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SEEDS OF JUSTICE: MAPPING THE LEGAL ARCHITECTURE OF AGRICULTURAL GOVERNANCE IN INDIA

Satakshi Raj¹

I. ABSTRACT

This particular research paper takes a very long, detailed look at the whole legal setup and the general architecture that basically governs the entire agricultural sector across the country of India, while also trying to analyze it from several different angles like the constitutional side, the statutory side, and the side that deals with reform-oriented dimensions. It really tries to highlight and point out how the legislative powers are actually distributed and split up between the central Union and the various States, while also looking at the specific role of certain key provisions, for example, things like Articles 246, 21, and 300A, which all play a big part in shaping how agrarian governance actually works on the ground in a practical sense. Moving on from there, the study goes even further into things by evaluating the various regulatory frameworks that are currently in place, including stuff like the Essential Commodities Act and the whole APMC system, along with the 2020 farm laws which were originally intended and aimed at bringing about more market liberalization in the sector. By looking closely at the protests that happened afterward and the eventual repeal of those same laws, the paper really tries to underscore and show the big tensions that exist between the idea of state control on one hand and market reforms on the other hand. It ends by emphasizing that there is a big need for a framework that is balanced, inclusive, and mostly farmer-centric, so that the legal system can actually ensure sustainability.

II. KEYWORDS

Agricultural Governance, APMC, Farm Laws 2020, MSP, liberalization

III. INTRODUCTION

Basically, when you look at it closely, agriculture in the context of India is not just some simple economic activity or a way to make money, but it is actually a primary source

¹ B.A.LL. B (H), 10th Semester, Student at Amity Law School, Noida (India).
Email:rajsatakshi2003@gmail.com

of livelihood and a way of life for a very, very large section of the entire population. Given the fact that it has such a critical and massive role in sustaining the day-to-day life of people in rural areas and ensuring that the nation has enough food to eat for security reasons, it stands to reason that agriculture basically requires a really well-defined and specific legal framework to sort of regulate how it all functions.² This is necessary to protect the interests of the people who are dependent on it. Essentially, legal regulation becomes a necessary thing to have so that society can address various issues like people having unequal bargaining power, being exploited in the market, having disputes over who owns which piece of land, and dealing with various environmental concerns that keep popping up.

Laws that are related to the field of agriculture play a really big and crucial role in making sure farmers are protected from trade practices that aren't fair, and they also make sure that these farmers can actually get access to the resources they need to do their jobs. Furthermore, these laws provide different kinds of mechanisms, like support for prices and insurance policies, which are quite helpful. These legal structures also help a lot in the process of ensuring that there is food security for everyone by regulating the way things are produced, how they are stored in warehouses, and how they are distributed as essential commodities, which helps in maintaining a sense of stability in the overall supply. In addition to that, legal frameworks are just really essential for the regulation of agricultural markets, making sure people don't hoard goods, controlling how much prices go up and down, and ensuring that transactions between the farmers and the people buying the stuff are fair for everyone involved.

In a situation where there is an absence of effective legal safeguards or rules that actually work, the farmers themselves find themselves exposed to all sorts of economic risks, market conditions that change all the time, and being exploited by middle-men or intermediaries who are just looking to make a profit. This whole situation directly contributes to what many people call agrarian distress, which is basically reflected in

² Sukhwinder Singh & Dhanveer Singh, "Law and Policies for agriculture in India: A study with special reference to Farmer's Rights", (2018) 6 (2) *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts* 1, available at: <https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT1807192.pdf> (last Visited on 2 April 2026)

a lot of different issues such as people being in a lot of debt, their income not being stable from month to month, and the general sustainability of agriculture as a whole starting to decline.³ Therefore, it seems pretty clear that having a strong and effective legal framework is not only a thing that is necessary for general governance purposes, but it is also completely essential for the goal of safeguarding the welfare of farmers and maintaining the overall stability of the entire agricultural sector in the long run.

A. Research Objectives

1. To analyze the constitutional framework helps in governing the agrarian legislation in India.
2. To evaluate the key statutory regulating agricultural markets.
3. To examine the objectives and implications of the 2020 farm laws.

B. Research Questions

1. How does the Indian Constitution structure agricultural governance.
2. To what extent do existing laws protect farmer's interests?
3. What were the intended benefits and actual implications of the 2020 farm laws?

C. Research Methodology

In terms of how this study was actually put together, it basically adopts what you would call a doctrinal and analytical research methodology to get the job done. It really relies quite heavily on a few different things, starting with primary sources, which basically includes stuff like the actual constitutional provisions, various statutes, and the different government policies that are out there. Then, it also looks at secondary sources, which is more like looking at other people's research papers, various legal commentaries, and a bunch of different reports that have been written over the years. The whole analytical evaluation part of the study tries to look at reforms, how the courts handle judicial interpretations, and what the actual policy outcomes end up being in the real world. The general approach here is very much qualitative in its basic

³ Neha yadav&Manish Tiwari, "Farm Laws and Farmers' Rights in India: A Legal Analysis", (2023) 4(3) *Indian Journal of Law and Legal Research*, available at: <https://ijalr.in/volume-4-issue-3/farm-laws-and-farmers-rights-in-india-a-legal-analysis-neha-yadav-manish-tiwari/> (last visited on 2 April 2026)

nature, so it spends most of its time focusing on the interpretation of things and the critical analysis of the legal frameworks themselves, rather than going out and doing a bunch of empirical data collection or numbers-based work.

D. Literature Review

When you look at the existing literature that is currently available on the topic of agricultural governance in India, it really reflects a big divide or a split between the idea of state-led regulation on one side and market-driven reforms on the other side. Scholars have spent a long time emphasizing and talking about the specific role of the Essential Commodities Act and the whole APMC system, mostly in terms of how they work for ensuring price stability and keeping farmers safe from being exploited. However, on the flip side of that, there are critics who like to argue that having too much excessive regulation has actually led to a lot of inefficiencies, things like cartelization, and making it harder for people to have restricted market access.

Recent studies that have been done to analyze the 2020 farm laws really highlight how they might have the potential to modernize the world of agriculture through things like competition and getting more private investment into the mix. At the very same time, though, several different authors are quick to point out that there are big structural concerns, like the fact that there is unequal bargaining power, a total absence of any legal MSP guarantees, and some pretty weak dispute resolution mechanisms to deal with problems. Research also tends to underscore and repeat the importance of things like cooperative federalism and making sure there is participatory policymaking when it comes to actually implementing these kinds of reforms.⁴ Overall, the literature seems to suggest that while liberalization is a necessary thing, it really must be accompanied by very strong institutional safeguards to make sure that agricultural development is actually equitable and sustainable in the long run.

⁴ M. S. Swaminathan, *Agricultural Sustainability and Food Security in India* (Academic Foundation, New Delhi, 2006).

IV. LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS OF AGRICULTURAL GOVERNANCE

According to the Indian Constitution, agriculture is within the Seventh Schedule's State List. States have the power to enact laws pertaining to agricultural issues, such as markets and land tenure systems, thanks to this division. However, by using its authority under the Concurrent List, namely Entry 33, which deals with trade and commerce in foodstuffs, edible oilseeds, and other necessary commodities, the central government passed the 2020 farm legislation. This brought up important constitutional issues about the separation of powers between the federal government and the states.

The power of the federal government to control interstate commerce and guarantee the unrestricted movement of products across state lines served as rationale for these regulations. Opponents claimed that this strategy weakened the federal system of government and invaded state sovereignty.

A. Constitutional Framework

1. Article 246 - Distribution of Legislative Powers

Actually, when we look at Article 246⁵, it's basically the main thing that lays down the whole division of legislative powers between the Union and the States, and it does this through the Seventh Schedule. It pretty much provides that:

- The Parliament has the exclusive power over matters in the Union List.
- State Legislatures have the power over matters in the State List.
- Both can go ahead and legislate on matters in the Concurrent List.

In the specific context of agriculture, this Article is very crucial because it goes and places agriculture under the State List. This establishes that State Governments have the exclusive power to make laws on agriculture, land, irrigation, and markets. However, the presence of various agricultural-related subjects in the Concurrent List

⁵ INDIA CONST. art 246

also allows the Union to indirectly create dominance on agricultural governance in a way, which ends up leading to a bit of an overlapping jurisdiction.

2. Article 248 and Entry 97 (Residuary Powers)

Then we have Article 248⁶, which basically grants residuary powers to Parliament. This means that it can legislate on various matters that aren't really mentioned in any of the three lists. Entry 97⁷ of the Union List is what supports this power. This provision more or less enables the Union Government to step in and intervene in new or emerging areas that are related to agriculture, like modern agricultural trade systems, digital markets, or national-level reforms. However, people say that the excessive use of these residuary powers might raise some concerns regarding the encroachment on State powers.

3. Article 301 – Freedom of Trade and Commerce

Article 301⁸ is there to guarantee the freedom of trade, commerce, and intercourse throughout the whole territory of India. In the field of agriculture, this is supposed to ensure that agricultural produce can move around freely across state boundaries without people putting up unnecessary restrictions. This provision has been used quite a bit by the Union Government to justify laws that regulate inter-state trade in agricultural commodities. But, on the other hand, it might also conflict with State-level market regulations like the APMC laws that we see.

4. Article 21 – Right to Life and Livelihood

Article 21⁹ is the one that guarantees the right to life and personal liberty. Over time, the judiciary has expanded its scope to include things like:

- The Right to livelihood.
- The Right to food.
- The Right to live with dignity.

⁶ INDIA CONST. art 248

⁷ INDIA CONST. Sch. VII, List I, Entry 97

⁸ INDIA CONST. art 301

⁹ INDIA CONST. art 21

In the case of *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation*,¹⁰ the Supreme Court held that livelihood is an integral part of the right to life. Similarly, in *PUCL v. Union of India*¹¹, the Court went ahead and recognized the right to food. For farmers, this Article provides a kind of constitutional protection against various policies that might threaten their livelihood and their survival.

5. Article 300A – Right to Property

So, looking at Article 300A¹², it basically and essentially provides that no person shall be deprived of their property except, you know, by the actual authority of law. It is important to remember that even though the right to property isn't a Fundamental Right in the strict sense anymore, this specific Article still sort of ensures a certain level of legal protection for farmers' land. In the grander scheme of things, it plays a pretty big and significant role in cases of land acquisition and land reforms, because it basically requires that any deprivation of land has to be lawful and has to follow the due process of the law as it stands.

6. Article 38 – Promotion of Social Order

Then we have Article 38¹³, which is more or less a directive that tells the State to promote the welfare of the people by securing a social order that is based on justice – social, economic, and political justice, that is. In the broad world of agriculture and rural life, this provision basically and fundamentally obligates the State to come up with various policies that aim to reduce inequalities in rural areas and try to generally improve the overall living conditions of the farmers out there.

7. Article 39 – Distribution of Material Resources

When one considers the foundational framework of Article 39¹⁴, specifically looking at sub-clauses (b)¹⁵ and (c)¹⁶, it becomes quite apparent that these provisions

¹⁰ *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation*, (1985) 3 SCC 545

¹¹ *People's Union for Civil Liberties v. Union of India*, Writ Petition (Civil) No. 196 of 2001 (Supreme Court of India).

¹² INDIA CONST. art 300A

¹³ INDIA CONST. art. 38

¹⁴ INDIA CONST. art.39

¹⁵ INDIA CONST. art.39 (b)

¹⁶ INDIA CONST. art.39 (c)

essentially exist to mandate that the State must take proactive steps to ensure the realization of certain distributive objectives. To put it quite simply, the State is basically required to oversee the actual distribution of material resources in a manner that serves the common good of the collective population. Furthermore, there is a redundant yet critical emphasis on the prevention of the concentration of wealth and the means of production in just a few hands, which is a major concern. This specific constitutional mandate is particularly relevant and holds quite a significant amount of weight when it comes to the historical and ongoing implementation of land reforms. The equitable distribution of agricultural land is seen by many scholars and policymakers as an absolutely essential prerequisite for mitigating the deep-seated agrarian inequality that currently exists within the socioeconomic system of the country.

8. Article 43 - Livelihood and Living Wage

Moving on, Article 43¹⁷ basically and fundamentally directs the State to ensure a decent standard of life and a living wage for all types of workers. Although it's not explicitly or strictly limited just to farmers, it does very much apply to agricultural labourers in the field and supports various policies related to fair wages and rural employment opportunities across the country.

9. Article 46 - Protection of the Interests of Weaker Sections

In a similar vein, Article 46¹⁸ basically functions as a directive that requires the State to promote, with special care, the educational and economic interests of the various weaker sections of the society. It specifically refers to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in this particular regard. Given the empirical reality that a very large number of small-scale farmers and landless agricultural labourers happen to belong to these specific marginalized groups, this Article serves as a vital constitutional pillar. It basically supports and underpins the creation of more inclusive agricultural policies and general welfare measures that are specifically tailored for them. One could argue that without this provision, the broader framework of rural development would

¹⁷ INDIA CONST. art.43

¹⁸ INDIA CONST. art.46

essentially lack the necessary focus on social justice for those who are most vulnerable within the agricultural sector.

10. Article 243G – Powers of Panchayats

Article 243G¹⁹ is the one that empowers the Panchayats to function as actual institutions of self-government and to implement various schemes that are related to economic development. Under what is known as the Eleventh Schedule, agriculture and allied activities are included as subjects for local governance. This whole thing is meant to promote decentralization and allow local bodies to handle agricultural issues right at the grassroots level where they happen.

11. Article 262 – Inter-State Water Disputes

Finally, Article 262²⁰ is the one that empowers Parliament to provide for the actual adjudication of disputes relating to inter-state rivers. Water is, quite obviously, a very critical and essential resource for agriculture, and disputes between different states over river water have a very direct impact on irrigation and farming practices. This Article basically provides a legal mechanism to try and resolve those kinds of disputes when they inevitably pop up.

B. Legal and Statutory Framework

1. Market Regulation and State Control

- **Essential Commodities Act, 1955**

The Essential Commodities Act (ECA) 1955²¹ is one of the cornerstones of India's state-based agri-regulatory system, its main goal being food security and distortion-free markets. Specifically, Section 3²² of the Act bars supply and distribution among others of essential resources by empowering such powers on the Central Government. This encompasses the power to bridle, control storage and circulation, fix prices, impose stock limits and define circumstances under which sale of items is compulsory. Beyond this regulatory regime, the Act is backed up with tough enforcement. Section 6A²³ to

¹⁹ INDIA CONST. art. 243G

²⁰ INDIA CONST. art.262

²¹ The Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955

²² The Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955, § 3

²³ The Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955, § 6A

6E²⁴ deals with the search, seizure and confiscation of commodities in case of violations. Essential commodities, including those which invariably carry on their body or a vehicle used for the carriage of an essential commodity may be seized under Section 6A²⁵ and Section 6B²⁶ further empowers that before passing orders u/s. Providing a right to appeal under Section 6C²⁷ assists in protecting individuals against arbitrary state action. Further, Sections 6D²⁸ and 6E²⁹ strengthen enforcement by allowing confiscation alongside criminal punishment and limiting judicial interference to ensure swift action.

The law has some rules to make sure people follow it. Section 7³⁰ of the law says that if someone does not follow the rules they can go to jail or have to pay a fine. This helps stop people from doing things like hiding food to sell it at a higher price selling things on the black market and making prices go up on purpose.

When we think about farmers and the problems, they face this law does two things. On one hand it helps farmers by stopping traders and middlemen from taking advantage of them. It also helps keep prices stable when the market is changing a lot and makes sure that people have the food they need. This helps reduce the uncertainty that farmers face which can make it hard for them to make a living and can lead to debt. On the hand some people think that the law controls things too much like how much food farmers can store and how they have to sell it. This can stop farmers from getting a price, for their food and can discourage people from investing in ways to store and transport food.

From a governance point of view the Act shows a government intervention approach. The government actively fixes market problems like hoarding, black marketing and artificial price hikes. This Act plays a role in keeping agricultural markets stable and protecting consumer interests. However, some people criticise this framework. They

²⁴ The Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955, § 6E

²⁵ The Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955, § 6A

²⁶ The Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955, § 6B

²⁷ The Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955, § 6C

²⁸ The Essential Commodities Act (ECA) 1955, § 6D

²⁹ The Essential Commodities Act (ECA) 1955, § 6E

³⁰ The Essential Commodities Act (ECA) 1955, § 7

say it creates much government control, which might reduce market efficiency cut competitiveness and hurt long-term agricultural growth. In conclusion the Essential Commodities Act 1955³¹ is a law. It balances food security, farmer protection and market rules. The Acts success depends on finding the balance, between government intervention and market freedom. The Essential Commodities Act helps achieve this balance.³²

- **Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC)**

The APMC Acts are laws made by each state to control how farm products are bought and sold in markets. The Punjab Agricultural Produce Markets Act 1961 is one example. It sets up Agricultural Produce Market Committees or APMCs to run market areas called mandis. Farmers, in Punjab must sell their produce in these mandis. In these mandis traders and commission agents need to get licenses to operate. They usually have open auctions to set prices transparently. The State Governments use the APMC system to charge market fees and commissions on sales, which are then used to maintain the infrastructure and administration of these markets. The APMCs play a role in overseeing the market yards or mandis where farmers bring their produce, for sale and the Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs) ensure that the market operates smoothly. The State Governments also utilise the market fees and commissions to improve the infrastructure of these markets.³³

The main goal of the APMC regime is to help farmers. It wants to make sure they do not get taken advantage of by people in the middle and that they get a price for what they grow. The APMC regime creates a place where farmers can sell their stuff. It has rules to make things fair. This way farmers know what is going on. People have to follow the same rules. It also tries to stop people from cheating or being unfair. Over

³¹ The Essential Commodities Act (ECA) 1955

³² OECD, *Agricultural Policy Monitoring and Evaluation 2025: Making the Most of the Trade and Environment Nexus in Agriculture* (OECD Publishing, Paris, 2025), available at: https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/agricultural-policy-monitoring-and-evaluation-2025_a80ac398-en/full-report/india_a08610a6.html (last visited on 10 April 2026)

³³ Ramesh Chand, *Agricultural Challenges and Policies for the 21st Century*, NABARD Research and Policy Series No. 6/2022 (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mumbai, 2022), available at: https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-02/Paper_Agri-Challenges-and-Policies_NABARD.pdf. (last visited on 10 April 2026)

time some problems have come up with the APMC system. Sometimes the people who are allowed to trade get too powerful. They work together to keep prices high. This means that farmers do not get a price for what they grow. Small farmers have a time selling their stuff to anyone else because they do not have access to other markets. They have to sell to the people in their area. Also, the rules that say farmers can only sell their stuff in places have been criticized. People think these rules are unfair to farmers and they make it hard for farmers to sell their stuff to people, in parts of the country. The APMC regime and its rules are supposed to help farmers. They are not working very well.

C. Liberalization and Market Reforms (2020 Laws)

It was basically back in the year 2020 when the Government of India decided to step in and introduce a set of three really major agricultural reform laws that were intended to kind of shift the whole entire existing system away from the way things were being done with state-controlled markets. They were looking to move things toward a much more liberalized sort of situation and a framework that was more or less driven by the market itself, which was a pretty big deal at the time.

1. The Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020

The Farmer's Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 permits farmers to sell their produce outside APMC mandis without the imposition of market fees or commissions. It establishes a framework for inter-State and intra-State trade, including provisions for electronic trading platforms. The main idea was to get more competition going, so farmers could reach all kinds of buyers, not just the usual ones.³⁴

That should help them get better prices, I think, and cut down on those middlemen who take a big cut. But some people worried about what happens if everyone starts skipping the mandis altogether. It might make the regulated markets weaker over time.

³⁴ The Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020.

States could lose out on revenue from all that. And for small farmers, especially the marginal ones, it feels risky. They might end up dealing with these huge private companies that could take advantage of them somehow. Not totally sure how that plays out exactly, but it seems like a shift that could go either way.³⁵

2. Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020

This act has essentially been put together in this way for contract farming so that farmers can enter into deals and agreements well before the harvest with big companies or traders at prices they agree on ahead of time. The whole idea behind that was supposed to provide some level of price stability and cut down on the usual market ups and downs that cause a lot of worry.³⁶

Furthermore, it also helped them get better stuff like new tools or tech and even various services they might not have otherwise had access to. I think the general thought process there was to make things smoother for everyone involved in the process.

Then there is this whole dispute system at the local level with boards for talking things out and authorities to step in if needed, which sounds helpful on paper.³⁷

3. The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020

It really marked a pretty big and noticeable shift toward more deregulation by fundamentally taking away key agricultural commodities—you know, things like cereals, pulses, oilseeds, onions, and potatoes—from the official list of essential commodities, unless there happen to be some really extraordinary circumstances going on.³⁸ It also went ahead and relaxed the stockholding limits for traders and private entities in a way that loosened things up quite a bit. The main thing and the whole point were to try and promote more private investment in agricultural

³⁵ Komal Ahuja, “Legal Perspectives on India’s Agricultural Reforms and Their Impact on Farmers” (2025), available at: <https://bhattandjoshiassociates.com/legal-perspectives-on-indias-agricultural-reforms-and-their-impact-on-farmers/> (last visited on 11 April 2026)

³⁶ Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020

³⁷ Subhang Agarwal 7 Prof. Pushpa Mehdoo, “Legal Protection Farmers in Inida: Addressing Debt, Crop Failure, and Market Vulnerability”, (2025) 6(10) *International Journal of Leading Research Publication* (IJLRP), available at: <https://www.ijlrp.com/papers/2025/10/2014.pdf> (last visited on 12 April 2026)

³⁸ The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020 (Act No. 22 of 2020).

infrastructure, like storage, warehouses, and cold chains, to essentially improve supply chain efficiency and reduce those post-harvest losses that occur. But one thing to remember is that this easing has certainly caused a lot of worry and anxiety around things like hoarding, speculative trading and price changes. That makes the whole thing a little more confusing and unpredictable than it was before. This is because there is this fear that these issues could have a very bad and undesirable effect in the long run to the farmers and the consumers.

V. FROM REFORM TO RESISTANCE: REPEAL OF FARM LAWS AND THE UNRESOLVED MSP DEBATE

The agricultural reforms introduced in 2020, intended to liberalise agricultural markets and improve efficiency, instead it met with unprecedented resistance from farmers across India. The three farm laws, 2020 sparked widespread protests, particularly in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. These Protests soon became one of the biggest agrarian movements in the history of India.

Main reason for opposition was perceived threat to the existing Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) system and also the lack of statutory guarantee of Minimum Support Price (MSP). The farmers were worried that the push towards liberalized markets and private trade would gradually dismantle the government procurement systems and, in turn, weaken the MSP, a critical safety net to ensure minimum income security. The demand for making MSP a legal right became a core issue of the protests, with deep concerns about price volatility and market vulnerability.

Basically, when looking at the whole situation, although the government kept maintaining and saying that the reforms would give farmers a lot more freedom and better price realisation, a whole lot of farmers viewed them as being set up to favour big corporate entities and essentially reducing the level of state protection. There was this huge imbalance in bargaining power, along with a lack of strong dispute resolution mechanisms and a general sense of uncertainty regarding price assurance, which just further intensified the distrust and bad feelings. The protests received

national and international attention which created political and social pressure that forced the government to address the situation.

After basically a whole year of sustained agitation and ongoing protests the Government of India finally decided to repeal all three farm laws in November 2021 and the repeal was formally passed by Parliament shortly thereafter in a pretty quick way. The decision showed that policymakers at the highest level of government completely failed to understand how small farmers who require institutional support for their livelihoods work in their actual farming environment³⁹. Most notably, the demand for a legal guarantee of MSP remains totally unfulfilled and is still up in the air. Farmers are still continuing to advocate and push for MSP to be recognized as a statutory right to ensure price stability and protect them from the usual market fluctuations that happen. This ongoing debate basically reflects the tension between market-oriented reforms on one hand and the real need for state-backed welfare mechanisms in agriculture on the other.

The actual repeal of the farm laws really underscores and shows the many complexities of agricultural governance in India. It demonstrates that while liberalisation and opening things up might offer some economic efficiency, it really must be balanced out with adequate legal safeguards to protect those vulnerable farming communities. The whole MSP debate continues to be a central and main issue in shaping the future of agricultural policy, highlighting the clear need for a much more inclusive and farmer-centric legal framework moving forward.

VI. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the foregoing analysis, certain legislative and policy-level interventions are necessary to address the structural deficiencies in India's agricultural governance framework.

³⁹ Subhang Agarwal 7 Prof. Pushpa Mehdoo, "Legal Protection Farmers in Inida: Addressing Debt, Crop Failure, and Market Vulnerability", (2025) 6(10) *International Journal of Leading Research Publication* (IJLRP), available at: <https://www.ijlrp.com/papers/2025/10/2014.pdf> (last visited on 12 April 2026)

1. There is a pressing need to consider a statutory framework for Minimum Support Price (MSP), ensuring income security for farmers while maintaining fiscal and market balance through a calibrated implementation mechanism.
2. Reforms within the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) system should focus on enhancing transparency, reducing cartelisation, and enabling greater market access through digital platforms, rather than complete dismantling of the mandi structure. A hybrid model integrating regulated markets with competitive private participation may ensure both efficiency and farmer protection.
3. The contract farming regime requires strengthening through legally enforceable safeguards, including independent dispute resolution authorities, protection against unequal bargaining power, and standardised model agreements to ensure fairness and accountability.
4. There is a need for clear constitutional and legislative demarcation of Centre-State powers in agricultural governance to uphold cooperative federalism and prevent jurisdictional conflicts, particularly in matters of trade and market regulation.
5. Policy formulation must adopt a participatory and farmer-centric approach, incorporating stakeholder consultations and empirical assessments to ensure that reforms are both inclusive and sustainable.

These measures, collectively, can contribute toward a balanced legal framework that reconciles market efficiency with social justice in the agricultural sector

VII. CONCLUSION

To wrap things up, the study eventually comes to the final conclusion that the whole system of agricultural governance in the country of India really reflects a very complex and messy interplay between things like constitutional mandates, various statutory regulations, and the constantly evolving nature of market reforms. While the more traditional frameworks that have been around for a long time, such as the Essential Commodities Act and the whole APMC system, have generally provided a sense of stability and protection for people, the 2020 reforms really went and exposed some

major structural tensions that exist between the idea of liberalization and the general welfare of the farmers themselves. The fact that these laws were eventually repealed really goes to highlight and show just how important participatory policymaking actually is in the real world, and it shows the big need to actually address various concerns regarding things like MSP and other institutional safeguards that are in place. Basically, a truly sustainable agricultural legal framework is something that absolutely must find a way to balance out economic efficiency with the idea of social justice, while also making sure there is equitable market access, plenty of protection for the small farmers, and a sense of long-term food security, all while staying within the boundaries of a cooperative federal structure.

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