

Students Youth! Let's join hands with the farmers struggling against the Corporate Vultures!

Let's oppose the anti-people, anti-farm laws that exploit the farmers and harvest super profits to the Corporate Companies!!

Friends!

The long economic crisis and the covid that followed it has broken the backs of the people, crores of people lost their jobs during the ensuing covid lockdown. While the people are struggling to make ends meet, the central government, instead of handling the situation and providing livelihood for the people, hastily enacted anti-people agricultural laws, cashing the lockdown where people cannot come out to protest. But Farmers across the country took to the streets in protest against these agricultural laws.

Do these laws, as the government says, work for farmers? Or serve the corporates as the farmers and peasant organizations say? How come the farmers pulling the wooden ploughs in the farms, broke through ditches and obstacles, endured the blows of lathis and water cannons and reached Delhi? Why does the women farmers, scythe in hand, reaping the harvest, came out fighting against the destructive laws of agriculture? In this biting cold, which weeds do they pluck in Delhi? Why are the students and youth, whom the state failed to provide proper education and employment standing for the peasants? To know these, let's understand what the new Farm Acts are about.

1. Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act:

Marketed as "One Country-One Market", the Act boasts that farmers have the freedom to take his crop to any part of the country and sell it. That is, farm produce can be sold outside Mandis. 80% of the country's farmers were small, lean farmers with small plots. Their annual income does not exceed one lakh. They cannot even transport their produce to the adjoining district and sells it in the nearest market yard. How can they transport to the states or buyers who offer better price? Will the government provide free transportation? Even if it provides free transportations, will it ensure the minimum support price? Can it force the corporate companies to buy at the promised prices? If no one buys, will the government buy the produce at the minimum support price?

There is a big No for all these questions. While the Center says the farmers can go anywhere and sell, The MP Government ruled by the same BJP, said it will arrest anyone who comes and sells in its state, the jail terms range up to 5 years!!!

On the other hand, corporate companies, taking huge loans from banks which they never repay, initially bluff the farmers with better prices until they completely wipe out Market yards and Food Corporation of India (FCI). Within no time they establish their monopoly and refuse to offer the promised price either by saying crop is poor or delayed or stocks are full and force farmers to leave their entire crop at dirt cheap prices. This is proven in the case of Bihar farmers, wherein the state laws removed the Mandis and led to a decrease of MSP from Rs. 1850 per quintal of paddy to Rs 900 in few years. This made the Bihar farmers the poorest in the entire country.

2. Farmers (Empowerment & Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act:

This Act facilitates 'contract farming'. Corporate houses like Ambani, Adani, Future, Pepsi, ITC etc can now enter into agreements with the farmers well ahead of sowing. Already corporate farming has occupied the input sectors i.e., seeds, fertilizers and pesticides since long, without any agreements; farmers who supply seeds get their MSP only on paper.

Once agreements are done through the new act, the seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc. should be purchased and used as dictated by the company (Again these have to be brought from their own share holding companies). After the crop is harvested, the story repeats again. These companies either say that the crop is not delivered on time as agreed upon or is not delivered in the grades agreed to and pay the lowest prices. This after the farmers have invested so much out of his capacity just to fulfil their agreements.

The law says there would also be possibility of resorting to the courts for justice. But can a farmer, a lean tenant farmer who cannot fight with a local lender on his just agreement, fight these monopoly capitalists? Even if he reaches the footsteps of the courts, will he get justice? How long will it take? We all know how costly it is to knock at the doors of judiciary. Lakhs of people are languishing in jails for years just because they don't have the money for bails. Ultimately this corporate farming completely bankrupts the farmers, snatches the lands from their very feet and makes them laborers in their own farms at the mercy of the corporates.

Will the corporate companies grow the food grains that people need? No. They run after profitable commercial crops. Once the production/input (law 2) and output/buying from farmers (law 1) is dictated by the corporates, the food distribution systems like FCI and fair price shops which have the responsibility to supply food grains to the people at fair prices will die. This becomes a serious threat to the food security for the majority.

3. The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act:

The essential commodities Act brought in 1955 prevented Corporates from creating artificial shortages in the market by buying and storing the produce in large quantities and inflating prices to make profits. Remember the Pulses crisis of 2016 wherein the prices of pulses skyrocketed to Rs. 220 per kg and broken the back of common man. It is alleged that it is a manmade crisis in Students and Youth! Let's join hands with the farmers struggling against the Corporate Vultures! Revolutionary Greetings.....which Adani has profited to the tune of Rs 2,50,000 crores. This happened even when this protective law is in place, with the help of his Gujrat friends in the government. Now this law is amended, to remove the difficulties for hoarders, to legalize their loot. The new amendment removed Cereals, Onions, Potatoes, other food grains and agricultural products from the list of essential commodities. Further it also removes the stock holding limits. So not just pulses, the corporate hoarders are now fed with all essential goods.

The government has no budget to build cold storages for the farmers produces, thereby forcing the farmers to sell it at below their production costs. But it helps the corporates with huge loans from national banks, with no guarantees, to construct these cold storages across the country and reap super profits.

This law affects all the people, as it leads to huge rise in prices of all essential commodities.

4. Electricity (Amendment) Act:

This act is intended to privatize all government power distribution companies. This is a means created by government for the private power generators, such as Reliance and Adani, to take over the sole government entity in power sector, Discoms. The electricity subsidy on agriculture and house-holds is removed step by step. The government will first replace subsidy with direct benefit transfer, transferring the subsidy amount to bank accounts, then it slowly removes the subsidy. We have seen this in the LPG cooking gas. As a result of the direct benefit transfer, subsidy is almost removed on gas now. Soon, smart meters will be fixed to agricultural bore motors to facilitate collection of hefty monthly charges by the corpo-rates. We all know about the 'surcharge' in our electricity bills which is forced on us by the govern-ment for the private electric companies.

Thus, this law too creates a big burden for both the farmers and household consumers alike.

The above four laws, which have a serious impact on the people of the country, have been enacted in Parliament in an undemocratic manner, through voice vote, not through counting of votes and that too by suspending the live telecast. However, the enactment of such anti-people, anti-agrarian laws is neither the first nor the last. The ownership of foreign companies in the agri-cultural sector has been growing since the beginning of the Green Revolution in the 1960s. After the introduction of the new economic policies in 1991, after India succumbed to the conditions of WTO and became its member, the situation in the agricultural sector worsened. In the name of financial assistance from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), our bourgeois ruling class has thrown our country at the mercy of imperialist countries like the United States. Due to the exploitation of these imperialist countries, the agricultural sector of our country is in a deep crisis. The new reforms (NEP) marked the beginning of farm suicides, lead to an enormous increase in the wealth of Capitalists, and increased the gap between the rich and the poor. In the initial decades the corporates grabbed the agro-tech industry, agri- research and input markets-seeds, pesticides and fertilizers. In the next stage they occupied the consumer markets through setting up of malls and ecommerce. During these years, they established indirect control on Indian agriculture. It led to a sever crisis in agriculture sector. More than 5 lakh farmers have committed suicide in the last 30 years. Also the average annual

income of a farmer family in 17 states is only 20 thousand rupees. 3 crore 30 lakh agricultural laborers lost their jobs in rural areas during the seven years between 2011-12 and 2017-18. During the Corona crisis, 15 crore migrant workers and 30 crore unorganized sector workers lost their jobs. Now they want to monopolize the entire Agri-sector from seeds to farming to distribution, from raw materials to technology. For this they need fertile lands, forests, water, etc at through away price, and cheap labour without any laws to protect them. So, there comes the new Amendments. This is the situation of agricultural crisis in our country! The main reason for this is, any government that came to power, is in the service of the imperialist companies in fertilizers, pesticides and seeds sectors and gave them free hand to exploit the farmer.

The Modi government in the last six years furthered the economic crisis which intensified the poverty and unemployment, multiplied the starvation deaths and suicides. Instead of bringing the economy to track, it brought new laws to serve the imperialists and corporate forces and pull them out of their crisis. These laws are also meant to dilute the powers of the States.

The Amendments to multiple labour laws, to Education policies, to Health policies, to Forest Acts, to farm laws, allowing corporates to exploit all-natural resource and public properties, to commercialize everything from food to health for their super profits, brought in all sectors of the people - students, youth, women, labour, medical staff and farmers to raise their voice, to protest. The historic farmers 'Delhi Chalo' is the culmination of the people's anger against the servitude of government to the corporates, to the richest men.

At a time when our economy is under severe crisis, when people are facing the direst of times, farmers and laborers across the country rose to the situation and are fighting for the repeal of these anti-people, anti-farm laws brought by the centre to benefit the corpo-rates; fighting for getting minimum support price for their produce and for farm loan waiver.

As the sons & daughters, as the brothers & sisters of farmers & farm labor as the young blood aspiring for a just world, the students and the youth of the country have a responsibility to stand up shoulder to shoulder with the fighting farmers. All India Students & Youth Organization calls upon the Students and Youth to extend their solidarity by joining the peasant struggle against these black laws and imperial corporate forces.

Revolutionary Greetings.....

**Coordination Committee
All India Students and
Youth Organization**

Delhi, 25-12-2020 Ansar

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