

## Protest, Politics, and Platform Power: A Longitudinal Framing Study of the Farmers' Movement on Twitter

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### Abstract

This study analyzes how the Indian Farmers' Protest (2020-2021) was framed on Twitter across five key phases: *Dilli Chalo*, *Bharat Bandh*, the Republic Day Tractor Parade, *Chakka Jam*, and the repeal announcement. Using framing theory and digital engagement analysis, the study identifies five dominant narrative frames viz., *Emotional and Solidarity Appeals*, *Repression and Victimization*, *Distrust in Political Institutions*, *Localized Lived Realities*, and *Structural Policy Discourse*. Tweets were analyzed for frequency and user engagement to evaluate frame performance. Results show that emotionally resonant and morally clear messages generated the highest engagement. Frames grounded in emotional unity and lived experiences mobilized greater support than technical or ideological arguments. The protest narrative evolved from physical mobilization to national solidarity, through symbolic crisis, and finally into global moral repair. This paper contributes to understanding how digital protests gain visibility and legitimacy. It highlights the importance of emotional clarity and symbolic framing in shaping public discourse and online activism.

**Keywords:** Farm Laws, Farmers' Protest, Framing Theory, Minimum Support Price (MSP), Digital Activism

### 1. Introduction

The 2020-2021 Indian farmers' protest was a massive social movement sparked by three controversial agricultural reform laws passed in September 2020 (Narula, 2022). Farmers feared these laws jeopardize their livelihoods and dismantle longstanding protections (such as minimum price supports as they seek to deregulate crop pricing and opened the sector to corporate players. In November 2020, tens of thousands of farmers from Punjab and Haryana launched the *Dilli Chalo* ("Let's go to Delhi") march, converging on the national capital and soon joined by cultivators from across India (Narula, 2022). They established large protest camps on Delhi's borders and sustained a peaceful sit-in for over a year. The campaign's scale was unprecedented – it has been touted as the "single largest protest in human history," with up to 250 million supporters participating in solidarity strikes at its peak (Jodhka, 2021; Pahwa, 2020). This extraordinary mobilization culminated in November 2021 when the government announced the repeal of the farm laws, marking a rare victory for a grassroots movement against a major policy initiative (PRS, 2021).

Crucially, the farmers' protest was not only fought on the highways and fields but also in the digital arena. Social media, especially Twitter, acted as a force multiplier that amplified the farmers' messages nationwide and globally. Through hashtags like *#supportfarmers* *#farmersprotest*, participants and supporters disseminated real-time updates, personal stories, and calls for support. The movement quickly gained global prominence through social media, as on-the-ground reports and images went viral across platforms (Jodhka, 2021). Notably, international figures weighed in on Twitter: for example, pop star Rihanna (with over 100

million followers) tweeted a news link with the comment “why aren’t we talking about this?! #FarmersProtest,” which was retweeted over 230,000 times (Mishra *et al.*, 2021). Within hours, climate activist Greta Thunberg and other global celebrities echoed support for the farmers, triggering an online wave of solidarity and intense debate (Sabherwal, Shreedhar and Van Der Linden, 2022). This digital amplification made the protest a worldwide trending topic and put significant pressure on Indian authorities. At the same time, Twitter became a battleground of narratives: supporters used the platform to celebrate the farmers as *annadatas* (“food providers”) and defenders of democracy, whereas detractors (including some officials and media outlets) circulated counter-frames portraying the protestors as misinformed or even separatist agitators (Bawa and Sodhi, 2024; Mishra *et al.*, 2021). Thus, the Twitter discourse around the farmers’ protest was characterized by competing frames and a struggle to shape public opinion, both within India and internationally. Movement organizers and supporters strategically engaged with social media platforms to shape public narratives and amplify their message in the digital public sphere (Behl, 2022). However, a systematic analysis is needed to understand what the dominant narratives (or frames) were and how they influenced engagement on social media. This study addresses two core research questions:

*RQ1: What were the dominant narrative frames in tweets about the Indian farmers’ protest?*

*RQ2: How did different narrative frames influence audience engagement on Twitter?*

These questions aim to uncover the recurring themes, such as framing the protest as an economic justice movement, a human rights issue, or a political conspiracy, that structured the online conversation. By examining how different frames impacted audience interaction (measured through retweets, likes, and replies), the study explores which framings most successfully captured public attention and resonated with users. Given the central role of social media in shaping public narratives, this research offers insights into how digital discourse can amplify or marginalize protest messages.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

This study draws on framing theory to understand how narratives around the Indian Farmers’ Protest were constructed and contested on Twitter. As Entman (1993) explains, framing involves *selecting certain aspects of reality* and making them salient to promote specific interpretations. Effective frames define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies. In protest contexts, frames shape how publics perceive events, who is to blame, what is at stake, and what action should follow.

Framing is also central to movement mobilization. In the case of the farmers’ protest, opposing camps employed divergent frames. Protesters framed the farm laws as threats to livelihoods caused by corporate-favoring policies, demanding repeal as a moral and democratic imperative. By contrast, pro-government narratives framed the laws as necessary reforms and portrayed dissenters as misinformed or politically motivated. These competing frames show how the same event was imbued with different meanings. Furthermore, as Snow (2000) note, collective action frames must diagnose injustice, propose remedies, and motivate action. For the farmers’ protest, this involved portraying farmers as *annadatas* (food providers) under threat, demanding repeal of the laws and minimum support price (MSP) guarantees, and rallying mass support with slogans and emotional appeals.

Importantly, this study also builds on digital activism research that links *moral-emotional framing* to higher online engagement. Brady et al. (2017) found that tweets using moral-emotional language e.g., words evoking justice, outrage, or empathy, were more likely to go viral. Similarly, Sanford et al. (2023) showed that emotionally charged protest messages generated significantly more public interaction on platforms like Twitter.

In applying these insights, this study identifies five dominant narrative frames in the Twitter discourse around the farmers' protest: *Emotional and Solidarity Appeals*, *Repression and Victimization*, *Distrust in Political Institutions*, *Localized Lived Realities*, and *Structural Policy Discourse*. It then evaluates the performance of each frame in terms of user engagement. The study argues that frames tied to moral clarity, emotional resonance, and collective identity were most successful in mobilizing attention, while technical or ideological frames underperformed. This contributes to framing theory by showing how *affective and spatially grounded narratives*, more than abstract policy critiques, drove the digital life of the protest.

### 3. Study Overview and Methodology

This study utilizes a publicly available dataset comprising tweets related to the Indian Farmers' Protest (2020–2021).<sup>1</sup> The dataset includes tweets containing the hashtag #FarmersProtest, collected between November 1, 2020, and November 21, 2021. It consists of approximately 1,000,000 tweets posted by around 170,000 unique Twitter users. The dataset contains tweet-level information for all tweets using #FarmersProtest and having tweet data columns: [date, renderedContent, tweetId, userId, replyCount, retweetCount, likeCount, quoteCount, source, media, retweetedTweet, quotedTweet, mentionedUsers]

To carry out this analysis, the study draws on the dataset described above and adopts a mixed-methods research design. This study investigates the digital framing dynamics of the Indian Farmers' Protest (2020–2021) by examining public discourse on Twitter across five critical phases: *Dilli Chalo*, *Bharat Bandh*, the *Republic Day Tractor Parade*, *Chakka Jam*, and the *Repeal Announcement*. The research aims to understand how narrative frames evolved over time and how they shaped public perception, political critique, and protest legitimacy in digital spheres. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining natural language processing (NLP) for high-frequency keyword extraction with qualitative thematic analysis to cluster keywords into dominant and emergent frames (Bird et al., 2009). The dataset was drawn from a cleaned and structured Twitter corpus filtered through relevant hashtags and protest-related keywords (e.g., #FarmersProtest, #MSP, #StandWithFarmers). Tweets were analyzed for average engagement (likes, retweets, replies) to evaluate frame resonance and visibility. Each protest phase was analyzed independently, and frames were categorized based on salience (very strong, strong, moderate, weak) using keyword frequency, contextual meaning, and thematic coherence.

Additionally, the study conducted a comparative framing analysis across phases and examined discourse shifts before and after the November 19 repeal announcement. A second layer of analysis focused on evaluating five interpretive frames: (1) Emotional and Solidarity Appeals, (2) Repression and Victimization, (3) Distrust in Political Institutions, (4) Localized Lived

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<sup>1</sup> The complete dataset, including tweet content and associated metadata related to the Indian Farmers' Protest (2020–2021), is publicly available and can be accessed at: [10.5281/zenodo.15130392](https://zenodo.org/record/15130392).

Realities, and (5) Structural and Policy Discourse, based on engagement metrics to understand which narratives mobilized the most public attention. Grounded in Framing Theory (Entman, 1993; Nisbet, 2009), this longitudinal and engagement-driven analysis offers empirical insight into the rhetorical strategies and emotional currents that shaped the digital life and legitimacy of the Farmers’ Protest over time.

#### 4. Findings

##### 4.1 Framing Landscape Based on Engagement and Keywords

This section outlines the central findings of the study by presenting the framing landscape that shaped Twitter discourse during the Indian Farmers’ Protest. The analysis identifies five dominant frames based on thematic clustering of high-frequency keywords and their corresponding average engagement. These frames reflect how different aspects of the protest were constructed, interpreted, and emotionally amplified in the digital space. Emotional and symbolic appeals were consistently more engaging than technical or ideological content, underscoring the power of moral and affective storytelling in protest communication (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Framing Landscape Based on Engagement and Keywords

Frame	Top Keywords	Interpretation
1. Emotional and Solidarity Appeals	<i>solidarity, peaceful, hope, support, voice, protester</i>	Centered on moral legitimacy, empathy, and collective identity; most engaging frame across all categories
2. Repression and Victimization	<i>water cannon, tear, police, force, jail, barricade</i>	Visual and symbolic portrayal of state aggression; fueled indignation, sympathy, and calls for justice
3. Distrust in Political Institutions	<i>government, modi, law, bill, bjp</i>	Expressed skepticism toward leadership; low engagement due to lack of emotional or personal narrative grounding
4. Localized Lived Realities	<i>punjab, haryana, agriculture, food, water</i>	Connected the protest to tangible, region-specific concerns; increased relevance through geographic and cultural anchors
5. Structural and Policy Discourse	<i>farmbills, msp, economy, corporate, price</i>	Focused on the economic rationale behind the protest; lowest engagement without moral or emotional context

#### 4.2 Framing Evolution and Narrative Shifts in the Farmers' Protest on Twitter (November 2020 – February 2021)

##### Phase 1: Grounded Resistance – Dilli Chalo (Nov 24–30, 2020)

During the “Dilli Chalo” phase, Twitter discourse centered on Logistics and Mobilization with keywords like *farmersdillichalo*, *delhichalo*, *border*, *march*, and *road*, emphasizing the physical convergence of farmers at Delhi’s borders. Political Critique and Solidarity & Support were also prominent, as tweets highlighted government opposition (*modi*, *bjp*, *narendramodi*) and digital empathy (*support*, *peaceful*, *voice*). Identity/Community and Repression/Conflict were moderately present, with regional terms (*punjab*, *sikh*, *khalistan*) and episodic state force (tear, gas, police) surfacing occasionally. Surprisingly, the Policy/Legal frame (*law*, *bill*, *farm*) was weak, showing limited traction despite its centrality to the protest’s cause. An emergent Moral Outrage frame, expressed through words like *shame* and *democracy*, cut across categories, invoking civic urgency and collective frustration.

##### Phase 2: Collective Legitimacy – Bharat Bandh (Dec 8, 2020)

The Bharat Bandh shifted focus to Solidarity & Support, with keywords like *istandwithfarmers*, *solidarity*, and *farmersarelifeline* reflecting pan-Indian moral unity. Political Critique intensified, targeting leadership and policy repeal (*modi*, *repealblacklaws*). Moderate frames included Identity/Community (*sikh*, *punjab*) and a strengthened Policy/Legal discourse (*law*, *repeal*), showing a more mature protest narrative. While Mobilization remained operational (*bharatbandh*, *bandh*), the Repression frame receded. Moral Outrage became more rhetorically sophisticated, with emotionally charged terms like *shame*, *democracy*, *please*, and *speakupforfarmers*. Delegitimization attempts (*khalistan*, *hijacked*) were present but largely ineffective.

##### Phase 3: Crisis & Contestation – Republic Day Parade (Jan 26, 2021)

The Republic Day Tractor Parade marked a dramatic shift, dominated by Conflict & Repression frames (*police*, *violence*, *redfort*). Mobilization keywords like *tractor*, *rally*, and *parade* persisted but were overshadowed by crisis narratives. The Delegitimization frame surged with mentions of *khalistan*, *terrorists*, and *farmersprotesthijacked*, intensifying reputational risk. Both Solidarity and Political Critique were subdued, while emotional framing became polarized, marked by confusion, betrayal, and national symbolism (*flag*, *democracy*, *delhiunderattack*). Policy/Legal discourse (*law*, *farm*) was nearly absent, buried under sensational coverage.

##### Phase 4: Globalization & Moral Repair – Chakka Jam (Feb 6, 2021)

In the Chakka Jam phase, discourse pivoted to Global Solidarity & Human Rights, amplified by voices like *rihanna*, *gretathunberg*, and *unhumanrights*. Moral Support & Gratitude dominated with keywords like *thank*, *support*, *standwithfarmers*, and *peaceful*, helping repair the protest’s image post-Republic Day. Political Critique was subdued, reframed through human rights discourse (*modi*, *law*). Cultural discourse became more pronounced, contrasting global celebrity support with domestic silence (*shameonbollywood*, *antinationalbollywood*). Policy/Legal (*farmbills*, *mss*) and Mobilization (*indiasupportschakkajaam*) frames were weak, as symbolic resonance overtook operational detail.

#### 4.3 Pre- and Post-Repeal Announcement Twitter Discourse (November 2021)

In the three days preceding Prime Minister Modi's repeal announcement (November 16–18, 2021), Twitter discourse around the Farmers' Protest exhibited moderate intensity and carried a reflective yet cautious tone. Dominant themes during this pre-announcement phase revolved around the continued endurance and resilience of the protest. Frequent mentions of keywords such as *farmersprotest* (1323), *farmer* (705), and *protest* (80) highlighted a sustained dialogue, reinforcing the prolonged nature of the movement. Terms like *year* (63) and *still* (50) further underscored the resilience of the protestors despite persistent governmental inaction.

Political critique and policy concerns also remained central during this period. Twitter users continued to exert significant pressure on the government, as indicated by frequent references to *govt* (123), *modi* (123), *law* (170), and *bjp* (77). Policy-specific issues persisted as focal points, notably highlighted by keywords such as *msp* (39) (Minimum Support Price) and *dap* (61) (*fertilizer shortages*), reflecting the continued frustrations over unresolved agricultural policy issues and governmental negligence.

Emerging within these conversations was a palpable sense of fatigue and frustration. Keywords such as *shortage* (36), *unconstitutional* (32), *truth* (29), and *death* (27) captured the mounting distress among farmers over prolonged hardships and inadequate policy responses. Emotionally charged terms like *need* (33), *save* (61), and *fight* (26) conveyed a growing urgency and exhaustion among protestors, illustrating a critical inflection point in the movement's emotional landscape. Interestingly, this pre-announcement discourse showed minimal engagement with delegitimization or polarizing narratives. While peripheral political and social debates, indicated by keywords such as *virdas* (77), surfaced, the absence of significant references to labels like "Khalistani" or "anti-national" suggested a relatively low level of polarization or delegitimization attempts during this critical juncture.

Immediately following Prime Minister Modi's announcement on November 19, 2021, declaring the repeal of the three farm laws, Twitter discourse underwent a dramatic transformation in both volume and framing. The announcement rapidly shifted the prevailing narratives toward celebration and victory, reflected in high-frequency keywords such as *victory* (1378), *win* (1018), *finally* (618), *congratulation* (548), and hashtags such as *farmersdefeatedarrogance* (391) and *victoryforfarmers* (373). This triumphant framing effectively replaced the previously cautious and fatigued narrative, marking a distinct moment of collective validation.

Furthermore, the repeal was directly and robustly associated with Prime Minister Modi and governmental accountability. Keywords related to political figures, particularly *modi* (2732), *narendramodi* (1471), *govt* (1026), and *government* (1015), surged in frequency, positioning the repeal as politically charged. This framing was frequently tied to electoral strategy, suggested by terms like *election* (1216) and *masterstroke* (465), indicating that the discourse interpreted the repeal as either a genuine democratic success or a calculated political maneuver. Simultaneously, discourse increasingly emphasized democratic resilience and farmer unity. The use of emotionally resonant and identity-affirming terms such as *democracy* (409), *struggle* (356), *jai* (327), and hashtags like *kisanmajdoorektazindabaad* (526) presented the repeal not simply as policy rollback but as a broader democratic triumph, underscoring collective action and civil resistance.

Despite the prevailing celebratory tone, significant caution and unresolved policy concerns persisted in the discourse. Frequent references to terms such as *msp* (349), *farmlaws* (5043),

and ongoing mentions of *farm* (2746) indicated ongoing anxieties about whether the repeal announcement genuinely addressed farmers' core grievances, particularly regarding future agricultural reforms and the Minimum Support Price.

Finally, alongside celebratory narratives, a critical undercurrent reflecting political skepticism emerged strongly. Keywords such as *election* (1216), *lost* (675), and *disappointed* (330) expressed suspicion about the government's true motivations, suggesting perceptions of electoral opportunism rather than genuine reform. This duality within the celebratory narrative captured the complexity and cautious optimism characterizing public reaction to the repeal announcement.

## 5. Discussion

Firstly, the five narrative frames offer a comprehensive view of how users constructed meaning around the Farmers' Protest in digital spaces. *Emotional and Solidarity Appeals* emerged as the most compelling, underscoring the critical role of moral and affective resonance in driving user engagement. In contrast, frames relying on factual critique or institutional distrust, such as the *Distrust in Political Institutions frame*, failed to gain similar traction, suggesting that audiences are more responsive to emotionally anchored content than abstract or adversarial rhetoric. The *Repression and Victimization frame* revealed how episodic moments of state violence, such as tear gas deployments or barricades served as flashpoints for moral outrage. These moments reframed the protest not just as a struggle for rights but as a resistance against oppression, dramatically increasing engagement and visibility. Meanwhile, the *Localized Lived Realities frame* offered a grounded and relatable narrative that connected broader policy concerns to daily agrarian life. This spatially and culturally rooted storytelling enhanced the accessibility of the movement for wider publics, especially those connected to Punjab, Haryana, and rural livelihoods. Finally, the *Structural and Policy Discourse frame*, though substantively critical, failed to sustain attention without emotional reinforcement. The relatively low engagement on tweets focused purely on MSP, deregulation, or economic liberalization suggests that while these issues form the backbone of protest demands, they require narrative mediation, such as personal stories or moral framing to succeed in the social media environment. Taken together, the findings reinforce the theoretical argument that digital protest visibility depends less on the sophistication of issue-based arguments and more on their narrative construction. Emotional clarity, symbolic representation, and grounded relevance emerged as key drivers of public engagement and frame salience throughout the Farmers' Protest on Twitter.

Secondly, comparative analysis of these four distinct phases reveals a clear narrative evolution of the Farmers' Protest, tracing how public framing and discourse changed over time. Below is Table 2, which summarizes the framing shifts across the four major protest events, highlighting how each phase emphasized different narrative frames and rhetorical priorities.

Table 2: Comparative Framing Analysis of Farmers' Protest Phases

Frame	Dilli Chalo (Nov 24–30)	Bharat Bandh (Dec 8)	Republic Day Parade (Jan 26)	Chakka Jam (Feb 6)
<i>Dominant Frame</i>	Logistics & Mobilization	Solidarity & Political Critique	Conflict & Repression	Global Solidarity & Human Rights
<i>Solidarity Frame</i>	Strong, identity-based (Punjab, Sikh)	Strong, pan-Indian, emotionally unified	Present but overshadowed	Very Strong: Moral affirmation and gratitude
<i>Political Critique Frame</i>	Moderate, leadership-focused	Central: Repeal demand + leadership accountability	Subdued, displaced by violence narrative	Moderate: Downplayed under human rights framing
<i>Mobilization Frame</i>	Central: #DilliChalo, border, march	Moderate: Bharat Bandh coordination	Present: Tractor rally, symbolic march	Weak: Chakka Jam specifics overshadowed by symbolism
<i>Repression/Conflict</i>	Episodic (barricades, tear gas)	Minimal	Central: Clashes, Red Fort, violence	Minimal: Frame replaced by peaceful rights-based rhetoric
<i>Delegitimization Frame</i>	Mild (Khalistan rhetoric surfaced)	Weak	Strong: “hijack,” “terrorist,” “anti-national”	Present: Cultural complicity (e.g., #ShameOnBollywood), but not dominant
<i>Policy/Legal Frame</i>	Weak: law & bill rarely mentioned	Moderate: Law repeal, #TakeBackFarm Laws	Minimal: drowned by symbolic/emotional frames	Weak: Displaced by global human rights discourse
<i>Symbolism/Nationalism</i>	Delhi as center of state power	Bharat as symbolic whole	Red Fort/Republic Day as contested national symbols	India as globally observed democracy; Human Rights as national symbol

The movement transitioned from physical mobilization (*Dilli Chalo*) emphasizing logistical visibility and grounded resistance, to nationwide collective legitimacy and moral solidarity (*Bharat Bandh*). It then entered a narrative crisis and contestation on *Republic Day*, facing internal fracturing and external delegitimization. Finally, through the *Chakka Jam*, it underwent narrative recalibration via international support, restoring moral legitimacy and evolving into a transnational human rights movement. The initial phase (*Dilli Chalo*) was marked by tangible, logistical frames focusing on geographic mobilization, grounded in regional identity and visible presence. By *Bharat Bandh*, the movement matured, shifting to emotionally charged, nationally unifying frames. Strategic moral and political critiques merged into an effective digital narrative, indicating growth in narrative sophistication and mass legitimacy.



However, the *Republic Day phase* was a turning point, illustrating narrative vulnerability. Despite previous coherence, symbolic conflicts at the Red Fort allowed counternarratives to exploit fractures, highlighting the volatility inherent in symbolic protest actions. Delegitimization narratives, largely ineffective in earlier phases, found traction here, underscoring the need for strategic narrative resilience in high-stakes symbolic protests. The final *Chakka Jam phase* represented narrative adaptability and maturity. Rather than remaining defensive, the movement pivoted toward global moral solidarity, reframing itself as a universal human rights issue. This international visibility restored legitimacy but also repositioned the protest beyond immediate policy concerns, demonstrating how digital activism often favors moral resonance over complex policy details.

Thirdly, analyzing Twitter discourse before and after the repeal announcement provides rich insights into the evolution of protest framing and public perception. Pre-announcement discourse was cautious, emphasizing prolonged resilience and frustration due to unresolved grievances. In contrast, the post-announcement phase dramatically shifted toward a celebratory narrative framing the repeal as a monumental victory. This reveals how concrete government actions significantly alter digital narrative trajectories, transforming fatigue into a powerful validation of prolonged democratic resistance. The direct association of the repeal decision with PM's persona and the BJP highlights the intensified personalization of political critique. The announcement positioned Modi as a central figure responsible for both the farmers' prolonged struggle and ultimate victory, suggesting high digital sensitivity toward political leadership and accountability.

The repeal was met with simultaneous celebration and skepticism. This ambivalence reveals complex citizen-government trust dynamics, indicating a deep-seated uncertainty about governmental motivations and the authenticity of democratic responsiveness, particularly when associated with electoral timing and strategic narratives. Despite immediate celebratory framing, ongoing keyword frequencies relating to MSP and farm policy suggest that the digital audience remained attentive and cautious regarding unresolved demands. This indicates a sophisticated public discourse, capable of distinguishing between symbolic victories and substantive policy achievements, potentially setting the stage for sustained digital activism on agricultural policy.

## 6. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive examination of how the Indian Farmers' Protest (2020-2021) was framed and reframed on Twitter across five key phases i.e., from the initial *Dilli Chalo* mobilization to the *repeal of the farm laws*. By integrating framing theory with digital engagement analysis, the study demonstrates how the protest's narrative evolved from a grounded expression of regional resistance to a transnational human rights movement. The study reveals that the most resonant and widely circulated frames were not necessarily those centered on legal policy or institutional critique, but those that emphasized emotional solidarity, moral clarity, and lived agrarian realities.

In terms of theoretical insight, our work extends existing framing literature (Brady et al., 2017; Sanford et al. 2023) by empirically demonstrating that digitally mediated protest movements gain traction when narratives are rooted in affect, identity, and moral universality. The Emotional and Solidarity Appeals frame consistently outperformed other frames in terms of

engagement, underscoring the power of moral-emotional discourse in digital mobilization. Conversely, frames focused purely on technical or ideological content, such as Structural and Policy Discourse or Distrust in Political Institutions, failed to garner similar visibility unless accompanied by narrative or symbolic grounding.

The study's contribution is twofold. First, it offers a longitudinal, phase-wise framing analysis of a major social movement, showing how digital narratives shift in response to political events, symbolic crises, and international attention. Second, it provides a frame-performance analysis based on user engagement, highlighting which types of protest discourse succeed in mobilizing public attention on Twitter. These findings not only deepen our understanding of the Farmers' Protest but also offer methodological tools and conceptual frameworks for analyzing the digital life of protests more broadly. Overall, this study affirms that the success of protest narratives in the digital age hinges not merely on the validity of demands, but on their storytelling power, emotional resonance, and symbolic positioning. As protests increasingly unfold in digital arenas, understanding their narrative trajectories becomes vital to assessing their political impact, media visibility, and historical legacy.

**Declaration of Conflicting Interest:**

The author(s) declare no conflicts of interest related to this research or its authorship.

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**Ethical Approval Statement:**

This study uses publicly available Twitter data. As per mention relevant guidelines, i.e., [Twitter's Developer Agreement and Policy](#), data collection and analysis adhere to ethical and legal standards. No interventions or direct interactions with individuals were conducted.

**Data Availability Statement:**

The dataset supporting this study consists of publicly available tweets collected from Twitter. Due to Twitter's data-sharing policies, the data containing aggregated data is available at: [10.5281/zenodo.15130392](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15130392)

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