

Comparison of Farmer Welfare Policies between China and India

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Abstract: The issue of this paper is the difference of farmers' welfare between China and India. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the problems faced by farmers in these two typical late developing countries and call on the society to pay attention to farmers' welfare. This paper starts from the cases of two countries. Through different problems in different cases, it shows the farmers' welfare problems faced by the late developing countries. Some of these problems appear in the development of the times, while others are problems left over by history. But these problems undoubtedly bring more problems to farmers in the post epidemic era.

Keywords: public policy, farmers' welfare, hukou, registered residence system, land acquisition, displacement, industrialization, urbanization, agricultural reform bill, Indian farmers' protest, social security

1. Introduction

Urbanization is a process that has been carried out since the industrialization of modern society. Academics have been discussing how to let farmers leave the land to enter the factory to complete urbanization and industrialization. It is not wrong to think that industrialization is the only way for human development. But at the same time, in the process of developing industry and urbanization, developing countries have ignored the welfare of farmers and rural areas. Some scholars even believe that treating farmers harshly can enable them to leave the land more quickly and become workers in cities. The main content of this article is to compare the farmers' welfare of the two largest developing countries and analyze and understand the current situation of farmers' welfare in the process of rapid urbanization. The two cases to be compared in this paper are China and India, both of which have huge populations and huge land areas. Agriculture is the basis for the survival and development of a country. The living situation of farmers reflects the productivity and sustainability of a country's agriculture. Therefore, the welfare policy of farmers is also especially important for a country and has research value. These two countries have different political systems and have similarities and differences in the development process. For example, both countries were once influenced by the Soviet Union and established a set of peasant security systems at the national level. However, due to different political systems, the results are also different. This paper will discuss how to use limited land resources to feed more than one billion people and contribute to the global food supply while ensuring the livelihood and production welfare of local farmers.

2. Literature Review

This paper is based on a study of public policy in China and India and involves international relations. Both countries have huge populations and land areas. Agriculture is the foundation of a country's survival and development. The living conditions of farmers reflect the productivity and sustainability of a country's agriculture. Therefore, the farmer welfare policy is also particularly important for a country and has research value. This is a comparative study paper, mainly comparing the similarities and differences between the welfare policies of Chinese and Indian farmers, what are the similarities and differences they are facing. This paper is going to analyze the basic social system, policy making, cultural traditions and other perspectives, which will follow the logic of time and deeply analyze the historical policies and social change direction of the two countries. At the same time, the impact of the current agricultural policies of the two governments on the welfare of farmers will be discussed, as well as possible changes and crises in the future. The main sources of this paper are reliable publications, news, government policy documents, books, etc. Through literature research, this paper will make an in-depth analysis of the systems and policies of the two countries, and seeks to find out whether there is a way to solve the welfare dilemma of farmers in the two countries. This paper will analyze where Indian farmers can find their way out when they are faced with more important problems in welfare.

The research object of this paper is Chinese and Indian farmers, and the research objective is to explore the similarities and differences in the welfare policies of farmers in the two countries and try to propose solutions to the problems. Therefore, in the aspect of data collection, relevant government policies should be queried first. Policy information mainly comes from government documents and public statements of officials. The implementation efficiency and effect of the policy mainly come from the interviews with farmers and grassroots cadres. Also, accurate data are needed to verify the conclusion of the interview, and reliable official and unofficial data can be queried for corroboration. The data can be compared to determine the subsequent effects of the policy and whether farmers' welfare has been improved or further reduced. The result of the policy is the focus of this paper. Based on the current policy, the paper further predicts the future and proposes solutions. Primary data will come from news, interviews and public statements by officials in both countries, and will be available on official government websites. Secondary data mainly come from published literature. Search through the search engine and read the relevant literature. The reason for choosing these methods is that for a comparative research paper on public policy, policy literature is the most important part, so the analysis of reliable literature and data can achieve the best research effect.

3. Case Study

Hukou is an inescapable topic when I discuss rural China. Hukou is China's household registration system, which has been continuously improved for thousands of years. In order to better count the population, maintain social stability and reduce the generation of migrants, China improved the household registration system after the founding of New China. Nowadays, there are two main categories of hukou, one is urban hukou, and the other is rural hukou. Children of urban hukou holders have priority in urban schools, and rural hukou holders have no access to the same health and social security systems. This difference also reflects the welfare difference between farmers and other citizens, resulting in a lot of problems.

India has no household registration system, and for Indians, the movement of people is relatively free. In theory, this means that India's huge rural population can move freely into cities without any impact on their rights. But precisely because Indian farmers are free to leave the land, they are also losing it "freely". When landless peasants moved into cities, they clustered together and formed slums.

"The Indian law does not excite people are free to move, but the government does not provide even basic housing, outsiders must find the way out, or employers are willing to provide, but that even now in India is also very rare, so for most settlers build shacks the only possible choice [1]."

The land in rural India supports a huge population, but this huge population does not have equal welfare and rights. 1.3% of the landowners own 14% of the land in India, 23% of the farmers are sharecroppers and semi-farmers, 50% of the poor farmers own only 1% of the land, and landless farmers account for 35% of the population of India. The annual income growth of Indian farmers of 2.2% is not consistent with the national economic growth. 85% of the cultivated land is cultivated by human and animal power, there is no mechanization of large farmland to liberate labor, and 70% of the cultivated land is irrigated by rainwater. There is no special irrigation facility for farmland in India, and the industrial development is not enough to subsidize agriculture with a surplus, and the industry has no funds to upgrade and improve production efficiency [2]. In the beginning, the problems in rural China were not less than those in India, but after the land revolution, the landlords were eliminated and the land was distributed to all farmers, so there was no mass land annexation problem in rural areas. And the problem of agricultural industrialization has been improved in recent years. Before that, China had always insisted on making profits from agriculture to industry, vigorously developed industry, and finally promoted agricultural productivity through the industry. "The contribution rate of agricultural science and technology progress in China exceeded 60%, and the comprehensive mechanization rate of crop cultivation and harvest reached 71%". The contribution rate of agricultural science and technology progress in China is over 60%, and the comprehensive mechanization rate of farming and harvesting is 71%. Agricultural modernization has reached a new level [3]. For the development of India, industrialization and urbanization are necessary to transform the huge rural population into the labor force of industrial society, so the Modi government also wants to carry out a series of reforms in this aspect, among which the new farm bill is an important attempt by the Modi government. Under the original agricultural policy, the Indian government needs to spend 4 trillion rupees a year at the minimum purchase price, while India's annual fiscal expenditure is only 35 trillion rupees. The subsidy to agriculture has clearly affected India's ability to invest and develop in other areas [4].

In September 2020, the Rajya Sabha passed three new agricultural reform bills, the Agricultural Trade and Transaction (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill 2020, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Price Assurance Agreement and Agricultural Services Bill 2020, and the Basic Commodities Amendment Bill 2020 [5]. To summarize the main content of the three acts, the first act allows farmers to sell their products outside the framework of the APMC, the Agricultural Production Market Committee, which has previously been the unified purchase of agricultural products by the APMC. This provides farmers with a stable selling price and guarantees their basic income [6]. The act further marketized agriculture, but farmers did not agree that it would bring them more benefits. Indian farmers believe that the "Three Agricultural Laws" will deprive farmers of the guaranteed purchase price of their produce provided by the government, and the interests of small farmers will be squeezed after the intervention of large private enterprises. The new bill will only benefit private enterprises, who will be the ultimate gainers as Modi "is privatizing agriculture [7]". It is also quite normal for such a bill to be opposed by Indian farmers. The farmer protest lasted for more than a year. The main supporters of the protest farmers were not the poor and middle farmers, but the landlord class. If these three acts were carried out smoothly, the interests of the landlord class would be greatly harmed, and more serious exploitation of the tenants would be more likely. In the end, the three bills were not implemented smoothly, and Indian farmers maintained their living status quo, but this is not necessarily a good thing for the development of India as a whole, and the future of agriculture.

For India, in the case of lack of land privatization and the household registration system, landless peasants are mostly forced into the cities, the farmers were forced to the city, and often lack the experience of city life, the lack of labor skills, engaged in the field of city they live in the countryside for long familiar with farming and animal husbandry, but they are not familiar with services and technical work. Indian farmers who move into slums lack basic social welfare and opportunities to learn the skills of urban life, further contributing to the poverty of rural migrants. This is a similar dilemma to China's urbanization process, but it is also very different. The household registration system of Chinese farmers is not only the shackle to prevent the flow of population, but also the most basic social security for farmers. It is a common social trend for Chinese farmers with rural hukou to move to cities for work, but this does not mean losing their land. After my interview and government officials at the grass-roots level, I learned that farmers can migrant workers, if find a suitable job, work units to pay for social security, rural registered permanent residence of people can enjoy and urban registered permanent residence of people's social security, if he can't survive in the city, back to the countryside also have the chance to continue to farming. In China, the land is publicly owned, while in India, it is privately owned. In China, newborns with registered permanent residence in rural areas can inherit the land of their grandparents, and land with public ownership will not be annexed in large quantities. Therefore, if they leave the countryside, as long as their registered permanent residence is still in the countryside, they will have the most basic survival guarantee. However, for those farmers who work in cities during the idle period and return to their villages during the busy period, their political rights and interests are not fully protected, because they are not permanent residents in cities, and it is difficult for them to obtain the same social security as urban residents through short-term temporary jobs. Migrant workers do not have political participation (can not participate in political decision-making), social security rights, and their household registration is still in the countryside, can not enjoy the "sunshine" of urban finance. Although they work and live in cities, they are not "urban people" and do not have urban hukou. The relationship between migrant workers and cities is a simple employment relationship, without political and social ties. In urban production and life, they do not have the right to vote, let alone their own political representatives, which makes their interest appeals have no interest spokespersons and no direct channels of expression, becoming a passive "political free group". This point, India and China are very different, although the farmers lost their land in the city lost the most basic life safeguard, but India's electoral system is a system of universal suffrage, some scholars put forward the electoral system in India is not completely in a general election, but on the political power, whether it is live in slums or senior apartments, they are not much difference.

In health care, both India and China have public health care systems. India has had a public health care system since 1950 with the goal of "making health care affordable to the poor." Therefore, special laws have been enacted to establish a national health plan and public hospitals provide health services. However, in the later process of marketization, India's medical industry began to be marketized, and private hospitals gradually occupied a dominant position. However, after entering the 21st century, India implemented a partial medicine-free system. It is not easy for farmers to get proper treatment and housing because 70 percent of the cost of treatment in private hospitals is at their own expense, and the problems of overcrowded and backward conditions in public hospitals remain unresolved. In China, the medical reimbursement ratio of rural insurance is lower than that of urban social security. Therefore, the elderly who have been farming in rural areas all their lives are often faced with poverty caused by illness. For the young people who go out for temporary work, the proportion of national reimbursement is not as high as that in the places where they are registered. Healthcare costs will always be a huge economic burden for developing countries, especially in rural areas of developing countries.

4. Conclusion

There are many similarities between rural India and rural China. In the process of development, they are also faced with problems caused by urbanization. However, due to the different systems of the two countries, the solutions to these problems are not the same. Indian farmers are facing more significant problems. The annual income of Indian farmers is 6,000 RMB, 10,000 people commit suicide every year. 190 million people are undernourished, 73 million people were in extreme poverty before the pandemic, and 270 million people live below the poverty line [8]. The per capita disposable income of rural residents in China reached 18,931 yuan in 2021 [9]. Indian farmers need to face serious class, caste and gender differences in rural areas. The standard of living is not just economic. Rural India also suffers from poor infrastructure. Many areas lack running water and electricity, which China has secured in its decades-long process of building infrastructure. How to modernize is a big problem for rural India. History tells us that the completion of industrialization requires the emancipation of the labor force. India needs the emancipation of the peasants from its land. The peasants should not leave the land and move into the cities to live in the slums, but into the modern factories. But India's farmers face a heavy legacy of historical problems that are holding them back. However, the most important problem facing China is different. As China's economy takes off, the household registration system in China has not brought about equality in the early years of the People's Republic, but created differences and divisions. The hukou system creates inequalities across the board in education, health care and social security. In the post-pandemic era, as the world economy reels, more young people in China's developed regions will seek their way to the countryside, but the existence of hukou makes such migration more difficult. Human being will face more challenges in the future, and the downturn in the global economy will affect more rural society as the cornerstone of society. Countryside, farmers, is the foundation of the tall building, climate problems, war, plague, all the time affecting the basis of our existence. Addressing basic agriculture and its practitioners will take us closer to addressing social problems and the unknown challenges of the future.

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