



Conservative Farmers Movements and Right-Wing Populism in Contemporary India

A research paper submitted by

Divya Jain

(India)

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of
Masters of Arts in Development Studies

Specialization:

Agrarian, Food and Environment Studies (AFES)

Members in the examining committee

Prof. Dr. Saturnino 'Jun' Borras

Dr. Amrita Chhachhi

The Hague, The Netherlands

November, 2017

Disclaimer

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Science. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

Inquiries:

Postal address:

Institute of Social Studies
P. O. Box 29776
2502 LT The Hague
The Netherlands

Location:

Kortenaerkade 12
2518 AX The Hague
The Netherlands

Telephone: +31 70 426 0460
Fax: +31 70 426 0799

Table of contents

Abstract.....	v
Relevance to Development Studies	v
List of tables.....	vi
List of abbreviations and acronyms	vii
Chapter 1	2
Right Wing Authoritarian Populism	2
1.3 A brief introduction to the Indian case.....	4
1.4 Research problem and questions	4
1.5 Research methodology	5
1.6 Bhartiya Kisan Sangh (BKS)	7
Chapter 2	8
Authoritarian populism and the state-society relations – the synergies and contradictions	8
2.1 Right Wing Authoritarian Populism	8
2.2 The State, capital and the countryside.....	10
Chapter 3.....	12
The Indian countryside, State and Farmers’ movements – A historical perspective.....	12
3.1 Agrarian distress and crisis – Contradictions of state’ agrarian policies	12
3.2 The past Populist nature of the state and markets - result and the cause of crisis.....	15
3.3 Farmers’ movements – a reaction to the state, identity politics and the narrative of ‘India vs. Bharat’	16
Chapter 4.....	19
Right wing Authoritarian Populism of the Modi Regime.....	19
4.1 The alignment of Hindu Nationalism and BJP.....	19
4.2 Nature of populism and contradictions within	20
4.3 Contradictions between Modi regime	22
Chapter 5.....	24
Fault lines within the movement and with the state.....	24
5.1 Situating Bhartiya Kisan Sangh in right wing authoritarian populism	24

5.2 Agroecology of Bhartiya Kisan Sangh.....	27
5.3 Agricultural issues, class interests and differences within movements' agendas	29
5.4 Contestations with movement leadership and identity politics.....	31
Chapter 6.....	34
Contradictions between the farmers' movement and the state	34
Chapter 7	38
Conclusion - contested authoritarian populism.....	38
References	40
Appendix 1. List of interviews and focussed group discussions.....	45

Abstract

This paper argues that Bhartiya Kisan Sangh (BKS), a conservative farmers' movement, although has managed to maintain an overall agenda of 'majoritarian cultural nationalism,' there are fault lines seen between them and the right-wing Modi government. This can be seen partly in the increasing strength of BKS's demands such as higher minimum support price for farm produce, ban of genetically modified seeds, lower interest rates on loans, better health and education facilities and so on. These rising demands stand in direct opposition to the policies of the Modi government, a regime that BKS is generally ideologically aligned with. Right-wing populist governments in various parts of the world have important social base in the countryside, such as Trump and rural America. India has a similar situation, with Modi and the Indian countryside, in the form of powerful conservative farmers' movements like BKS. But my study will show that there are fundamental tensions and contradictions between the Modi authoritarian populist regime and its rural social base. What these are, and how these get played out are the key inquiry of this study.

Keywords: right-wing/conservative farmers' movements, authoritarian populism, India

Relevance to Development Studies

Right-wing authoritarian populism has been on a rise globally. This paper helps look at some of the important aspects of such regimes specifically with reference to rural farmers and countryside politics. Situated in the Indian case and the recent widespread farmers' struggle in the country it briefs on the agrarian crisis which has been a result of long neoliberal penetration that has aggravated the rural urban divide, inequality and rural poverty. The study aims to contribute in a better understanding of large scale right wing farmers' movements, their positioning in a right wing regime. This assuming as an alarming trend requires fresh perspective in studying social movements and state in the field of development studies, as this paper also appeals.

List of tables

Table 1: Network of RSS affiliated organizations.....	7
Table 2: Features of the Modi Populism.....	20
Table 3 Contradictions between BJP and BKS	34

List of abbreviations and acronyms

BJP	Bhartiya Janta Party
VHP	Vishwa Hindu Parishad
BKS	Bhartiya Kisan Sangh
RSS	Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh
KRRS	Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha
FGD	Focussed Group Discussion
NSSO	National Sample Survey Organization
GMO	Genetically Modified
MSP	Minimum Support Price

Chapter 1

Right Wing Authoritarian Populism

1.1 Introduction

This research is an attempt to critically engage with the contemporary phenomenon of right wing authoritarian populism and how it relates to the countryside in India. It examines the Indian case of a right-wing farmers' movement and its interaction with the contemporary right-wing populist regime. This paper specifically looks at the contradictions the movement has within itself and in its relationship with the political camp it draws, at least partly, its identity and ideology from. It casts its analysis of the Indian case in the context of the current rise of 'authoritarian populism' worldwide, and shows how and why the Indian case may not necessarily fit in any ideal-type right-wing populism. I apply the concept of right-wing authoritarian populism to understand the relationship between the state and the peasant movements and the nature, conditions and trajectory of contradictions within and between the Modi regime, current right-wing central government in India and its rural social base i.e. conservative farmers' movements in the countryside.

I look at the right-wing farmers' movement Bhartiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) which is founded in the base of Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) and Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP). I analyse the alliance that is full of contradictions and synergies. Perhaps, the reasons that bring them together may actually be the very reasons for their differences and, possibly, fallout. For instance, as the current central government, led by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, hurries on a globalist path, its social base is realized strongly against this 'global dream'. This is one of the key points of discussion in my paper.

An important motivation to pursue this ambition was the predominant notions of the 'right-wing', 'populism', and 'authoritarian' amongst the left in India and even globally. Few will disagree that there has been an academic bias towards studying progressive movements and movement in relation to the state. However, there are limitations to empirical research work done on how right wing farmers' movements interact with a right-wing political party in power. What forms of populism really exist? What kind of resistance follows when the fallout of agricultural economy and deepening of agrarian crisis couples with socio-cultural and nationalist attributes?

1.2 Right-wing authoritarian populism

The notion of 'right wing' politics has largely been understood as conservative, reactionary forces combined with strict traditional, cultural and political order and norms. This often leads to and is channelized for ethnic consciousness and establishing popular consent, resulting in

advancement of political, economic and social interests of particular groups, political parties and organizations – also largely considered as extremist. For instance, the case of Hindu nationalism in India, ‘Islamophobia’ in the west and other parts of the world, Marie Le Pen popularity in France, and success of right wing parties in Europe (Pedahzur and Brichta, 2002, Panizza 2005), diverse form of radical Islam in the Middle East, Turkey and Indonesia, Buddhist extremism in Sri Lanka, Burma, (Scoones et al. 2017), or the increasing neoliberal economic and anti-immigrant policies.

Populism, on the other side, is a combination of, and also exists in, different forms across the political spectrum. Scoones et al. rightly argue that authoritarian populism is a rather problematic category which is often used for the political right (2017:2). Panizza defines populism as a “mode of identification available to any political actor operating in a discursive field in which the notion of sovereignty of the people and its inevitable corollary, the conflict between the powerful and the powerless, are core elements of its political imaginary” (2005:4). However, he also admits that populism is a contested idea and agreeing on what should be called as populism is difficult. Thus, suggesting it to be understood contextually.

Similarly, Ranciere argues that the term is not used for a particular political force, ideology or a clear political style – it “served simply to draw the image of a certain people” (2016). Consolidating few terms, Gusterson includes a range of articulation of populism such as ‘authoritarian populism’, ‘right wing populism’, ‘cultural nationalism’, ‘fascism’ or ‘neo-nationalism’ of the 21st century which are often combined with either right wing or anti-globalization agendas (2017:209). It is possible that these characteristics or forms of populism demonstrate together or in different combinations, and sometimes even paradoxically.

Authoritarianism could also be a contested term with its existence in both left and right politics. However, it has largely had regressive connotations vis-à-vis democracy. Panizza refers to it as a setting when a country is governed by ‘consociational elites’ and autocratic-militaristic behaviour. However, he raises an important concern that such traits could also emerge and continue within democratic settings – “encouraging rule by decree and all sorts of authoritarian behaviour while maintaining a democratic facade” (2005: 62, 95). However, Moore takes a clear stand that authoritarianism and such regimes have a clear concentration of power and are not tolerant towards pluralist systems. He argues that they lack the crucial political infrastructure and organization skills, and thus use authority and a sort of ‘corporatism’ to control people. This cannot last for too long as it lacks a consistent smooth popular support and they cannot keep up with growing modernization. Hence, it requires either breaking of the power and allowing pluralism or controlling the groups in a right-wing or fascist way (1974:194).

These three concepts amalgamate in varied forms, timing, and intensity and political-cultural-religious settings. I however, understand them specifically with reference to rural politics, resistance, ‘emancipation’ and the state itself. For this paper, and even otherwise, I argue that for a deeper understanding of these notions, they must be understood collectively and in relation with each other. This helps me in employing the lens of right wing authoritarian populism to analyse the proposed problematic.

1.3 A brief introduction to the Indian case

In the recent past, journalists, academics, human rights activists and the left in general have raised concern over the steady rise of ‘authoritarian populism’ in the West – with Trump coming in power, the popularity of Le Pen in France, Geert Wilders in Netherlands, Alternative for Germany becoming a trend even in other parts of the world including Asia like Duterte in the Philippines, Modi in India or past Thaksin regime in Thailand. Bhagavan (2016) pointed out that Trump represents a bigger pattern in the West although ‘authoritarian populism’ is rising in far more many places.

Situated within this global trend is the rise of right wing politics in India, after Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) candidate Modi came to power in a massive historic victory during the 2014 union government elections. Vyawahare (2014) highlights that the contribution of countryside has been significant in these elections, as the BJP secured a larger proportion of rural voters in comparison to other parties and won big in states with dominantly rural population. Despite the supportive rural base, there has been a massive outburst of farmers’ agitations in the country recently. Jha rightly expresses that even a remote look at the Indian media reports would show us that Indian peasants across regions are facing serious issues and are protesting against the various neoliberal policies affecting agriculture and farmers’ income (2017:252).

Amidst these, how do the Modi regime on the one hand, and its social base in the countryside, the conservative farmers’ movements, on the other hand – shape one another? It is important to ask this question because there are policies proposed by the Modi government that are protested against by its allies and supporters among farmers’ movements. Why is this so, and what does it tell us about ‘authoritarian populism’ more broadly? The inception of this paper took place with frustration, confusion and curiosity of what was going on in India, with the rise of right wing politics in relation to farmers’ movements and rural politics. More specifically, my quest has been to understand what forms of inequalities and political situations have emerged with it in the countryside.

1.4 Research problem and questions

Traditionally, social movements are seen in the light of protest and activism, where they are constantly positioned against the ruling dispensation. However, what makes the current case unique is that the mass movement is firmly embedded within a right-wing political party and yet appears to be critical of it. What is the nature and extent of these ‘differences’ and how deep does the tension run? This research paper is an attempt to explore in greater depth the chasm that exists between these two seemingly similar entities drawing their ideology and working motivation from the ‘same camp’.

I ask how grassroots farmers' perceptions of these differences compare and contrast, both within the movement and with leaders of the movement. How can scholar activists understand the agrarian crisis and policies in the context of Narendra Modi's emergence as a popular figure globally, at a juncture where leaders like Donald Trump, Marine Le Pen, Rodrigo Duterte have set the tone of populism. Where does he diverge from this trend? And more broadly, what is specific or unique about the current Indian case of populism? Could this tell us anything about future trajectories, particularly in relation to the alarming agrarian crisis and massive farmer protests, and the rise of Hindu Nationalism and right-wing authoritarian populism in India?

Thus, tied in the framework of 'right-wing authoritarian populism' my key research questions is What are the synergies and contradictions between and within, a populist force, i.e. Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) and its rural support base specifically the of Bhartiya Kisan Sangh (BKS), and why is this so?

The following sub-questions help in empirically reflecting on the key research questions.

- i. What are the agendas and framing of agricultural issues of BKS and what is its stand on the state proposed agricultural policies particularly since 2014.
- ii. In what ways is Hindutva part of the movements ideology and how is it enforced?
- iii. How inclusive is the movement across gender, caste, class. Minorities (mainly Muslims) and ethnic lines.
- iv. What has been the response of the state to the demands of the movement both in terms of having consent and coercion?
- v. In what ways the movement challenges the political regime and thus, what is the nature of resistance?

These questions are addressed in form of two building blocks in the paper. Firstly, it conceptually engages with different forms of populism and questioning the dominant meanings and typology including a brief on Indian historical context of the movement. It unfolds populism of the party and populism of the movement itself, underlining what are really their key characteristics. Building on the first, the second block is about presenting the contradictions I empirically encounter within the movement and between the state (in the context of Modi) and the movement, and how is it placed vis-à-vis global authoritarian populist forces.

1.5 Research methodology

This paper combines primary field research and existing literature on farmers' movements and right wing authoritarian populism. For the qualitative data collection, personal interviews and

focussed group discussions were conducted, along with an analysis of BKS literature like pamphlets, handbooks, videos, newspapers, and slogans, to understand the farmers' movements' base and functioning. I passively participated in district level gatherings of the movement. These were also brief ethnographic sites for me to get a sense of the power dynamic, use of religious symbols, identity politics or differentiation within the movement. The meetings also enabled me to observe both covert and overt forms of mobilisation and resistance, and how different farmers and leaders are positioned within the movement.

Field Site - Initial interviews were conducted with the national level leaders in the New Delhi office of Bhartiya Kisan Sangh and also with the founding members of BKS in Gujarat, followed by extensive fieldwork in Rajasthan. Both Rajasthan and Gujarat have been amongst the strongholds for both BJP and BKS. In-depth interviews with farmers and local leaders were conducted at village and district levels in Kota and Jhalawar regions in the state of Rajasthan.

Sampling - I used snow balling sampling initially and then purposive sampling. Initial interviews were conducted with the leaders at national and state level to get an overview of the movement. They behaved very much like the "gate keepers" of BKS. This was followed by personal interviews, and both focussed and open ended discussions with district, block and village level leaders, farmers across different age groups and caste groups. Interviews at different levels in the 'hierarchy' were done to understand the kind of interactions, confrontations, contradictions and political processes that were taking place in the movement. I spoke to 40 informants in total. Five interviews were conducted with women farmers or agricultural workers. Leaders from Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) were interviewed in order to broadly understand how these groups were connected with each other as sister organizations. The farmers interviewed were mostly paddy, wheat, soybean, coriander seeds, garlic and vegetables growers, with an average of two crops a year.

Issues and limitations - Being a woman the research had its difficulties (and possibly, advantages) in navigating an entirely male dominated movement. My access to informants, their responses, time (timings and the amount of time I could get to interact with the male informants) and even the questions were remotely shaped by my identity. Ethically and politically, it was important for me to move away from the broad categorisation of right wing or left wing movements. However, some degree of ambiguity during interviews about my own ideology and identity was a part of this process and did present an ethical dilemma for me.

The research also brought some awkward situations in relation to understanding the 'poor' versus 'poor' kind of relationship. For instance, analysing class relations when a village level leader, himself not being a 'rich farmer' aimed to change the lives of other farmers despite social and class variations. This is not to say that the paper itself has no ideological inclination. As a young researcher until now I find that almost impossible in social science research. Nevertheless, I have attempted to keep away from sweeping generalization. Baviskar aptly expresses that "we must remind ourselves that the scholarly text is simply one representation among many...one book is far from being the only, definitive, representation of people"

(1995:11). The known limitations of this paper are the limited time spent in the field and on engaging with the vast literature on these topics.

1.6 Bhartiya Kisan Sangh (BKS)

Bhartiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) is a farmers’ movement that was founded by Dattopantji Thengdi in 1979. Thengdi was both nationally and internationally recognised. ¹ He was a Communist Party of India member in early years of his life and then soon joined the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (RSS). He founded the Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), which is one of the largest workers trade unions in India, and went on to found many other organizations, including BKS and Swadeshi Jagran Manch. He was a known nationalist who aimed for the preservation of Hindu culture and rural society.

BKS was founded in Kota, Rajasthan, when 600 farmers and activists working on farmers’ issues came together to start a nationwide organization based on set principles and organizational structure.² The movement currently claims to have 20 million farmer members in the country with its strongest hold in states like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat. However, they claim to have a presence in all Indian states, including in the South and the North East. As mentioned in table 1 below, the movement is affiliated to the Rasthriya Sevak Sangh (RSS), the biggest and strongest right wing political organizations in the country. The BJP is the electoral arm of the RSS.

The movement has a national level committee situated in New Delhi and state level committees, with ongoing efforts towards making district and village level committees. These committees usually consists of seven members from President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasures, etc. The movement’s flag is of orange colour, which is also symbolic to the Hindutva ideology and RSS. The other two symbols on hoardings, and their offices include an idol of Lord Balraam and Bharat Mata³. The movement’s agendas and its current politics are explained in detail in the following chapters in the paper. ⁴

Table 1: Network of RSS affiliated organizations

Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (RSS)	Electoral Party	Other Affiliations with RSS
		- Bhartiya Kisan (farmers) Sangh (BKS)
		- Bhartiya Mazdoor (Labor) Sangh

¹ See <http://en.bharatiyakisansangh.org/static/thengdiji.aspx>

² See <http://en.bharatiyakisansangh.org/static/history.aspx>

³ Lord Balraam , Hindu lord considered as a symbol of strength. Bharat Mata (India as a motherland) is a Hindu nationalist way of looking at ‘our own country’.

⁴ Information on BKS is from primary data, pamphlets, website, BKS books and collected through news sources.

<p>More than 60 affiliated organizations working indifferent fields farming, factories, rural industries, with women, on indigenous consumption, education, with children, and even has publication units.</p>	<p>Bhartiya Janta Party (Nationalist Party in India and also the party in majority since 2014 general elections – when it won (along with its allies) 336 parliament seats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Swadeshi Jagran Manch (one of the main organizations fighting against westernisation, GMO crops)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vishwa Hindu Parishad (does different activities to preserve the Hindu culture)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bajrang Dal (Lord Hanuman Troops) – anti westernisation and stops people from conducting into western practices – for instance – valentine day celebration, love marriages etc.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rashtriya Hindu Andolan, demand removing "secular" from the Indian Constitution.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rashtra Sevika Samiti, women’s organization of RSS with the same principles.

Chapter 2

Authoritarian populism and the state-society relations – the synergies and contradictions

2.1 Right Wing Authoritarian Populism

Building on the elements briefly laid out in the previous section, this chapter ties concepts of right-wing, authoritarian and populism. It draws from the work by Stuart Hall on explaining Thatcherism as a political force and his reference to Gramsci's work in creating 'common sense' and 'hegemony'.

Hall looks at the emergence of authoritarian populism in a crisis situation as redefining 'discipline' and 'social order' or creating 'popular morality', 'popular ideologies constitute', a kind of 'strategic terrain' actively shaped by 'organized political and ideological forces. This resulting in organizing actions and behaviour of the masses in a way which lets the political force implement and produce new forms of consent. This does not necessarily involve creating new structures but 'renovating' the already existing systems. Engaging with Laclau's work, he argues that while the dialogue on 'populism' and 'democracy' cannot be attached to a certain class and neutral in that sense – it is absolutely unlikely that outcomes and practices of ideological struggle remain 'class-free' (1980:157-187). Nevertheless, it could be said that authoritarian populism is not a fixed idea and is articulated very differently in different political conditions and contexts.

Hall (1980) argues that Thatcherism worked because it operated directly on manufacturing 'popular ideologies' through working on the traditional forms of government in a direction of authoritarianism. It worked systematically on the 'popular morality' as it got the maximum acceptance through it. According to him, it is the 'radical right' that works on the margins of government power and systems whereby creating 'new equilibrium' between preserving the old knowledge or systems only with strongly altering them. Thus, with riding on the old systems and modifying them, the far right manages to get legitimacy from the masses and is capable of receiving popular consent through its engagement with everyday economic, social and cultural aspects. This could travel through historical situations and specific 'conjunctures' (Ibid.).

Suggesting an explanation for the right wing authoritarianism of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) and BJP, Ahmad articulates that their "commitment to creating a cultural homogeneity out of this ocean of diversities, and to translate that cultural homogeneity into a unified political will, means that it wishes to become both church and state simultaneously. That ambition is at the heart of its fight against secular civility and the specific content of its authoritarianism" (2016). He further questions how a far right political party can legitimately rule with its own fascist agendas through liberal democratic institutions.

As Hall explains, economic crisis, education, media, and law and order are some crucial spaces where 'right' notions have been well established. For instance, through 'politically-motivated teachers' in the classroom, and fake stories of 'adulteration' of school standards and schools becoming violent spaces due to allowing immigrants to study. He adds that media plays a crucial role by sensationalising these beliefs. He firmly argues that authoritarian populism is an "exceptional form of capitalist state - which unlike classical fascism has retained (though not all) the formal representative institution in place, and which at the same time has been able to construct around itself an active popular consent" (1979:14-20). Thus, the "radical right" just does not happen, but it is a result of continuous political and cultural effort and conquer

within the existing and sometimes new formations. This, as Hall argues, has the potential of reordering the system where authoritarian populism “is a response to the crisis and a crisis in itself”. This gets built on the already existing traditions, communal tensions, and crises of unemployment, poverty and agricultural prices, and so on. Hall aptly reflects “that restructuring of the order works on the ground of already constituted social practices and lived ideologies. It wins space there by constantly drawing on these elements which have secured over time a traditional resonance and left their traces in popular inventories” (1979:20).

It is possible that Hall (1979) predicted a future trend that we see now, when he argued “swing to the Right”, and considered it as not a ‘temporary’ or ‘short term’ disbalance of political forces. With reference to India Vanaik points out that ‘Hindu extremism’ is not new and has existed since the 1920’s, within and without national movements. However, what is recent is the wider public receptiveness of these right wing ideas (2001:52).

For instance, Bhutan is popular for its pride in minimalism and noted for its strict environmental and energy conservation measures, and most importantly its Gross National Happiness surveys. All of these popular practices are combined with an almost ‘hidden’ drive of ethnic cleansing minorities led by the monarch over decades. The military and closely state promoted violent persecution of Rohingya Muslims in the Buddhist Myanmar was appalling. San Suu Kyi as one of the most powerful politician, State Counsellor⁵ and Nobel Peace Prize laureate remained largely silent during this massacre. Thus, how have the authoritarian structure framed their populist ideologies and normalised its political styles is crucial to undersand. Suggesting a form of Thatcherism, Vanaik elaborates that the BJP has focussed on dropping ‘its own people’ with strategic posting in decisions making units of education, social science research, media and so on (2001:60).

This certainly contributes to altering the knowledge and experiences of the general population in a ‘rightward’ shift. Right wing authoritarian populism, hence, is a form of restructuring of state-society, state-capital, and society-society (with its heterogeneity) relations where the objective is a more powerful, controlling. In contemporary India, it is the case of more powerful and controlling government through market liberalism and Hindu fascism (see Vanaik 2001, 2017).

2.2 The State, capital and the countryside

The state remains a central actor in rural politics and agrarian transformation. Fox observes that since the last century, theoretical work has focused on how the state has been influenced by the actors and values outside its realm and how its leadership and systems chase its own interests. However, these theories have been in one direction. He argues that neither society centred nor state centred approaches completely explain the nature of agrarian and public

⁵ Head of the government equivalent to a Prime Minister, a position created in Myanmar during the 2015 general elections.

reforms. (2007:7). Thus, it is important that a state-society interaction framework is used to understand reforms and the discourse of development. Of course, the state and society themselves hold contradictions and variations within. Fox argues that even in the most authoritarian regimes, internal divisions or conflicts could deepen questioning of state through 'politics of accountability' and give an opportunity for civil society to exercise and penetrate to revive reforms (Ibid.:10).

Das analyses the state-peasantry interaction in a dialectical but reactionary form, where the state is considered advancing economic accumulation on behalf of capital. What are its impacts on peasants and how does it shape the rural politics or resistance from 'below'? He emphasises that with the massive shifts to market led interventions and neoliberal policies, it becomes even more crucial to constantly observe the state's role and actions. For instance, land reforms, land ceiling and landownership laws require active state intervention. And, even with its reduction in welfare provisions for peasants and workers in the rural areas, the state has been a promoter of agrarian and agribusiness capital accumulation at the local, regional, national and international levels. (2007:353). The state has been constrained by the dual role where it should have the capacity for "accumulation and legitimization", which are often contradictory as the capitalist state requires both profits and political stability to continue. (O'Connor: 1973).

Das argues that the neoliberal state is a class state where the government policies could be about re-establishing class relations and power and increasing capitalist control over resources, including surplus extraction in rural areas by large land owners and commercial farmers. (Ibid: 356). Additionally, the government led land reforms, industries and infrastructure through public private partnerships have aggravated the class divide, where knowledge has always been imposed on peasants' from outside and people are dispossessed regularly from their land and common resources. This form of exploitation helps in maintaining the class differences and ensuring the benefits to corporates, the state and even the petty elites. This differentiation, as Das argues, is combined with ethnic, tribal, minority status. In the case of Mexico, this has led to violence and outmigration from the countryside. (Ibid.: 358). Similarly, in Latin America for instance, Fox argues the military and technocratic state elites have attempted to overthrow the elected government systems and replaced them with "bureaucratic-authoritarian" regimes as a rationale to the economic crisis and increased demands (Ibid.:18).

In the context of a right wing authoritarian populist state, legitimization and accumulation from the peasants could happen through the neoliberal processes as well as a greater reliance on nationalism and state power. Nationalism is cultivated through the sense of 'common-men problems' and appropriation of religious belief, economic crisis and poverty, corruption from the opposition government and others. Thus, it could be a closer relation with the society on one hand for manipulation of the masses and with the capital for increasing profits. The relations thus, are both conflicting and combining. Butler et al. (2000) argue that the "Rightist 'fundamentalist' populism which advocates the return to grass-roots democracy, but above all are among the advocates of the market economy themselves." In other words, it is capable of establishing and normalising authoritarianism and social order in the countryside. This could be also a catalyst in normalising violence, manipulating resistance and class relations. Similarly, Das argues that the notion of civil society has changed drastically over years. The

issue of property relations which was central to its discussion has disappeared. The discourses in the civil society have not been specific about the rural workers and peasants and not paid attention to the specific political contexts. As argued, this is drawn from the modernization theories – like those of Scott whereby peasants and rural societies should not be interfered with – and must be challenged as this allows the state and class structures to remain ‘intact’ (Ibid: 365).

I emphasise that populism has a range of connotations and it really needs to be defined by the social base, government’s attitude towards the liberal democratic institutions, forms of governance, economic policy, to what extent police or military or religious beliefs are used to achieve goals, cultivate popular beliefs, fear and assert certain thought processes. The next chapters attempt to explain these themes further with the help of new farmers’ movements’ theory in India.

Chapter 3

The Indian countryside, State and Farmers’ movements – A historical perspective

3.1 Agrarian distress and crisis – Contradictions of state’ agrarian policies

There are multiple deep issues that are important to get a sense of the stark agrarian crisis which has stayed and continued in diverse forms for decades in India. It is beyond the capacity of this paper to travel in depth to address each and every issue. However, I briefly but firmly attempt to highlight some of the milestones which were rooted in the state policies, formation of change

in nature of state itself, rural politics, peasants' class differentiation, promotion of technology and social movements. These set the foundation for understanding contemporary politics and authoritative populism at the core of Indian state.

The Indian population remains significantly rural with 68.84 percent of its total population living in rural areas, according to the 2011 census.⁶ According to the National Sample Survey Organization⁷, the employment share and dependence on agriculture still remains remarkably high at 50.19%, while the share of farm production in GDP has significantly declined from 55.4% in 1951-52 to 14.6% in 2009-10. Hence, the poverty levels have remained stagnant or even aggravated for rural peasants as their relative income has reduced much further with decrease in GDP share as well.

With a series of famines, wars and slow economic growth, food shortage was considered as one of the major issues that modern India faced during the 1960s. The key solution offered by the state to this was a top-down proposal to increase agricultural productivity, a rather Malthusian attempt to solve the food availability problem.⁸ One of the centralized attempts was pursuing a Green Revolution, through technology and modern variety seeds which were introduced to improve agricultural output and productivity. The period of the Green revolution from the 1960s and its further expansion in the later years in the 1970s have been criticised by many for having no significant role in reducing poverty and instead aggravated the rural class divide. This as many argued deteriorated the agro-ecological balance and benefitted only rich farmers in specific regions in India. This had increased the class divide in the rural areas. Bardhan points out that while the green revolution improved yields of certain crops like wheat in particular regions, the overall rate of growth in agriculture was not at all significant, at 2.2 per cent per year.⁹

Das critically argues that the Green Revolution brought back the “state to control peasants through the bureaucratic system of dispensing subsidized inputs and fixing prices, a process which consolidated the position of local level state elites.” Also, the state in a way replaced the ‘old landlords’ and played a role in indirectly supporting the capitalist and rich farmers in controlling the marginalized rural and landless workers. He also points out that a mediocre phase of ‘repeasantization’ during the 1960s land reforms was overturned by the state later with the upcoming neoliberal policies of the 1990s. This included land transfers from small holders, capturing of common property in the name of market forces and conservation, cutting support for agricultural inputs and subsidies (2007:359). This has successfully deepened the class relations in favour of the land owners and the rich peasants. Byres emphasised that the Green revolution marked the powerful occupancy of “international capitalism” with capitalist establishing alliances with the ‘Third World’ governments, with newly defined processes of ‘neo-colonialism and’ imperialism’. (1980:245). He hence argued that with the green

⁶ This had reduced from 1952 census data when the rural population share in total population was 82.71% and reduced to 74.28 in 1991.

⁷ The National Sample Survey Organizations is a department responsible for conducting large scale surveys in different fields, under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementations (Government of India).

⁸ See Herring in Ray and Katzenstein (2005:203).

⁹ National Account Statistics as cited in Bardhan (1984:11).

revolution and associated technological development, the market itself has led to capitalist agricultural development in India and perhaps, “class efficiency” of the dominant agrarian classes (1998:165).

The Green Revolution meant the use and expansion of technology and modified ‘high’ yielding varieties of seeds, which caused several issues in the long run for the environment and health, specifically in the rural areas. Irrespective, as Patel analyses, the Green Revolution expanded with big players coming together for “philanthropy”, like the US government, World Bank, government from the industrialized world and other private players like Rockefeller Foundation. This ensured “accumulation for the dominant hegemonic bloc within countries in receipt of the package of technologies, subsidies and violence that constituted the programme”. Identifying the continuity of the Green Revolution in neoliberal times, he argues that not only has the intervention power of the state changed, but also the private sector has become much more powerful. This has exhibited in reduction in subsidies, inherent violence and control of knowledge (2013:50). Such a scenario aggravated the agrarian distress, specially for the marginalized peasants who now had to compete for their own food security with the liberalised market along with the changing rural capitalism where the divide between small, middle and rich peasants increased. This has been extremely contradictory of the state’s social democratic principles, instead making it autocratic-centralised.

The push towards cash crops and associated international price fluctuations has led to pushing farmers in debt and uncertainty, the results of which we have seen in the form of monoculture farming, associated food insecurity and farmers suicides in the country. A recent study by NSSO in 2014 claimed that 52 per cent of total agricultural rural households in India were in debt and the average size of debt had increased four times since the beginning of 2003. Indebtedness, further unavailability of credit and uncertain market prices (in the context of a neoliberal state combined with social pressure) have led to severe distress and farmers’ suicides.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau, between 1995 and 2014 – more than 300,000 farmers committed suicide in India. Just in 2008, also the year of the global food price crisis, there were 16,196 farmers’ suicides. This high number was recorded despite discrepancies in who has been considered a farmer – only those with land ownership and not in case of land leasing and for agricultural laborers (see Nagraj 2008, Sainath, 2015). Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh (including Telangana), Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh are the “Big 5” states where farmer suicides have happened in large numbers. Cultivators in “others” (tenant farmers and workers) category have also seen a dramatic increase in suicides, from 24,809 in 2013 to 41,216 in 2014, just in these five states. Infact, the category of ‘other’ has been further divided to create distorted numbers. (Sainath, 2015). A total of 2,96,438 farmers have committed suicide in India since 1995. In 2011, the farmers’ suicides rate was astonishingly 47% higher than the rest of the population. This raises serious questions on the success of previous green revolution, technology, neoliberal ‘growth and development’ and the role of state itself, specially in terms of an institutional support failure and willingness to identify and address the acute agrarian crisis which Nagraj underlines as an “epidemic of farmers’ suicides”.

Expansion of genetically modified seeds and biotechnology like scaled BT cotton in India has been a further step to continue the grave impacts of green revolution, which was well debated and paradoxically also argued to reduce poverty and improve food security. Herring analyses that BT cotton does not solve the problems of the poor in anyway and is only a claim by multinational seeds companies, like the giant Monsanto, which was on its way to gain a monopoly in India. The framing of this as a solution is how science and technology has been popularly framed by the elites and exercised by the state and private players. Thus, the vision of food security through genetic engineering had problematic consequences on the poor. Herring further argues it to have resulted in class and movements polarization in rural areas as some believed in the outcome of the biotechnology (2005:222). This is coupled with various factors like leadership of the movements and their political interests, caste and class reality, climate and strengths and weakness of social and public institutions.

3.2 The past Populist nature of the state and markets - result and the cause of crisis

Drawing on Herring, I argue that the “politics of framing” is crucial in creating popular beliefs and imaginary solutions by the populist state now and before, often combined with force, violence and manipulation of existing institutions.

The Nehru period in India was defined as a developmental state with belief in socialist and democratic principles. Its response to crisis was a strong state and development of public institutions and its five years plans. There was a conflict between developing an independent and capitalist economy, and reducing poverty and inequality. To achieve poverty reduction, maintaining growth, land reforms and progressive taxation were considered as benchmarks (Ray & Katzenstein, 2005). This still remained skewed towards powerful castes and classes. Ray & Katzenstein points out that that the language of poverty reduction had become a mere populist electoral agenda after Nehru’s demise. The state had already started responding to the food security crisis by introducing the Green Revolution, improved technology, and tie ups with international capital, mainly the US and associated partners. Indira Gandhi, served as the next influential Prime Minister for more than a decade whose autocratic policies, urban bias and her push for declaration of national emergency etc. led to eventual loss of trust in the Congress within its own party and the ‘public’, and eventually led to a loss of its political legitimacy.¹⁰ Simultaneously, the late 1970s and 80s was also considered as a period of urban bias and rural over urban agendas by farmers’ movements, discussed in much detail in the later section.

In the 1990s, as Sarkar argues, the BJP, instead of engaging on the same path of democracy and socialism like its opposition, created a firm foundation of ‘religious populism’. (2005). This also happened at the onset of structural adjustment programmes and the rise in State’s faith in capitalist growth, a shift to economic liberalization and privatization, instead of

¹⁰ See Introduction chapter Ray & Katzenstein, 2005

pursuing a stronger democratic state. This included a decline in state investment in developing public institutions. As Dreze and Sen have argued, there has been less focus on social development and there has been a decline in public investment towards it. The state has also not given due importance to developing primary education which has been an obstacle in creating overall access to the new economic opportunities for the marginalised and caused more inequality (1996:40).

At the conjuncture of responding to the economic crisis and accepting liberalization, Herring argues that India has opened up its market like no other country has, and which has made the farming sector even more risky and fragile. (2005,223). This has undoubtedly led to new patterns of unsafe migrations, accelerating vulnerabilities, and young peasants and agricultural workers shifting to other employments which have been equally unsatisfying (if not more as their education and skill levels have remained low as well). Sidiqqi argues that the GDP might have increased after 1991, but there has been little improvement in employment opportunities. More recently, unemployment has increased and there has been a decline in rural real wages (2017:149).

3.3 Farmers' movements – a reaction to the state, identity politics and the narrative of 'India vs. Bharat'

Peasant struggles and movements have been underway against this backdrop of states' economic liberalization policies, the. There has been a strong but varied reaction to the agrarian crisis and the crisis of globalization from below, with emergence of movements' which are highly differentiated by class and identity politics. This has led to a new theorization of social movements.

Emerging from the late 1970s onwards, the farmers' movements operate under different names in specific contexts throughout India. The most important of them are: the Shetkari Sanghatana in Maharashtra, the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) in Uttar Pradesh, and Punjab, the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh in Gujarat¹¹, the Tamil Nadu Agriculturalists' Association (TVS) in Tamil Nadu, and the Karnataka State Farmers' Association (KRRS) in Karnataka¹² (Brass, 1994:3).

The 1970s had been a period of various forms of political mobilization, and alliances amongst farmers' movements and political parties and on class relations in the countryside. Brass highlights that it is crucial to acknowledge the overall impact of these movements on local, regional and national politics. This included, protests, stopping food transportation systems, refusing officials access to villages, not paying bank loans and electricity bills, not supplying agricultural produced in the whole sale markets for demanding better prices – these reasons

¹¹ Both Bhartiya Kisan Sangh and Bhartiya Kisan Union have expanded their work in many states. BKS claims that it has a unit in every state now and soon will have a unit in every district and village *panchayat* level.

¹² See for more details, The Journal of Peasants Studies special issue on The New Farmers' Movements in India (1994).

became important for overthrow of Congress government in 1989 elections. Farmers' movements thus have played an integral role in influencing and shaking the political powers, even at the centre (Ibid.).

Lindberg similarly points out that some of the farmers' movements either emerged or became formal or informal allies of political (electoral) parties. Some movements were anti urbanization and westernization and favoured "*swadeshi*" (indigenous) path to development (Lindberg1994). There were others that represented the class interests of rich and middle peasants and took divergent stands on market and land reforms.

Dhanagare, talking about the case of Shetkari Sanghatana's ideology, contends that the main focus of the movement is on remunerative prices for farm produce, and on the issues of rules and regulations of trade. This was a springboard for peasants' protests during the 1980s in India. However, it was largely the well-off farmers with big land holdings that could produce market surplus and benefit from the increased prices for most cash crops like sugarcane, cotton, wheat and others. This not only led to improving income of these rural classes, but also led to them having formed the most powerful political lobbies. These "constitute the driving force and are also the main participants in the farmers' movements which have gathered momentum throughout India since around 1978-79" (Dhanagare 1994:72, 73).

Gill notices that even by 1970s, the 'politicisation of peasantry' existed in a big way, specially in the northern states like Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. Political parties were well aware of their dependence on peasants' support in these areas, and thus got some of the 'petty commodity producers' onboard along with already having 'pro landlords' and other influential farmers in the party. He explained that the Green Revolution also brought farmers closer to the market. The rich farmers used high yielding variety seeds which later put pressure on the small farmers to go down that path. However, this came with considerable dependence on the market for buying inputs (Gill 1994:196). These fluctuations partially defined the price crisis of the agricultural produce and also the gradual dependence on the market for inputs. Prices of both these were market driven and continued to fluctuate further with the advent of neo liberal policies, where today these prices locally gets defined by the global market. This has led to severe crop loss, debt and suicides, an overall increase in food insecurity and raised hopelessness amongst the farmers.

Lindberg, with the case of Bharat Kisan Union and Shetkari Sanghathan, both very popular farmers' movements of the 1970s and the following decades, explains that in many provinces, farmers have come together and formed organizations for improving their incomes within an increasingly market centric and commoditised agricultural economy. Thus, their main demands have included better interventions from the state, market regulations, reduced prices on inputs like pesticides, seeds, fertilisers, tariffs reduction in water and electricity, loan waivers and better remuneration for their products and cash crops. (1994). Interestingly, he points out that it has been a 'historic shift' to increasingly market oriented demands from a "land to the tiller" kind of movement, which were organized with the landless workers and peasants. This was predominant since Independence, when poor peasants came together and landlords had to raise

a counter movement to safeguard their own interests and reduce the influence of such radical stances (Lindberg 1994:101).

Thus, there were contradictions between the demands of the landlords and the landless. The movements involved tensions between the members, on who was represented, how common demands were raised, and on what issues movements could cut across classes. These movements have also been a centre point of investigating on what grounds \farmers mobilise and to what extent caste, class, Dalit, women rights, contributed in shaping these movements?

Assadi argues that KRRS ignores the exploitative relations within peasants and between peasants and rural labour. Instead, peasants are referred as “part of the future”, “the real producer”, “the real owner of the country” – and placed opposite the state and ‘the system’. This also means that “rural proprietors”, such as coffee estate owners, could also participate in the movements (Assadi 1994:213). Both KRRS and Shetkari Sanghathan maintain that the movement has to be a ‘united front’. As stated by the leader of KRRS, Nanjudaswamy “We cannot divide ourselves into landlords and landless farmers, and agitate separately, for the agitation will have no strength nor will it carry any weight” (Ibid.: 215). Both the movement have presented a sharp axis between ‘rural backwardness’ and ‘urban bias’, and ‘India’ and ‘Bharat’ being distinct from each other. Sharad Joshi observed that “‘India’ consists of the urban elite and power, groups, and Bharat consists of the mass of rural people” (Ibid.:217).

The response to the state and globalization varied across these different movements and marked an important aspect of farmers’ movements. For instance, the farmers' movement in Maharashtra supported a laissez-faire programme and called for minimum state interference. Pattenden brings out a crucial aspect of anti-globalization movements and critics, arguing that the ‘horizontal thesis’ of ‘non-hierarchical’ social mobilisations hardly exists and it is crucial to understand social and political relations vertically within the movement, along caste, gender, and class based inequalities (Pattenden 2005:1975). Herring and Agarwala similarly argued that firstly globalization did not take place directly in the countryside but through state as a mediator. Secondly, rural being considered as a class for itself and inclusive is a deceptive political stand, as in the process of legitimization of global market and national growth principles, the exploitation of labor by the elites has been unavoidable for maintaining competitiveness (2006:343). The farmers’ movements, embedded in social and political relations continuously shaped by identity politics, and fighting for inequality and rural workforce rights, have remarkably contributed in emphasising property rights and capitalist relations within. Banaji calls it as a process and demand of rural capitalism where “rural industrialization is not left to the large business groups” (1994:239). Based on these elements I have argued that the movements themselves have been contradictory forces and the contradiction runs deep within the movements themselves.

Chapter 4

Right wing Authoritarian Populism of the Modi Regime

4.1 The alignment of Hindu Nationalism and BJP

The Bhartiya Janta Party (literally translated as Indian People's Party, BJP) was formed in 1980 and today is the largest nationalist party in India. The BJP draws its ideological and organizational tactics from the Hindu nationalist organization, the Rashtriya Sewak Sangh (RSS). The RSS is “an organization inspired by and teaching the ideology of the militaristic Hindu extremism in its daily training schedules or *shakha*” (Sarkar, 2005). It was founded in 1925 and gradually gave birth to family of organization targeting different groups of people and issues, including women, children, tribal populations, and young men, with the core principle of establishing a “*Hindu rashtra*” (Hindu nation state). This has been further spread with public rallies, running local magazines, educational institutions and more. Hindu nationalist led the illegal demolition of Babri mosque in 1992, based on the belief that there existed a Ram Temple earlier and thus, the land should be re-devoted to lord Ram. RSS has given its ideological motivation to these organizations as an overarching figure. Vanaik

expresses that these ideologues have managed to skilfully manufacture “a collective sense of Hindu grievance, over and above internal differentiation of caste” (2001:54). This surpasses the atrocities and caste based discrimination Dalits (formerly untouchables) and *adivasis* (tribals) continued to face.

The Rath Yatra (or procession of Lord Ram’s chariot) in the 1900s gained immense popularity through media. Its majoritarian Hindu essence, literally began a prominent rise of BJP and Hindu nationalistic ideas in the 1990s. This was followed by BJP headed coalition party’s victory at centre in 1998. With the decline of the Congress government and loss of support for its development approach, the BJP gradually came to power. Now, the BJP and associated organizations like the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (see table) rule as the biggest social movements in the country. “The fragmented political field of the seventies and eighties, marked as it was by de-institutionalization, has been replaced by a new institutionalization, coupled with twin ideologies of market and Hindu nationalism” (Ray & Katzenstein, 2005).

4.2 Nature of populism and contradictions within

From the nature of campaigning and the BJP’s victory with Narendra Modi’s candidature in the 2014 Union government elections, to his ongoing tenure, it will not be an exaggeration to associate Modi with a ‘regime’, because he and his governing rules have been identified with some key patterns and structures. If I could add some specific characteristics to his persona, it would be the accelerated neoliberal policies in the form of more private and foreign investment, decline in public expenditure, encouragement to corporate funding for its pro-infrastructure development work and import substitution for primary products – a very neoclassical way of managing the economy. Coming from a far right wing party with a background of RSS training, he is identified as an authoritarian Hindu nationalist, while paradoxically and parallelly a huge globalist the same. According to Forbes 2016 ranking of ‘the world’s most powerful people’, Modi secured a position amongst top ten leaders along with Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump.

Table 2: Features of the Modi Populism

Modi	Neo liberal
	Gained huge popularity in countryside but also amongst middle and business elite class
	Hindu Nationalist, nationalist and a globalist
	“protection of sacred cow” – violation of minority rights and livelihoods
	Encourage industrialization and foreign funding/investments
	Decline in public expenditure, more corporate funding

Modi came to power partly due to his social base in the countryside amidst his populist posturing. This is overlapping and coinciding with the rise of what Achin Vanaik (2017) calls ‘Hindu authoritarianism’. But since coming to power, the Modi government has evolved dynamically. In some ways it is ‘populist’ because of its anti-corruption, anti-poverty, development and “acche din”¹³ rhetoric to create a popular image for the masses with the help of media appropriations. In other ways, it shows ‘authoritarian’ tendencies with the increasing cow vigilantism, sudden demonetisation across the country, making Unique Identification (UID) cards mandatory, o repeated reference to ‘Hindustan or Hindu nation state’, allowing the entry of GMOs, and so on. Some of his government’s new initiatives have been ‘Digital India’ with increased use of internet by ministries for information dissemination and active Twitter accounts of ministers, ‘*Mann ki baat*’ – a show where Modi addresses the general public through national radio and television channels, introduced national Yoga day, a bullet train project that is underway, changing names of some cities’, streets, or even government departments to more Hindu and Hindi versions. There are ongoing debates on the land ordinance, 2015 that exists with many loopholes to have scope for forced land acquisition in rural areas under exemptions like rural infrastructure, industrial corridors etc. Make in India a large skill building programme, is contested as unsustainable and for just covering up the unemployment in both rural and urban areas. The newly introduced Good and Service Tax (GST) which removes the multiple state level tax barriers for businesses – which is debated to impact rural industries and traditional skills adversely.

Vanaik argues that Modi’s and BJP’s important agenda of establishing a Hindu Nation State has been penetrating through ‘violence, state repression and censorship’. After the sweeping victory in elections, there have been close to thirteen major states where Chief Ministers from the BJP have become the office bearers. Vanaik puts it as a “long march through the institutions”, where he looks at the Election Commission of India, the Supreme Court, the public education sector and “Hindutva’s hegemony” even in civil society and activis,, with an increasing focus on creating fear for the ‘dissenters’ (2017). He also points out that choice of leaders who joined BJP as it expanded itself over months across states was strategic, from getting Nitish Kumar, the Chief Minister of Bihar on board, to choosing a Vice-President of the country from the South¹⁴ and appointing Ram Nath Kovind as a symbol of Dalit leadership became President this year. Both of these leaders have been strong RSS workers. Thus, it has been a successful tactic to creating a notion ‘no discrimination’ with getting individuals who ‘represent’ the most marginalised in the country and also matches with the party’s ideology. Vanaik argues that anti-corruption agendas are used by Modi government for more corruption by continuously getting corporate funding. Similarly, public education has been facing continuous change in text books, history and syllabus towards a dominant Hindu and Hindu

¹³ “Good days are coming” BJP’s popular slogan during 2014 elections campaign.

¹⁴ It is often talked about Indian context that the northern states have mostly dominated the central government. BJP after getting power in most northern states have used ways to control southern and north east states of the country.

leaders' popularity (2017). His social support base has been a huge share of countryside voters, but his populist image has both catered and cut across middle class and urban elites. What has been a point of great contention is the autonomy that the right wing organizations and groups have received at national and regional levels to take violence in their hands with instances of cow vigilante, mob lynching (banning of cattle trading, beef eating and slaughter houses say in Uttar Pradesh) where specifically minorities have been killed and lost their livelihoods. A form of "flagging nationalism" (Bhatia, 2016), a "cultural politics of animal welfares" imposed in the system of rural communities (Srinivasan,2016), and new cultural narratives being created on the foundation of 'othering' and 'hate' (Dutta, 2017) impacting lives and livelihoods of the poor farmers, pastoralists in the countryside and smaller towns.

Referring to the long effort of BJP and RSS, Ahmad building on Gramsci's work argues that 'secure religious-cultural dominance take advantage of the existing institutions as they do not "necessarily obstruct the power of the extreme right" and builds even stronger political power "combining religio-cultural conservatism and majoritarian violence with neoliberal capitalism within the belly of imperialism, as well as liberal democratic institutions of governance domestically" (2017).

I argue that in Indian case Hindu nationalist authoritarian populism has just not happened but it is a combination of different factors from the failure of social democracy, to the rise of neo-liberalism and success of RSS and BJP over multiple attempts. This was combined with the congress massive decline with series of scams, corruption and the ongoing economic crisis. Moreover, reproducing the identity of Modi as a "*Chaiwallah*" (tea seller) and as he came from a 'poor' background would be sensitive to the demands and problems of the large underprivileged population in the country both in rural and urban areas. Banaji rightly argued that the RSS had never encouraged electoral participation or the "leadership cult" – however, this changed with the popularity rise of Modi during the election campaign itself. This has led to identification of 'self-sustaining extremism in place (as Holmes argues in case of Europe) which is very dangerous for both public institutions and appropriating people's belief and cultural system (2013) – what Hall also calls a "organised fascism" (1979).

4.3 Contradictions between Modi regime

Jha argues that the ongoing widespread dramatic protests are a result of prolonged period of 'agrarian distress' which has taken place due to several changes in the macroeconomic policies in the 1990s with opening of the domestic markets, and agricultural production combined with reduction in government procurements and in minimum support prices (MSP) itself as the production costs have continued to increase. This has happened along with market forces becoming much stronger with lesser entry barriers for the corporates and private players and agricultural imports (Jha 2017:254). Such factors together have driven peasants further in danger and made survival difficult. Jha firmly calls it a transition from 'agrarian distress to agrarian crises'. This has been geographically uneven and diverse, however, exists everywhere.

The evidence of this is visible in the ongoing farmers' uprising where protests have showed up from some of the agriculturally developed states like Punjab, parts of Uttar Pradesh and also amongst the southern states like Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

The newspaper and media reports are flooded with the massive farmers' protests that have taken place across India after the 2014 elections and are currently ongoing. The severe fallout of agricultural prices, effects of demonetisation, free trade and duty free imports, rejection of exports, GMOs, push under the Modi government, rural joblessness, heavy farm debts have been some of the important factors influencing the unrest. On the other, movements particularly in the tribal areas have been violently suppressed for raising issues to tribal land rights and against land acquisition. This has been an unexpected reality for many who believed in the Modi tale which ensured a pro-poor, uncorrupted government.

The ongoing agrarian struggle has now resulted in some 150 organizations have come together from different political spectrum in All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee. The agitation has spread big in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Punjab and more recently in Mandsaur district in Madhya Pradesh where some 6 farmers were killed by the police during mass protests for better prices for agri-produced (See Jha, 2017).

There are particularly agitations against loan waivers and Minimum Support Prices (MSP) across many states in India. More interestingly farmers from the right wing movements like Bharat Kisan Sangh and Swadeshi Jagran Manch have protested against the cotton prices in Gujarat, and other agricultural agendas which are being proposed by party of their affiliation. It was recently flagged by both RSS and BKS that there was potential damage to the Modi government's image because of recent decisions — “strategic sale and divesting management control in over two dozen public sector undertakings (PSUs), commercialisation of genetically modified mustard and failure to respond appropriately to agrarian distress” (Pandey, 2016). The Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh's head, India's biggest trade union also from the RSS and BJP camp has argued that on the labor and economic front the BJP government has been like another Congress (United Progressive Alliance) government and the other changes are just “cosmetic” (Philip, 2017). I empirically discuss these contestations in the following chapters.

Chapter 5

Fault lines within the movement and with the state

This study, as argued in the beginning, empirically shows that there are divergences and contradictions within the social base of Hindu right wing authoritarianism and affiliated organizations. They do not necessarily fit into the ideal image of fascist forces and have overlapping agendas with other farmers' movements, say, of the Left. I extend this argument by analysing the agendas, the notion of 'agrarian crisis' within the movement, class relations and identity politics, mobilization processes, politics of leadership and most importantly the response to current government agricultural and other policies impacting the countryside. Above all, I look at the nature of resistance itself and what it tells us about the movements and rural transformation in the contemporary politics and market regime.

5.1 Situating Bhartiya Kisan Sangh in right wing authoritarian populism

As highlighted in the previous section, BKS, like other powerful farmers' movements, has been capable of shaping the Indian politics from below. In the 1980s, BKS led a 'collective' action by stopping all basic supplies, like vegetables and milk, from villages to cities in Gujarat, to push the government for electricity and irrigation demands and improve the prices paid for their produce (Ambubhai, interview).¹⁵ Both Bhartiya Kisan Sangh and Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh worked independently without actually coming together, with BKS largely working with

¹⁵ July 19, 2017

the land owners. These movements also operated strongly against the long legacy of the Indian National Congress through mechanisms of roadblocks, protests outside government offices and rallies.

The broad strands of populism in the movement include nationalism, attributes from Hindu religion, ‘classlessness’ and principles of agroecology. The movement remains anti-urbanisation and anti-westernisation, and believes in promotion of ‘*swadesi*’ (indigenous) practices, and sees the village as one community. There exists scepticism of ‘western scientific’ knowledge and the top-down centralised government structures are criticised, particularly by veteran leaders working at the village and district level (Hukam chand, interview).¹⁶ However, all of this existed in variations and as contesting ideologies within the movement, even in relation to its synergies and differences with both the BJP and its ‘father’ organization, Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS).

Recently, emphasis has increased on keeping the Hindu culture alive and making it a much stronger part of the movement and everyday life, which is gradually being forgotten even in rural areas. Farmers’ families’ are thus, told to worship the *Tulsi* plant, worship ‘mother’ cow, and also keep them in their homes, as they are beneficial for agriculture and integral to their lives. This is repeatedly stressed in the village and district level meetings (Kaival, interview).¹⁷ There has been passive resentment to this by small farmers, based on economic and logistical difficulties and the gradual loss of faith in the current systems. On the other hand, this as an agenda cuts across different peasants classes. This has been emphasised for solidarity amongst farmers and make them think about ‘nation’s interest’. To elaborate, across different interviews and slogans farmers have been considered similar to soldiers. Thus, farmers’ sacrifice and thought for nation’s interest has been repeatedly brought. During assemblies and interviews with the national leaders,¹⁸ it was argued that the BKS aims to make a strong disciplined collective, which its founder, Thegdi, also emphasised during the founding years of the organisation.

On creation of a Hindu nation state, it is believed that farmers and national development are complementary to each other, just like the army is to the country’s security. In other words, “army protects the nation at the border and farmers grow food for everyone” (Chadrashekhar interview)¹⁹. One of the national level leaders opined that much higher dependence on the market for agricultural inputs has resulted in unemployment for farmers and increase in input costs, while westernization has made farmers, specially the younger generation, lazy (Chadrashekhar interview). Thus, I argue that from the leaders’ point of view, farmers were seen beyond their personal miseries and were expected to be almost heroic in their efforts of nation and agricultural development. It was established that the society requires a collective

¹⁶ July 31, 2017

¹⁷ July 31, 2017

¹⁸ This was a repeated argument that came from the National leaders in Delhi, from the Gujarat state team leaders Ambu bhai Patel and Jeevan bhai Patel (founding members of BKS along with others). This was also shared as an inspiration with roughly 400 farmers in Kethun assembly (August 9, 2017) which I personally witnessed.

¹⁹ August 21, 2017

effort and support to each other. These logics possibly have been catalyst in creating popular consent and ‘unity’ in the movement. However, I argue that these are also ways in which farmers are exploited.

If farmers became self-centric it was not ‘nationalist thinking’. During a focussed group discussion with district leaders, the oldest leaders said that “leaders were like engine of a train and farmers like bogies who will join them in more numbers from every village in the country”²⁰. I argue that this has resulted in creating a ‘popular image’ for the farmers to mobilise in the movement. Paradoxically, while it possibly gives them a sense of togetherness or social acceptance, it could be that the movement is equally capable of taking away or altering the discourse of peasants’ rights. To elaborate, what will happen in a situation where the national interests’ won’t match with the one of peasants? I argue that there is not only a top-down approach from the state to the society, but the same is paradoxically found within the “emancipatory” politics and resistance against the state.

As one of the most ‘autocratic’ policies under the Modi government for curbing black money in the country, demonetisation had severe impacts on the rural industries and farmers, leading to decline in prices of farm produce and loss of work. Farmers’ economy run on cash, and this sudden announcement during the harvest season badly hit vegetable growers, horticulture and farmers in general. For months, there was no cash with farmers’ families. Rural workers had lost work both on the farms and in the factories at a huge scale (Rabari, interview).²¹ The farmers associated with BKS had similar experiences; it was pointed out during a discussion that due to heavy decline in prices overnight, the farmers went under further debts losses together. This issue was never highlighted in any of the gatherings and agendas by the farmers or the leaders as it was vaguely considered as a contribution to nation’s interest and had created a sort of ‘common consensus’.

Cow protection and politics around it has taken both a dramatic and violent turn in India. There have been several incidents of mob lynching and killing of Muslim minorities based on rumours of cattle trading and beef eating. Such acts are considered as being against the sentiments of the Hindu majority, who considers the cow as ‘sacred’ and as ‘mother’. It has also been further appropriated by Hindu nationalist groups such as the Bajrang Dal, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh. BKS top leaders have established strong links between farming and the cow. “The farmer is unhappy today because we have stopped keeping and caring for cows” (RSS spokesperson, speech).²² The notion of ‘discipline’ and hierarchy within BKS is maintained through a certain seating and discussion patterns. For instance, in large gatherings farmers cannot talk to each other if some leader is giving speech, the questions could be addressed only during a specific time slot etc. These styles are drawn from the RSS trainings. This may or may not be directly related to farming but will have the essence of an imaginary ‘Hindu nation state’.

²⁰ August 2, 2017

²¹ July 22, 2017

²² August 9, 2017

Across interviews and gatherings, a certain image of the cow has been created - as essential for organic farming, maintaining agroecology and also as integral to Indian culture. Thus, violence for their protection is justified. This has impacted livelihoods of pastoralists and rural workers involved in meat trading, besides creating a general atmosphere of fear. In BKS gatherings, it was repeatedly argued by senior leaders, specially those with a previous background in the RSS, that the cow was crucial to the society, and that organic farming and cow rearing should become mandatory for farmers. Such statements cut across both Hindu nationalism and agro ecological principles. The current government wants to protect cows at any cost, but not given any support to the farmers or pastoralist in this regard. I argue that this has become a question of imposing “morality” on the already marginalised groups. Secondly, it potentially strengthened the Hindu cultural and fascist practices in the rural areas.

Earlier there was no expenditure on keeping cows as there was enough grazing land and people mostly lived in joint families, thus, there was no need of hiring labor. Cow milk is procured from farmers at a much cheaper rate while cows require investments and a lot of care. Farmers are not able to save their land and cannot be expected to save cows if no support is provided (FGD)²³.

The cow does not have a religion and it is illogical to link the two. The original aim of right wing groups has been to create a “Hindurashtra” (Hindu nation state). Thus, “if someone is not a Hindu then give them threat, and if someone is a Hindu then control them in the name of nationalism and if someone is a Hindu and nationalist then cow is a way to keep them associated with them. This was never an issue but has been turned into one; now nobody wants to even touch the cow” (Rabari, interview). What is more confusing is the heavy infrastructure costs that is required in keeping cows and the shrinking grazing which has not at all been addressed by the government, lands, partly which are being occupied by the government itself for industrial purposes. These adversely impact the countryside, with both losses of livelihoods and resources.

The national politics and the countryside politics do not operate independent of each other. Another veteran leader of Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh stated “to protect mother cow is a very positive thinking and act. RSS has already said that there will be a cowshed in every district. In saving cows some incidents (referring casually to violence) take place but the intention is very positive” (Sharma, interview²⁴). This is a meeting point for the RSS, BJP and BKS leaders, which however is different from the farmers’ perspective, as it could have negative impact on their household economy.

5.2 Agroecology of Bhartiya Kisan Sangh

²³ Arjunpura, August 4, 2017

²⁴ August 13, 2017

BKS literature points out that the movement mainly focuses on three aspects – mobilization, holding protests, and agriculture research and development (pamphlet: 2017). Some of the leaders, with other farmers, have been experimenting with organic farming. This has received success in some areas where BKS operates. However, the idea is to expand it across the villages. Referring to a larger politics against the third world and creating dependence, Hukam Chand²⁵ argued that seeds and pesticides companies were killing the country and its farmers. He further explained that it was after the Second World War that the remaining raw materials to be used for making bombs were promoted as fertilizers and sent to countries like India. “First they sent diseases with their inputs and then their medicines”. He added that due to poisonous impact of these agricultural inputs over the years, the quality of Indian agricultural products has drastically deteriorated, which has led to rejection of a lot of India’s exports, including from European countries. He added that BKS considers centralization of agricultural policies as a mechanism that only benefits the agricultural companies. One of the aims of the movement, infact, has been to draw attention to take care of the 127 agro climatic zones of the country, as this is believed to be catalyst for stopping migration and reducing poverty (see also Thegdi, 2002).

Reflecting on the history of agriculture during one of the group discussions with the organic farming unit of BKS, it was reflected that India was treated and shown as a poor and hungry country, on the basis of isolated instances. While this was not the case in the entire country, it was generalised in order to let foreign companies and aid enter rural India. Scientists and politicians who had studied abroad and missed what could have been done with the use of local resources. It was added that earlier the Indian soil was overall pro organic agriculture, but after the green revolution, specially with the introduction of hybrid seeds and fertilisers, the soil had lost its nutrient quality over years. This was made possible by westernized scientists, who knew that it would create problems in the near future but for selfish interests had ruined the rural lives (FGD)²⁶. This led to destruction of local seeds, soil and water resources, and a consequent decline in rural health. Thus, farmers have been pushed from self-sustainability to dependence on the market.

Currently, in the researched region, there is big presence of seeds companies like Bayer and Syngenta, which has been condemned by BKS. These seeds are supplied through government seeds shops. Pesticides and seeds from the market²⁷ are being used for the last ten years, which has reduced the quality of soil and productivity. The government was at fault to first let such inputs enter in the village economy, second for not being pro-food sovereignty and local inputs which were one of the core reasons for farmers crippling (Ramdev and Rambharose interviews). While BKS is putting efforts in the improvement of agricultural techniques, it was not common across the villages I studied. Some small peasants argued in one of the discussions that organic farming is possible but only when farmers have bigger sizes of land, available

²⁵ An organic farmer, trainer and one of the old BKS leaders since the founding years in the 1980s.

²⁶ Asnawar, August 5, 2017

²⁷ Farmers interviewed in this region during the study shared that if they did not use “ghar ka beej” (their own local or saved seeds from previous crop) they usually bought it from the government shops which had seeds from different private companies.

capital to take risks, and reliable demand for their produce (FGD).²⁸This has formed one of the core differences between BJP and BKS.

5.3 Agricultural issues, class interests and differences within movements' agendas

Scoones et al. (2017) argue that the important elements in understanding and analysing populism is “determining who is incorporated and to what extent, and who is excluded, and under what conditions”. This even gets reflect in the field work. In one of the pamphlets used in the protests during June 2017, 61 demands were put forward to the state government of Rajasthan. These included having a special session in the parliament discussing only on farmers issues, and demands of reduction in electricity tariffs, improved irrigation, directly related to (including seeds, Minimum Support Prices, and not allowing GMO seeds in the state) and better access to banking services. Timely and better compensation in cases of crop failure is also an important demand raised by the movement.

Unlike other movements, waiving off of farmers loans is not considered as one of the most important demands by BKS leaders. It was pointed out during one of the speeches that loan waivers were not a solution and farmers needed to become capable themselves, instead of being too dependent on the government. Loan repayment cycles and the availability of credit are often not timed well with the sowing season, when cash is needed the most. This has also led to farmers selling portions of their land in order to repay and also buy inputs (FGD)²⁹, Repaying loans with fluctuating prices and combined loss has pushed farmers in debt and left the younger generation more disinterested.

Minimum support prices and better prices in the *mandis* (wholesale markets) have been the most common demands of the BKS. This is the primary reason of the massive farmers protests. Due to a steady increase in input prices and inflation in general, farmers claimed that they are not able to cover their production costs. Education, health and connectivity services between the city and villages were extremely poor and there was an overall loss to the younger generation and farmers' families as they were not getting access to basic services (FGDs)³⁰. The need of accepting Swaminathan Commission report 2006³¹, was pointed out by the village level leaders, another demand that has not received attention under the current BJP government (Amanlal³² and Hukam chand, interview). Thus, better prices have been the dominant demand by the farmers, but one on which largely no government response has been received.

²⁸ Rasalpur, August 10, 2017

²⁹ July 29, 2017

³⁰ Rasalpura and Arjunpura, August 2017

³¹ This aimed food and nutritional safety along with better prices and quality.

³² August 3-4 , 2017

During one of the major gatherings in the state³³, it was said that out of the 75 demands made to the state government, 55 were accepted by the government. However, on looking at the actual pamphlets that were circulated, there were 61 demands out of which 39 were accepted as listed. Most of these demands did not seem to be directly helping the farmers in any way. For instance, the agenda note included payment of 700 rupees if a transformer got burnt in the field. Some of the demands included new electricity connections, reduced tariffs, and extensions in bill payment periods. Other broader issues of consensus included repairing of the river banks and new irrigation projects, including solving conflicts between the Punjab and Rajasthan state governments. Demands directly related to farming included a complete ban of GMO Mustard and other GMO seeds. Giving agricultural status to medicinal plants, proper bills from the wholesale *mandis* (markets) for the farmer and a compulsory instalment of electronic measurement scales in all the *mandis* were also part of the list. There were demands for grants to farmers for the setting up of food processing units and exports of medicinal plants and fruits. Moreover, setting up a national committee on seeds and a state committee on Minimum Support Price to send the suggestions to the central government, with BKS leaders as members, was suggested to the state government.

Critically analysing these agendas, I argue that first, some of these demands show class interests of middle to rich peasants, and of the surplus producers. This includes some of the BKS leaders who are farmers themselves. None of these agendas have any mention of agricultural labor and women farmers' issues. Demands for improvements in basic services like health, roads, and education have not found any mention in these agenda notes, although these were shared as major concerns during group discussions with farmers.³⁴ The class analysis becomes central to BKS since demands for landless workers and agricultural labor are not incorporated as everyone in the countryside is considered economically poor. Banaji (1994:229), referring to one of the conventions of Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS), shows how the issues of poor peasants and wages are not a part of their agendas. This is because it is suggested through the movement that unless farmers receive higher prices for their produce, it will not be possible for them to pay minimum wages to the agricultural labourers. He further argues that "the other sections of small holders and farm-hands are attracted to it for various social and economic reasons. They regard the *sanghatan* (union) as the only body capable of redressing their immediate grievances."

In terms of class relations within the BKS, while there is a 'rural bias' in the movement, class is often understood as a homogenous category, particularly by the leaders. For instance, during the interviews it was expressed that economic inequality and the rural urban divide has hit farmers the most, with urban areas getting priority for development and public facilities (FGD). Hukam chand stated that 'common men', whether middle class or below poverty line, are facing problems and thus, people from all the classes should be together. Farmers and agricultural labor are the same and the village community should be seen as one society, unlike what communists do to divide them (Thegdi, 2002). "If the farmer, workers, suppliers and the

³³ August 9, 2017, Kethun district, Rajasthan

customer come together as ‘one’ then we will be able to resolve all the farming issues”³⁵. Clearly, the obvious class clashes have been ignored by the nature of agrarian populism in the movement, which has suppressed the demands of the already marginalized peasants.

Jugdish, who is one of the BKS district leaders and also a lawyer and farmer by profession, shared that a lot of BKS farmers are engaged in organic farming and are earning well, both locally and through exports (interview). However, I understood that most of these organic farmers have at least one hectare of land. Some of them also have other sources of income or salaried jobs. The state policies have made it unfavourable to continue growing organic food, BKS is challenging it by setting up successful examples; however, it is not class neutral.

BKS presents itself as a “for the farmers” movements and makes ‘no distinction’. Gender, caste and religion has a crucial impact on peasant’ access and representation and thus, even if movements argue for the attainment of food sovereignty or sustenance of the rural economy, the community is always differentiated. However, it raises an important question whether to counter the authoritarian and neoliberal policies of Modi – ‘populism’ is needed from below which is full of its own contradictions.

5.4 Contestations with movement leadership and identity politics

The movement is absolutely silent on women farmers’ issues or even getting them on board as equal participants in the movement. However, women were seen as mobilising agents. “the male leaders in the movement put no effort in getting women involved and expect us to do it” (Rambharose, interview).³⁶ On the involvement of Dalits and minorities, different state and district leaders argued that farmers coming from any caste and community, including Muslims, must abide by the rules of the movement and respect to Bharat Mata (India as mother goddess) and God *Balram*. (Hemraj interview)³⁷. This strategically avoids the involvement of Muslim farmers and even some of the Dalit communities, while the movement stretched across some other caste groups from scheduled castes (SCs), tribes (STs) and other backward castes (OBCs). The major castes involved in the BKS are *Patidars, Choduhary, Meena, Nagar, Gujjar, Suman, Malav, Meghwal, and Seni*. Some of these have been traditional landowners, while the others are politically very strong groups in the region. Banaji rightly argues that the farmers’ movements are often conservative as they emphasize on property rights and increasing the base of rural capitalism, where corporates are not involved but the rural elites are (1994:239).

Caste and religious differentiation that exists in the Indian peasantry are largely ignored by BKS and are considered a ‘thing of the past’. According to one of the senior spokespersons of the movement, “Earlier people did not even sit together to eat but today people from different

³⁵ August 21, 2017

³⁶ August 10, 2017

³⁷ July 25, 2017

caste sit together and nobody questions. RSS and its organizations have brought this change” (Sharma, interview). BKS defines farmers as anyone who is involved directly or indirectly into farming; someone who tills the soil in his or other’s field, or is involved in allied agricultural activities (2017 pamphlet). Despite this, on labor issues, the state leader of BKS argued that labor is stronger than the farmer today, since the labor wages are ensured irrespective of the production and agricultural wage rates have been increasing every year, while the farmer faces huge risks with his final production (Hemraj, interview). Across discussions with the farmers and leaders during the study, there is least disagreement on agricultural labor being financially better off than the farmers, and it was argued that the financial gap between labor and farmers was reducing rapidly. This also has to be understood with reference to the movement leaders, who are middle to rich peasants’ themselves with both bigger lands and hired agricultural workers.

After the major BKS protest in Rajasthan in June 2017, small local gatherings were conducted across the state to address the result of the protests. “For three days the government did not give any response, they thought we will give up but we stood there peacefully and did not harm any public property. Even the police was appreciative of our disciplined agitation.” Referring to the demands accepted, it was shared that MSP was a central state issue and needed a longer fight as pointed out by the state leaders. (Jugdish and Satya Narayan speech).³⁸ In my opinion, this was a strategy to keep the movement intact, since the major demands of the farmers on water and minimum support price were left unaddressed.

Farmers in villages had varied experiences on their mobilization and fulfilment of demands. “If we are capable of doing, we will do everything, but the government does not allow us to be capable, they know we will protest for four days and after that we cannot afford to protests. We can protests well if we at least do not have to worry about our families and basic necessities for few months.” (Brijmohan, Personal interview, 2017).³⁹ Farmers continue to be a part of the movement as government listens only when people are together. Farmers’ financial situation is really bad and that is why particularly for the poor farmers it is very difficult to mobilise. The supply has to be completely stopped to markets and urban areas, to make the government understand, but protests cannot happen in such financial situation (FGD 2017)⁴⁰. This raises an interesting point on the nature of mobilisation, as poverty is seen as an obstacle in mobilising, and if there was more financial stability, perhaps the agitations would be bigger from the farmers’ end. However, the financial benefits are dependent on the same system. It was expressed by various leaders during the study that they roamed around house to house and in nearby villages to make village level committee and organize gatherings so that BKS becomes a strong federation and not just a crowd. It was pointed out that they did not get any money to run the movement, but that they used their own hard earned money (from farming) to mobilise farmers.

³⁸ August 9, 2017

³⁹ Farmer from Arjunpura village and BKS member

⁴⁰ Arjunpura village, Rajasthan

Lenin, in his work of the differentiation of the Russian peasantry, revealed that peasantry have not been “antagonists of capitalism but, on the contrary, are its deepest and most durable foundation” (1928:131) . This is because there is a continuous penetration and formation of the elements of capitalism ‘within the community itself’. Secondly, the peasantry and agriculture are both hugely based on the “traditions of the past, the traditions of patriarchal life, as a consequence of which the transformative effects of capitalism , the development of the productive forces, the changing of all social relations, etc. manifest themselves here most slowly and gradually” (1982:131). This is appropriate in the case of BKS, which operates with powerful ethnic and class biases., leaders’ own personal biases which supports in maintaining these biases from below and could take a violent form as many of its leaders came from Vishwa Hindu Parishad, RSS and Bajrang dal who centrally believed in work towards Hindu majoritarian and creation of Hindu nation state. A contributing factor for the BKS’ expansion has also been that it was founded on the principles of non-person specific leadership, while this expansion also does not stand alone from the RSS.

This was an important contradiction and conflicting point within the movement has been the supposed ‘link’ of BKS with BJP and RSS. “BKS and RSS should be kept separately and we should not be forced to follow them. They don’t understand anything about farming and farmers issues since they only care about the agenda of Hindu nation state” (Amanlal 2017, personal interview).⁴¹ During a discussion some other BKS farmers pointed out that the top leaders of BKS get quiet or agree with the style and agendas of BJP and RSS and that crushes all the efforts from villages.⁴² However, the same was also countered by some other anecdotes of BKS leaders, about not having a choice but to negotiate with the political organization for the benefit of farmers.

What aspect of the crisis is affecting whom the most? And to what extent mobilisation itself is organic or political or distress driven and what kind of class and ethnic relations it could result are broad but important questions to rise. BKS poses complex social and political agendas embedded in both social and political relations are similar and contradictory in multiple ways and too complex to be put them in any ideal type of right wing populism. I reflect on these differences between BKS and BJP in the next chapter.

⁴¹ Arjunpura

⁴² Rasalpur village, FGD

Chapter 6

Contradictions between the farmers' movement and the state

“Bhartiya Kisan Sangh will not be scared of any political party. Have you ever seen any political person or minister here? We are farmers’ guards and we are here to protect them. Our objective is not to make any party but only to support farmers. BKS should become a name that the government is scared of. (Jugdish 2017, speech).⁴³

Bhartiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) has been in news recently for protests against the nationalist BJP-led union government and state-level protests, including in Rajasthan where the fieldwork for this study was conducted. There has been resentment both against Prime Minister Modi and the state’s Chief Minister, who also belongs to the same party. BKS has even joined the newly formed All India Farmers’ Coordination Committee which represents farmers’ organizations across the political spectrum. This surprising stance of the BKS contradicts with the political camp it supposedly drives its ideology from. In this chapter, I attempt to explain the how and why this opposition has appeared.

The table below lays out the main contradictions and points of synergy between BKS and BJP:

Table 3 Contradictions between BJP and BKS

Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP)	Bhartiya Kisan Sangh (BKS)
Pro -free market and pro-liberalisation	Anti-free market, pro “Swadeshi” (indigenous)

⁴³ Farmers sabha (gathering) in Kethun, Rajasthan

Pro-increase in agricultural productivity	Pro-increase in productivity only if profitable prices are ensured
Withdrew bonus and abolish Minimum Support Prices soon	Improved and ensured Minimum Support Price
Pro-GMO	Anti-GMO and promoting organic agriculture
Allowed 100% FDI in food processing and animal husbandry	BKS is firmly protesting against this and finds it a threat to rural farmers
Pro-advanced infrastructure, technology and urbanization	Anti-urbanization, westernization, Pro indigenous science, pro technology which is financially suitable and user friendly
Pro- privatisation of seeds etc.	Opposing it and wants government to ensure supply of healthy seeds
Pro import substitution of food and agri-products	Pro export and self-sustainability within the country with food consumption.
Neglected ecological and environment sustainability concerns	Ecological balance and protection of all agro climatic zone considered crucial
Cow as sacred and protection is must	Cow as sacred (from the leaders)
Hindu Nationalist	Hindu Nationalist
Authoritarian populist	Agrarian populism and ‘village as one community’

Hansen argues that “looking closer at social movements one finds that they are composite phenomena comprising many social relations, world-views and identities, about which there is constant negotiation. In short, they are volatile and changeable structures. (cited in Lindberg, 1994:100). These contestations and identity formation are also very different and constitute one of the important limitations of classical Marxist literature, where articulation has been mainly around class struggle against the state. Hasan argues that there has been silence and no counter movement from the peasants and the movements’ leaders against Hindutva and the dominant right wing politics. Moreover, across some of these movements, there has been an ideological encouragement of populism of different kinds, whether it is to do with standing against westernization or emphasizing peasants as one identity. (1994:189). While this holds largely true, any form of ideological solidarity between BKS and BJP has been compromised with removal of bonuses to farmers, not procuring enough agricultural produce supported under MSP, low MSPs, high level of inflation, and most importantly, the increase in import substitution. These policy steps have not gone well with farmers in the countryside, leading to massive agitations.

Bhartiya Kisan Sangh, has been critical of green revolution and neo liberal policies instituted in the early 1990s. It has ideological differences with the BJP on many grounds, as I empirically argue in this paper. Agricultural policies under Modi government have been disapproved precisely because they have deepened the crisis - the crisis of agricultural prices,

debt, food security and unemployment. Corporates penetration through seeds, technology, herbicides and other chemicals, or in the form of corporate farming, has been condemned and rejected by BKS farmers, and as well as movement leaders. Similarly land acquisition for the stated purpose of creating skilled jobs has been received with scepticism by farmers. The import and export policy of the government is also regarded as unfavourable to farmers. It was pointed out during the fieldwork that the import of rice and wheat has led to reduction in prices (lesser than one third of the earlier price) in the domestic market.

Modi ensured that farmers' issues will be resolved by 2022 and rates for crops will increase by 50 percent however, the prices have only gone down and the debt might double. There is no faith in politicians amongst farmers and that the government will do any good. It is encouraged that farmers take some initiatives. For instance, farmers' should not sell their produce at lower rates than Minimum Support Price (Jugdish, 2017). The veteran leaders specially who have been a part of BKS since 1980s argued that Congress has never acknowledged them and that with the BJP, it is at least possible to have a discussion (Ambubhai 2017, personal interview).⁴⁴ However, in interviews in Rajasthan, which is also a more electorally contested space between BJP and Indian National Congress, it was argued that BKS would protest against any government, including Modi and the BJP, as the farmers were being pushed in poverty by both the parties.

“Everyone behaves in the same way once in power. BKS protests whenever is needed and not based on who is in the power. We are sometimes questioned that why do we protest – when we know BJP members, why do not we just enter in their offices, when we have access. The truth is these ministers do not listen to anyone and do not belong to anyone” (Suhas, Agriculturalist 2017, personal interview⁴⁵). Farmers and BKS leaders differed in their opinion of how BKS and BJP were politically linked and to what extent BKS was influenced by BJP and vice versa. While across interviews it was shared that the BKS protests against both the national parties and works as a separate entity, the BJP was still considered as a nationalist party and there have been lot of expectations from Modi, given his popular image as a strong, nationalist leader. However, his policies are being realised as anti-farmers and thus, being challenged. “We had many expectations from Modi but he has just ruined our hopes, they are talking about so many big schemes but we do not see anything around” (FGD 2017).⁴⁶ Thus, it is possible that even the nature of Hindu nationalism is not the same across and within these organizations; BKS farmers or local leaders seem more inclined towards practicing Hindu culture, with evidence of some ‘fascism’ at state and national levels, while the BJP plays more of the Hindu majoritarian card.

There are differing opinions of BKS' association with the RSS within the movement's leadership. Some farmers accuse BKS to be running as per the larger agendas of RSS and not being firm with BJP leaders and farmers' demands (FGD 2017)⁴⁷. Aman Lal, who is a village level leader and has been in BKS for twenty years, shared that it was argued recently with the

⁴⁴ Gandhinagar, Gujarat

⁴⁵ Udaipur

⁴⁶ Arjunpura

⁴⁷ Rasalpur

national and state leaders that Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) and BKS should be kept completely separated as they will never understand the plight of farmers and their families. RSS prioritises the nation's creation first rather than people. He added that while BJP was separate from BKS – they ought to be kept in touch for farmers' benefit with a clear agenda of farmers' interests and not to get merged in them, since “movements have to compromise on some aspects whether it is BJP or Congress” (personal interview, 2017). It raises an important question on how and to what extent a movement with a prior ideological cohesion can have the space of dissent and open resistance, particularly from the most marginalised farmers and village level leaders, against its 'own' political party and authoritarian leader.

Fox (1993:10) argues that “the government's capacity to carry out distributive reforms is depended on the beneficiaries' autonomous mobilization in defence of their interests against anti-reform elements within the state itself.” This does get represented in the recent agitations where farmers from BKS and other movements have resisted against agricultural policies and losses farmers have incurred, BKS farmers along with other movements have protested through rallies, road blockages, hunger strikes, etc. They have come out in big numbers in states like Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, which have electorally been the strongest BJP states. Right-wing movements like *Swadeshi Jagran Manch* and BKS have continuously protested against Monsanto and GMO crops, which have been a major concern for left wing movements as well, along with opposition for other neoliberal policies.

Chapter 7

Conclusion - contested authoritarian populism

In this study I asked the key question - what are the synergies and contradictions between and within a populist force i.e. Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) and its rural support base, specifically the case of Bhartiya Kisan Sangh (BKS), and why is this so?

Based on theoretical and empirical understanding I argue that while BJP and BKS resonate and base its ideology on Hindu majoritarian and cultural nationalism, there are heavy tensions between the two. With the increased resistance by farmers against genetically modified crops, minimum support prices, loan waivers and an overall demand for better education, health, quality of life has firmly questioned the neoliberal agendas and market based poverty solutions

of the BJP. This is combined with opposing concerns on environment and agroecology on which BKS is also principally based. However, the movement does reflect identity politics and differentiation on class lines within it. I argue that this helps us to understand how right-wing populism functions in reality in the countryside; contrary to the assumption that right-wing farmers and workers unions neatly contribute to the rise of right-wing political groups. They may be more heterogeneous in their demands at the ground level. In the Indian case the Modi's social base has been opposing his global and capitalist dream.

As Scoones et al. argue that “contemporary populist politics are far from uniform and are often contradictory: for example shoring up exclusionary and even violent political power, while selectively offering progressive policies, whether free tertiary education in the Philippines, land reform in South Africa or Zimbabwe, or targeted investment in rural communities in the US, Europe or India” (2017). I have argued in this study that authoritarian populism is not a singular or ‘unified’ ideas and thus, could be used in different social and political contexts. “Authoritarian populism’ (AP) has never been intended to, could not possibly have been intended and—I would claim—has never been used in my work, to produce a general explanation of Thatcherism. It addresses, directly, the question of the forms of hegemonic politics. In doing so, it deliberately and self-consciously foregrounds the political-ideological dimension” (Hall, 1985). With reference to Modi and some other global leaders it is argued that while they are considered as authoritarian figures, their leadership characteristics are very different from each other and cannot be put into one category. Some are more fascist than others. Some are more diplomatic like Modi while somebody like Trump is blunt about getting “America first” catering to the demands and needs of the white Americans and the middle class. These leaders are difficult to be put into one kind of authoritarian populism and cut across different characteristics.

Bernstein argues that there exists many kinds of populism and agrarian populism and a distinction should be made between them with their key elements, intellectual form, people but also by the history of it and some specific circumstances, political strengths and dynamics they occur in (2009:69). Looking at current trends globally Bhagavan (2016) argues few key factors in occurrence of a radical populist politics – the economic globalization, the emergence and taking over of huge, non-state multinational corporate actors, the globalization of conflicts and its articulation as a long war on terror and the overall crisis in public health and environmental threats globally. It is a combination where a neoliberal government or leader is also fascist or nationalist at the same time or some could even be religious fanatics.

In case of Le Pen, Trump or even Modi the countryside has constituted an important social base. The right wing populism combined with economic crisis in the countryside has contributed to the rise of these leaders. In some cases this is achieved with the combination of corporate capitalism, appropriation of public institutions and religion. The same social base is capable of launching resistance against the hegemony of these leaders as argued in the case of BKS and BJP. As Laclau (2005) inspires that “reclaiming populism, and its performative dimensions and ‘dangerous logics’, can thus be central to the creation of ‘radical democracy’ and the struggle against the normalisation of authoritarianism”. In one of the interviews it was pointed out that the right wing movements have been working hard and thus, their presence is

increasing, since, the effort require to counter these initiatives is not happening (Rabari 2017, personal interview). This paper has attempted to extend ‘political-ideological shift towards right’, and Hall’s point of contradictions in the context of Social democracy in Thatcherism to the Indian case. I argue that fresh perspectives are required in understanding these contestations and dilemmas and varied reasons behind peasants’ mobilization and participation in countryside politics.

References

'Bhartiya Kisan Sangh'. Accessed October, 22 2017 <<http://bharatiyakisansangh.org/>>.

Bhartiya Kisan Sangh, Anonymous 2017. *Bhartiya Kisan Sangh Ke Mahapadav Andolan Main Kisano Ki Safalta*. Pamphlet edn. Kota, India: Bhartiya Kisan Sangh.

Aijaz Ahmad (2016) 'India: Liberal Democracy and the Extreme Right' Indian Cultural Forum. <<http://indianculturalforum.in/2016/09/07/india-liberal-democracy-and-the-extreme-right/>>.

Assadi, M. (1994) 'Khadi Curtain', 'weak capitalism' and 'Operation Ryot': Some Ambiguities in Farmers' Discourse, Karnataka and Maharashtra 1980–93', *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 21(3-4): 212-227.

Banaji, J. (1994) 'The Farmers' Movements: A Critique of Conservative Rural Coalitions', *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 21(3-4): 228-245.

Banaji, J. (2013) 'Trajectories of Fascism: Extreme-Right Movements in India and Elsewhere'.

Bardhan, P. (1984) *The Political Economy of Development in India*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Baviskar, A. (1999) *In the Belly of the River: Tribal Conflicts Over Development in the Narmada Valley*. Oxford University Press.

Bhagavan, M. (Last updated 2016) 'We are Witnessing the Rise of Global Authoritarianism on a Chilling Scale' (a webpage of QUARTZ). Accessed 23 October 2017
<<https://qz.com/643497/we-are-witnessing-the-rise-of-global-authoritarianism-on-a-chilling-scale/>>.

Bhatia, S., 2016. From Beef Vigilantism to Flag Nationalism, Indian Politics Hits a New Low. *The Wire* .

Brass, T. (1994) 'Introduction: The New Farmers' Movements in India', *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 21(3-4): 3-26.

Butler, J., E. Laclau and S. Žižek (2000) *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*. Verso.

Byres, T.J. (1998) 'Some Thoughts on a Heterodox View of the Causes of Low Agricultural Productivity', *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 26(1): 159-169.

Byres, T.J. (1980) 'The Green Revolution's Second Phase', *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 7(2): 245-250.

Das, R.J. (2007) 'Introduction: Peasant, State and Class', *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 34(3-4): 351-370.

Dhanagare, D. (1994) 'The Class Character and Politics of the Farmers' Movement in Maharashtra during the 1980s', *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 21(3-4): 72-94.

Drèze, J. and A. Sen (1996) *India: Development and Participation*. (First edn) New York: Oxford University Press.

Dutta, M.J., 2017. From Dadri to Kansas, Countering the Politics of Hate. *The Wire*.

Fox, J. (1993) *The Politics of Food in Mexico: State Power and Social Mobilization*. Cornell University Press.

Gill, S.S. (1994) 'The Farmers' Movement and Agrarian Change in the Green Revolution Belt of North-West India', *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 21(3-4): 195-211.

Gusterson, H. (2017) 'From Brexit to Trump: Anthropology and the Rise of Nationalist Populism', *American Ethnologist* 44(2): 209-214.

Hall, S. (1985) 'Authoritarian Populism: A Reply', *New Left Review* (151): 115.

Hall, S. (1980) 'Popular-Democratic Versus Authoritarian Populism: Two Ways of 'Taking Democracy Seriously' ', in A. Hunt (ed.) *In Marxism and Democracy*, pp. 157-187. London: Laurence and Wishart.

Hall, S. (1979) 'The Great Moving Right show', *Marxism Today* 23(1): 14-20.

Herring, R.J. and R. Agarwala (2006) 'Introduction: Restoring Agency to Class: Puzzles from the Subcontinent', *Critical Asian Studies* 38(4): 323-356.

Herring, R.J. (2005) 'Miracle Seeds, Suicide Seeds, and the Poor: GMOs, NGOs', in Ray, R. and M. Katzenstein Fainsod (ed.) *Social Movements in India.*, (First edn). pp. 203-232. USA: Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC.

Hasan, Z. (1994) 'Shifting Ground: Hindutva Politics and the Farmers' Movement in Uttar Pradesh', *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 21(3-4): 165-194.

Jha, P. (2017) 'India's Peasant Rebellions at the Current Juncture', *Global Labour Journal* 8(3): 252-257.

Laclau, E. (2005) *On Populist Reason*. London: Verso. London: Verso.

Lenin, V.I. (1982) 'The Class Differentiation of the Peasantry', in J. Harriss (ed.) *Rural Development: Theories of Peasant Economy and Agrarian Change.* , pp. 130-139. London: Routledge.

Lindberg, S. (1994) 'New Farmers' Movements in India as Structural Response and Collective Identity Formation: The Cases of the Shetkari Sanghatana and the BKU', *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 21(3-4): 95-125.

Moore, C.H. (1974) 'Authoritarian Politics in Unincorporated Society: The Case of Nasser's Egypt ', *Comparative Politics* 6(2): 193-218.

Nagaraj, K. (2008) *Farmers' Suicides in India: Magnitudes, Trends and Spatial Patterns*. Bharathi puthakalayam.

- O'Connor, J. (1973) *The Fiscal Crisis of the State*. Transaction Publishers.
- Pandey, R. (2017) 'Why a Loan Waiver is Far from enough to Solve UP's Agricultural Crisis', *The Wire* .
- Panizza, F. (2005) *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*. Verso.
- Patel, R. (2013) 'The Long Green Revolution', *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 40(1): 1-63.
- Patel, R. (2013) 'The Long Green Revolution ', *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 40(1): 1-63.
- Pattenden, J. (2005) 'Trickle-Down Solidarity, Globalisation and Dynamics of Social Transformation in a South Indian Village', *Economic and Political Weekly* : 1975-1985.
- Pedahzur, A. and A. Brichta (2002) 'The Institutionalization of Extreme Right-Wing Charismatic Parties: A Paradox?', *Party Politics* 8(1): 31-49.
- Philip, A.G., 2017. the BJP Government at the Centre is Nothing More than UPA III, Says Sangh Parivar Leader. *Outlook*.
- 'Rashtriya Swyam Sevak Sangh' (Last updated 8 November 2017) 2017
<<http://rss.org/Encyc/2017/11/8/Swara-Govindam.html>>
- J. Rancière (2013) 'The People are Not a Brutal and Ignorant Mass' Verso Books Blog. Accessed November 5, 2017 <<https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/1226-the-people-are-not-a-brutal-and-ignorant-mass-jacques-ranciere-on-populism>>.
- Ray, R. and M. Katzenstein Fainsod (eds) (2005) *Social Movements in India*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC.
- Sainath, P. (2010) 'Nearly 2 Lakhs Farm Suicides since 1997' *The Hindu*, SAINATH.
- Sainath, P. 'the Slaughter of Suicide Data'. Accessed October 26 2017
<<https://psainath.org/the-slaughter-of-suicide-data/>>.
- Sarkar, T. (2005) 'Problems of Social Power and the Discourse of the Hindu Right ', in Ray, R. and M. Katzenstein Fainsod (ed.) *Social Movements in India.*, (First edn). pp. 62-78. USA: Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC.
- Scoones, I., M. Edelman, S.M. Borras Jr, R. Hall, W. Wolford and B. White (2017) 'Emancipatory Rural Politics: Confronting Authoritarian Populism', *The Journal of Peasant Studies* : 1-20.
- Siddiqui, K. (2017) 'Hindutva, Neoliberalism and the Reinventing of India', *Journal of Economic and Social Thought* 4(2): 142.

Srinivasan, K., 2016. What the Fights Over Beef and Jallikattu Tell Us about the Cultural Politics of Animal Welfare. *The Wire*.

Thengdi, D. (2002) *Dhaye Path Par Kisan*. Bhartiya Kisan Sangh

Vanaik, A., 2017. Hindutva's Forward March. *JACOBIN* .

Vanaik, A. (2001) 'The New Indian Right', *New Left Review* 9(2).

Vyawahare, M. (2014) 'The Trends that Helped Sweep B.J.P. to Landslide Victory' *The New York Times*, May 23.

Appendix . List of interviews and focussed group discussions

	Names	Occupation	Place interviewed
1	Chandrashekhar	one of the national heads	New Delhi
2	Rajendra Sharma	RSS spokesperson	Kota, Rajasthan
3	Rakesh	Secretary, Vishwa Hindu Parishad	Kota, Rajasthan
4	Jugdish	advocate, one of the state heads	Kota, Rajasthan
5	Ambu bhai Patel	Founder - BKS	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
6	Jeevan Bhai Patel	Founder - BKS	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
7	Sagar bhai Rabari	Kisan Khedut Samaj, social activist, secretary	Ahmedabad, Gujarat
8	Hemraj	Head, BKS Rajasthan	Udaipur, Rajasthan
9	Lokesh and Santish	BKS farmers' trainers, Agricultural science university	Udaipur, Rajasthan
10	Kaival	Yuva Pramukh	Maanpura village, Jhalawar district , Rajasthan
11	Hukam Chand	Oganic farming expert, district leader	Maanpura village, Jhalawar district , Rajasthan
12	Narendra	Banking expert, district leader	Maanpura village, Jhalawar district , Rajasthan
13	Kaival	Teacher organic farmer, BKS member	Maanpura village, Jhalawar district , Rajasthan
14	Aman lal	BKS veteran leader	Arjunpura village, Kota, Rajasthan
15	Braj Mohan	Farmer (former BKS district leader)	Arjunpura village, Kota, Rajasthan
16	Ramdev	Farmer	Arjunpura village, Kota, Rajasthan
17	Dilip	Farmer	Arjunpura village, Kota, Rajasthan
18	Rambhoroase	Farmer	Arjunpura village, Kota, Rajasthan
19	Brij Mohan	Farmer	Arjunpura village, Kota, Rajasthan
20	Devi Shankar	Farmer	Arjunpura village, Kota, Rajasthan
21	Devi Prasad	Leader	Kheda Rasalpur village, Kota, Rajasthan
22	Shyam	Leader and a rich farmer	Kheda Rasalpur village, Kota, Rajasthan
23	Ramchandra Ji Gujjar and Anokhi Bai	Farmers (Husband and wife)	Arankheda, Ladpura district , Rajasthan
24	Mathura lal	Rich Farmer	Arankheda, Ladpura district , Rajasthan
25	Gowardhan bai	Woman Agricultural worker	Arankheda, Ladpura district , Rajasthan
26	Shashi bai	Middle supplier	Arankheda, Ladpura district , Rajasthan
27	Indra bai	Woman Agricultural worker	Arankheda, Ladpura district , Rajasthan
28	Nirmala sen	Woman Agricultural worker	Arankheda, Ladpura district , Rajasthan
29	Chandrakala	Woman Agricultural worker	Arankheda, Ladpura district , Rajasthan
30	Rambharaose	Woman Leader	Kheda Rasalpur village, Kota, Rajasthan
31	Nirmal Kumar	Farmer	Kheda Rasalpur village, Kota, Rajasthan
32	Rambhoroase	Farmer	Kheda Rasalpur village, Kota, Rajasthan
33	Bhavar lal	Farmer	Arjunpura village, Kota, Rajasthan
34	Radha Kishan Gehlot	Farmer	Arjunpura village, Kota, Rajasthan
35	Brij Mohan	Farmer	Arjunpura village, Kota, Rajasthan
36	FGD 1	10 farmers	Arjunpura village, Kota, Rajasthan
37	FGD 2	7 farmers	Kheda Rasalpur village, Kota, Rajasthan
38	FGD 3	7 young boys from farmers' families	Arjunpura village, Kota, Rajasthan
39	FGD 4	5 young boys from farmers' families	Kheda Rasalpur village, Kota, Rajasthan