

HUNGER PROJECT (CLASS X-C)

This year's hunger project by our class X- C was dedicated to the farmers from Tamil Nadu who had gathered at Jantar Mantar to protest against the government's step-motherly attitude towards them.

We decided and prepare Rajma Chawal with other options being Chole Chawal and Khichdi.

We reached Jantar Mantar with the food we had prepared in school with the help of Chandran sir. There was an ocean of people. Many people who were farmers were sitting on the ground with mud smeared on their bodies and with skulls and bones in front of them. It gave me eerie feeling. As we were about to distribute the food a few farmers came running to help us which showed their helpful nature even in times of crisis . The area was cordoned off by the policemen to control the crowd. The scene made me even more curious to know why all this queer things were happening.



The interactive session with the farmers gave us an insight into the cause of their peaceful protest, the solutions to their problem, and their plans for farmers across India.



All of them were not farmers, some were bankers, professors, teachers etc who had come forward to support the cause of the TN farmers. Like all farmers of India, they too depended on the rainfall. In the event of less rainfall that lead to drought which in turn leads to failure of crop and inability to repay debt which ultimately lead to committing suicide. This vicious circle according to them was common to all the farmers across India and they wanted to bring it to the notice of the Modi government. The solution for this problem was inter- linking of the rivers of India which has not been looked into in the 70 years of our independence.

Another issue that they were focusing on was the use of fertilisers instead of manures. The govt provides subsidy for fertilisers. They agreed that the paddy harvesting could be done in 2 months instead of 10 months as against the case of use of organic manures. But at what cost? The cost according to them was of nutritional value. They argued that nutritional value should be given importance rather than to colour, quantum of yield etc. They wanted assurance of life insurance from the govt for small farmers and in case of mishappenings their family should be taken care of.

On further probing, it was found that the skull in front of them were actually of their farmer friends who had committed suicide. They were dedicated to their cause and had even brought the skulls and bones of the farmers who had committed suicide .The depiction of chains around the skulls was no doubt to remind others of the shackles of bondage and helplessness. The best part was that their protest was peaceful.

Our interaction with them made a few farmers emotional. Some of them identified us to their grandchildren. They were appreciative of our effort through the Hunger Project. They felt that we were considerate about their issue and had patient heard their painful, sensitive issue. We were happy to have interacted with them and I felt that they were satisfied that kids like us had understood them and one day even the govt would lend a patient ear to their problem and come up with some solution to their problems.

All in all we felt blessed at the end of the Hunger Project and this experience is going to last a lifetime.