOD POLITICS, BUSINESS AND INNOVATIONS.

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