From
BHARTI KISAN UNION,
(Non-Political)
Basti Abdullapur, Ludhiana-3
&
V. & P.O. Kanjhawala
Delhi.

Open letter to the Prime Minister of India, Union Ministers,
Opposition leaders and all members of Parliament :-

Dear Friends,

We are a non-political organisation of farmers without any affiliation with any political party. Any body doing the business of farming can be a member of our union, regardless of his religion or political affiliations. But office bearers of our organisation are barred to become a member of any political party.

It is a pity that due to anti-Kisan policies of the Govt., the farmers of this country have always been denied their due while fixing prices of agricultural produce. You will agree that the farmer is the biggest consumer of this country. They are consumers of all consumers goods as well as agricultural inputs. The prices of all these goods have sky-rocketed as compared with the prices of the agricultural produce, resulting in the complete shattering of the agricultural economy. How the prices of agricultural inputs have increased, a brief data is given below :-
Name of input | Price per Qtl. in 1967 | Present Price
--- | --- | ---
CAN | Rs. 51/- | Rs. 170/-
D.A.P. | Rs. 109/50 p. | Rs. 360/-
Urea | Rs. 84/- | Rs. 215/-
D.D.T. 50% | Rs. 33/- | Rs. 205/-
Melathon | Rs. 74/50 p. | Rs. 421/-
Unskilled Labour | Rs. 4/24 p. per day | Rs. 14/- per day
Skilled Labour | Rs. 7/- per day | Rs. 40/- per day
Massey Ferguson
32 B.H.P. Zetor | Rs. 21610/- | Rs. 85000/-
2011/2511 | Rs. 13700/- | Rs. 62000/-
Diesel Engine
Kirloskar 5 B.H.P. | Rs. 2740/- | Rs. 6430/-
Electric Motor 5 B.H.P. | Rs. 984/- | Rs. 3460/-
M.oil | Rs. 2/60 p. | Rs. 15/50 p.
Average Wholesale Price | Rs. 100/- | Rs. 348/-

The Union Govt. started fixing support prices for agricultural produce from 1967. The data given below shows the prices fixed by the Govt./A.P.C. and the actual prices which should have been fixed with regard to the movement of wholesale price index.
Name of Produce | Price fixed by the Govt./A.P.C. (In 1967) | Price was to be fixed | Loss per Qtl. (In 1983)
---|---|---|---
Paddy | Rs. 53/- | Rs. 184/44 p. | Rs. 52/44 p.
Cotton | Rs. 200/- | Rs. 400/- | Rs. 696/- | Rs. 296/-
Coarse grains (Maize etc) | Rs. 53/- | Rs. 124/- | Rs. 184/44 p. | Rs. 60/44 p.
Sugarcane | Rs. 11/- | Rs. 20/- | Rs. 38/28 p. | Rs. 18/28 p.
Wheat | Rs. 76/- | To be fixed | Rs. 264/48 p.

It is very clear from the above data that the prices fixed by the Govt./A.P.C. has never been justified. Ours is an agricultural country. Therefore to save the economy of the farmers and the country as a whole; a constructive approach is required. We hope that you will rise to the occasion and help the farmers to get their due by putting pressure on the Govt. from within and outside the Parliament.

It is an economic cruelty to the peasants that they were never paid their due on the one side and were directly or indirectly taxed heavily on the other side. The farmers have always been agitated that the elected representatives of the people have never given full justice to their cause. Similar was the case at the state levels.

Bharti Kisan Union organised the farmers and educated them about their duties and rights. The farmers fulfilled their duty by raising agricultural production every year but they have always been exploited, by raising the prices of agricultural inputs and fixing low procurement prices. Due to
Wrong import and export policies, the prices of agricultural produce were always kept low whereas the industrial sector was always given support.

In the recent past Punjab State Elec. Board raised the electricity tariffs of tubewells, connection charges, securities, reconnection fees, and levied fuel surcharge etc. The board launched several schemes to give priority to those in releasing tubewell connections who will deposit ₹7000/- with the board free of interest for seven years. The connection charges were raised to ₹3000/- and a connection surcharged at ₹500/- per B.H.P. was levied. In this way the poor farmers were deprived of their right to get tubewell connection as they can't pay such huge expenses. The Punjab Govt. levied 1% agri. cess on agricultural produce through a notification which has been challenged by our union in the Punjab & Haryana High Court. Repressive measures were started to recover the charges of brick lining of water channels of canal water. Chowkidars tax was imposed on farmers which is immoral and illegal.

We presented memorandums, held demonstrations and Dharnas etc. and adopted all other democratic peaceful methods. The Govt. never thought to solve the problems by negotiations. We had no way left except to start an agitation. Therefore on 20th Jan. 1983, we declared not to pay brick lining charges of water courses, Chowkidara tax and electricity charges of tubewells. The Punjab Govt. moved to recover brick lining charges,
Chowkidara and Elec. bills of tubewells and thousands of farmers courted arrest. The Govt. had to bow before the Kisan movement and stopped its recovery and set free all the satyagrahies from the jails. The other state units of our union are also successfully running this agitation.

Our Haryana unit is also agitating for non-payment of cost of Brick lining of water courses. They have successfully fought for uninterrupted Power Supply to tubewells in the past. The farmers of Punjab also demand Power Supply for 24 hrs. to their tubewells to raise food production to solve the food crisis of our country. How sad plight of the country is, can be imagined with the fact that the Govt. is spending crores of rupees on the import of foodgrains. The Govt. is not ready to supply power to tubewells for raising food production. If we can't save wastage of power on air conditioners to run tubewells, the country will definitely face Bankruptcy. A lion's share of Punjab's power is being supplied to Delhi to run air conditioners. This should be stopped. There should be no bar on farmers for using their elec. motors for threshing operations etc. and there should be no extra charges for it. The centre has directed the state govs. to abolish Octroi tax but instead of abolishing it, some state govs. have imposed fodder tax also.

According to the call given on 20.1.83 by the Union, thousands of farmers in Punjab have stopped payment of elec. charges of their tubewells. Seven months have passed, neither
the Punjab Govt. nor P.S.E.B. authorities have made any attempt to sit with the union to settle the issues by negotiations.

Now we hope that you will raise our demands in both houses of Parliament to press the Govt. to accept our justified demands so that the democratic right of the people to get their problems solved by peaceful modes of agitation is preserved. However we are adopting another democratic method to call Goths' attention to our demands by courting arrest in front of Parliament House on 13.8.83. Many thousand farmers will offer themselves for arrest. So it becomes more necessary for you to take up the matter.

Yours,

Dated: 13.8.1983
Delhi.

Sd/- Ajmer Singh Lakhowal
General Secretary (Pb.)

Sd/- Balbir Singh Rajewal
Secretary (India)