

WILL RAHUL BE THE NEW MESSIAH OF INDIAN FARMERS!

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Many said he is a *Messiah* for farmers! Some has seen it as election propaganda! Others believed it is a political gimmick! But 3 hours and 10 km '*walk the talk*' with '*Rahul Gandhi*' has indeed given us a new perspective of this young man and opened new vistas of what this National Leader can do for the farmers!

I visited *Bhatta-Parsaul* and met the farmers few days before. What I saw in the people is the fear of State violence and total confusion as to why UP government is depriving them of their livelihood without providing alternative occupation or justifiable remuneration. They are helpless, angry, but finally in a mood to revolt, not any more different from the farmers at large in every part of India.

- ➔ The Indian agriculture GDP is stagnant
- ➔ Rural migration continues so also farmer's suicides.
- ➔ Rural unrest has led to extremism and caste oriented politics.
- ➔ 2% agriculture growth is unable to meet the demands of increasing population.

It is at this juncture *Rahul Gandhi's* agitation on agriculture land acquisition of Noida; Agra High Way; Farmer's deaths due to police firing at *Bhatta-Parsaul*, subsequent *Pad Yatra* culminating in *Kisan Maha Panchayat* has caught national attention.

Skepticism about Rahul's intentions are natural. *Since, it is the first time in independent India, the humble farmers have seen a political leader of Nehru clan sleeping in their neighborhood on the same charpoy; eating along with them and discussing the field & family issues thread bare squatting with them on the floor.* It is **but certain that the outcome of this initiative has brought the problems of farm sector on to the center stage of the NATIONAL AGENDA.**

Mr. Satnam Singh Behru (President - CIFA) and myself participated on the third day of *Pad Yatra*. We found Rahul extremely inquisitive to understand the farmer's issues. **He had a number of questions on livelihood, sustainability, Biotech, markets** etc. He heard patiently and wanted more details. We found him to be a keen listener.

The return trip saw Mr.Behru & myself discussing about the outcome of Rahul's initiative on the **larger context of 600 million distressed farmers** looking to Rahul's action on the **GOI Land Acquisition Act**. These farmers across the nation will be keenly observing on his future initiatives on other issues of support price, technologies, mechanization, removing controls etc.

We requested Rahul to visit more villages across the country as frequently as possible. We sincerely hope that he will truly come up to the expectations of our farming community.

As a politician it is for Rahul Gandhi to decide to take up farmers issues not only for political advantages but to be a true statesman for the holistic development for National Economy & all its People.

The solution may not come straight away, but this initiative of *Rahul* has indeed brought farmers distress into drawing rooms of the country elite specially politicians, administrators, scientists, youth for an animated discussion.

When agriculture is the profession for 60% of population; any growth process cannot be exclusive of farmer's welfare. It is true and tragic fact that the disparities between organized & unorganized farmers have become huge ever since liberalization process.

THE FARMERS OF INDIA WHO ARE LARGELY ORPHANED BY THE POLICY MAKERS AND ADMINISTRATORS ARE LOOKING FORWARD FOR A 'MESSIAH'...
