



## Mains Practice Question

### Case Study

Farmers and their families have been protesting on the interstate border of Delhi for months, camped out on roads demonstrating over the government's new farm laws which they think will ruin their livelihoods.

Farmer unions and their representatives have demanded that the laws be repealed and have stated that they will not accept a compromise. Farmer leaders have welcomed the Supreme Court of India stay order on the implementation of the farm laws but rejected the committee appointed by the Supreme Court.

Farmer leaders have also rejected a government proposal of suspending the laws for 18 months. Eleven rounds of talks have taken place between the central government and farmers represented by the farm unions; all were inconclusive.

The protesting farmers sometimes turn violent and damage public property in the guise of peaceful protest. A number of telecom towers of a particular company and other infrastructure were also damaged. The roads approaching to Delhi have been turned into protesting sites and are blocked by protesters causing nuisance to passengers and local population.

However supporters of the laws say improvements are badly needed, as thousands of farmers are struggling.

What are the ethical issues in the case? Discuss the different options available and how will you respond in this case?

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### Introduction

The given case is about issues raised due to three farm laws passed by the government in order to bring reforms in the agriculture marketing system. But the farmers and farmer's organisation have apprehensions about the laws. The dilemma here is **whether to continue with the implementation of the acts or repeal them** as demanded by the farmers.

### Body

The given case involves multiple stakeholders and requires a number of issues to be resolved. To deal with this case every stakeholder requires to maintain very high ethical standards and think beyond vested interests.

| Stakeholders Involved         | Ethical Issues  |
|-------------------------------|---|
| State and Central Governments | Implementing the <b>democratic values (Constitutional Value)</b> of debate and discussion and giving farmers adequate time to represent themselves. |
| Local administration          | Show <b>empathy</b> towards the poor farmers and their families.  |

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
|                            | <b>Provision of basic facilities</b> for not only protestors but also for the <b>local population</b> affected by the protest.   |
| Police                     | Maintaining <b>impartiality</b> in taking legal actions against the culprits.<br><br>Be <b>transparent and uphold rule</b> of law in investigations in case of violence by the protestors.   |
| Farmers and their families | Following fundamental duty ( <b>Art 51A(a) and (i)</b> ) to respect the National Flag and the National Anthem and to safeguard public property and to abjure violence.<br><br>Perform the duty of being a good citizen by helping the administration and police and file complaints against the culprits who are indulged in violence. |
| Farmers' Unions            | Duty to <b>promote truth</b> among the farmers; should not only be motivated by vested interest.<br><br>Show compassion and empathy for farmers but do not mislead.<br><br>Keep the protest peaceful for any effective outcome.  |

### Various Options Available:

|    | Option  | Merits  | Demerits  |
|----|---|---|---|
| 1. | Use force and remove protesters from the interstate border areas            | Protesting sites will be clear and roads would be open to be used by travelers and the local population.<br><br>No more violence by the protesters.<br><br>Acts can now be implemented. | Against constitutional morality to use force against protesters.<br><br>Might give rise to bigger protests and more violence later.<br><br>Farmers' concerns remain unresolved. |
| 2. | Repeal the three Farm acts  | Protest would end.<br><br>Trouble created by the protesters to the local population would end.  | Some reforms are necessarily required and that would not be done if acts are repealed.<br><br>May go against democratic set up.   |
| 3. | Defer the implementation but ask farmers to end the protest                 | Would give some time for all stakeholders to discuss the pros and cons of the acts.<br><br>Government can utilise the time to persuade the protesters.<br><br>Protest would end.        | Farmers are against this idea leading to a deadlock.<br><br>Reforms are needed to be done as early as possible.   |
| 4. | Give the farmers a new protesting site and hold talks with farmers' unions. | New protesting site located in a not so busy place would not disturb the daily commuters.<br><br>Talks with leaders of the farmers farmers' unions and reaching to consensus.           | It will take time for the protestors to come to consensus and to end the protest.   |

### Response in such situations:

- First two options are the extreme options and should not be taken as first is morally unsound and later may go against the democratic setup of India.
- The second and third options are to be used to resolve the matter and end the protest in a

peaceful manner.

- Using persuasion to educate the farmers about the benefits of the acts and addressing their apprehensions about the three farm acts.
- Basically, farmers' unions tell farmers pros and cons about the acts and sometimes drive them according to their interest.
  - Thus, the government should hold continuous talks with leaders of farmers' unions without any conditions and directly communicate with farmers through transitional media (newspaper, national and local news channels) as well as social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Tweeter.
- There should be a zero tolerance policy against violence and force must be used if protestors try to become violent and damage public property. Also, there is a need to identify and remove anti-social elements.

## Conclusion

The present situation is difficult to resolve. A major cause is the apprehensions about the government's intention about bringing the farm acts which are questioned by the farmers. Thus, the government should ensure that all farmers feel safe and protected economically.

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