

immersion INDIA®

FIELD NOTES · SHEET 13

The Farm That Won't Stop Voting

Why Agriculture Still Runs Indian Politics

AGRICULTURE & MSP · PUNJAB · HARYANA · MADHYA PRADESH

Transplanting paddy by hand. Most of this work is done by women, and most of it sits outside the MSP system that dominates the politics.

16%
of GDP from agriculture
and falling for decades

46%
of the workforce
PLFS 2023–24

~6%
of farmers reached by MSP
concentrated in three states

$9.6bn
lost after harvest each year
storage, markets, logistics

> For more than a year, farmers camped their tractors on the highways ringing Delhi. By November 2021 they had won: three farm laws repealed. A modern economy reversing its own liberalisation.

Agriculture is about sixteen percent of India's GDP and forty-six percent of its workforce. That mismatch is the whole story — too small to carry growth, too large and too organised to be reformed against its own wishes.

MSP dominates the argument and reaches roughly six percent of farmers. The more expensive failure sits downstream: ₹92,000 crore of produce lost each year to storage, fragmented markets and logistics. That one reaches all of them.

THE SIGNAL TO WATCH Farmer Producer Organisation formation. They shift market power without touching MSP.

Make India your classroom

A field guide for global executive education. Turn over for the site visits, the questions for the room and what we run.

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BENGALURU, KARNATAKA, INDIA

FIELD NOTES · SHEET 13 · AGRICULTURE & MSP

Bring the cohort to the case.

Every sheet in this series is a place you can stand in. The dark store, the fab, the swap kiosk, the mandi, the GCC floor — all of them within a day of Bengaluru, and all of them take visitors.

Field Notes is a series on the forces shaping India now, designed to give decision-makers exploring India the right perspective before they commit to it. Each one takes a single force, gives you the argument and the four numbers that anchor it, and names the places in India where you can go and stand in front of it. The series is drawn from *The India That Is Unique*, Immersion India's field guide for global executive education.

ON THE GROUND — AGRICULTURE & MSP

A mandi at auction
The regulated market as it operates, not as described.

A farmer producer organisation
What collective bargaining actually gets smallholders.

A post-harvest logistics operator
Where a quarter of the crop goes before market.

THREE QUESTIONS FOR THE ROOM

01 MSP dominates the politics and reaches 6% of farmers; post-harvest losses cost ₹92,000 crore and reach all of them. Why does the smaller problem own the debate?

02 Farmer Producer Organisations are changing rural markets with almost no political friction. What makes a reform legible as technical rather than ideological?

03 Any future government reforming these markets does so with 2020–21 as living memory. How would you sequence a reform that has already failed once?

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14 Women & Work

12 Climate & Just Transition

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