



Impact of Covid-19 lockdown on Agriculture sector

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Abstract

The year 2020 has witnessed the historic virus known as covid-19 or Corona virus. The whole world is affected by the virus. Each and every nation is affected by the virus very badly. India is one of the victims of this virus. As we all know that India is an agricultural country. Agriculture is the base of India so in the following paper the detail analysis of covid-19 on agriculture sector is given. The corona virus is going to affect the Indian agriculture sector in a big way. Moreover, it's going to be a mixture of both negative and some positive effects. This paper presents only its impact on agriculture sector. The study is based on secondary data collected from various sources. Corona virus is a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans.

Keyword: Agriculture Sector, Covid, Harvest.

Objectives:

- 1) To know the Impacts of Covid-19 on Agricultural sector.
- 2) To know the challenges for Indian Agricultural sector.
- 3) To know the Agriculture reforms and few measures proposed to Agriculture.

Research Methodology:

For the purpose of the research descriptive method is used. For secondary data collection we used different types of sources such as journals, articles, magazines. Secondary data is the data which is already available in the form of Newspaper, Magazines, Research Journals and Books etc. For this research work secondary data has been collected from internet and different articles.

Introduction:

The virus is thought to be natural and has an infection. The actual origin is unknown, but the first known cases of infection happened in China (reference?). By December 2019, the spread of infection was almost entirely driven by human-to-human transmission. Corona viruses are a large family of respiratory viruses that can cause disease ranging from the common cold to the Middle Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). In case of symptoms suggestive of acute respiratory illness before, during or after travel, the travelers are encouraged to see medical attention and share travel history with their health care provider. COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered corona virus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. Public health authorities should provide to traveler's information to reduce the general risk of acute respiratory infections, via health practitioners, travel health clinics, travel agencies, conveyance operators and at points of entry.

State Governments shall not dilute these guidelines issued under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, in any manner, and shall strictly enforce the same. The all essentials services and day to day resources are remains open according to the guidelines in hotspots and containment zones with time restrictions. The activities will be functional for the sectors like all health services, Fisheries, Plantations, Animal husbandry, Financial sector, Social sector, Online teaching/ distance learning to be encouraged, Public utilities, Movement, loading/ unloading of goods/ cargo. Inter and intra essential goods, Commercial and private establishments also Offices of the government of India, its Autonomous/ Subordinate Offices, Offices of the State Governments, their Autonomous Bodies and Local Governments etc.

All Agriculture and horticultural related activities were started as follows:

1) Farming operations by farmers and farm workers in field. 2) Agencies engaged in procurement of agriculture products, including MSP operations. 3) 'Mandis' operated by the Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) or as notified by the State Government Direct marketing operations by the State Government or by industry, directly from farmers/ group of farmers, FPOs' co-operatives etc. States may promote decentralized marketing and procurement at village level. 4) Shops of agriculture machinery, its spare parts (including its supply chain) and repairs to remain open. 5) Custom Hiring Centres related to farm machinery. 6) Manufacturing, distribution and retail of fertilizers, pesticides and seeds. 7) Inter and intra State movement of harvesting and sowing related machines like combined harvester and other agriculture/ horticulture implements.

Fisheries related activities were started as follows:

1) Operations of the fishing (marine and inland)/ maintenance, harvesting, processing, packaging, cold chain, sale and marketing. 2) Movement of fish/ shrimp and fish products, fish seed/ feed and workers for all activities. 3) Hatcheries, feed plants, commercial aquaria.

Plantations related activities were started as follows:

1) Operations of tea, coffee and rubber plantations, with maximum of 50 per cent workers. 2) Processing, packaging, sale and marketing of tea, coffee, rubber and cashew in factory maximum of 50 per cent workers.

Animal husbandry related activities were started as follows:

1) Collection, processing, distribution and sale of milk and milk products by milk processing plants, including transport and supply chain. 2) Animal feed manufacturing and feed plants, including supply of raw material, such as maize and soya. 3) Operation of animal husbandry farms including poultry farms & hatcheries and livestock farming activity.

Challenges for Agriculture:

Agriculture and Supply Chains are posing following challenges with respect to current situation of lockdown in the nation 1) Initially there was problem regarding harvesting due Lockdown and Sanchar Bandi that had put restrictions on getting out of home but later on when restrictions for agricultural activities migrant labor had begun to move towards their hometowns leading unavailability of workers for harvesting purpose. 2) Farmers are having difficulties with storage of harvested crops since already overflowing with 77.6 MMT of rice and wheat with Food Corporation of India as on March 1, 2020. (M S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF). 3) India's fruit and vegetable export is going to suffer a lot as all major import markets these products that includes United States, European Union, China and Middle East are lockdown due to covid-19. 4) APMC mandis are on either limited operation or closed along with retail agriculture markets being under shutdown direct sales of these products have seen serious declination. 5) Sharpe fall in the prices of agricultural products like tomato, Grapes, wheat, vegetables. 6) Due to spread of misinformation through social media there is colossal drop in the prices of poultry products.

Impact of COVID-19 lockdown on agriculture sector:

Agriculture sector in India being mainly in the period of harvesting Rabi crops and initial period of Mango, watermelon, muskmelon and also some varieties of Grapes like Anab e-Shahi, Bangalore Blue, Gulabi and Thompson seedless is having its harvest period from January to March and April seems to be in difficulty due to interruptions in supply chain due to lockdown in India.

Punjab and Haryana the food bowl of India and new food bowl Madhya Pradesh are ready with bumper crops of the season due to adequate rain last year but lockdown seems to hit the farmers badly as Punjab and Haryana combined are having signs to produce about 225 lakh tons of wheat this season but most of the agricultural workers there comes from UP and Bihar and they won't come most of the mechanical harvesters from the region are also stuck in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. UP the largest producer of potato has produced nearly 15.5 million tons of potato and about 60 to 65% of cold storages there are having potato stored and are also receiving still from Prayagraj and

Agra. Whereas the rise in demand of potatoes from southern states, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Assam have stabilized its Prices. In Western Bengal loading is going on due shortage of labor.

Following are the effect on Agriculture sector due to lockdown:

i) As the lockdown proceeds, Amul expect milk demand to decline. ii) All state only 50 farmers would be allowed to enter mandis [markets] through entire areas. iii) Disruption in the procurement of food grains by government agencies. iv) Disruption in the collection of harvest from the farms by private traders. v) Shortage of workers to harvest the Rabi crops and of Drivers in transportation sector. vi) Blockade in the movement of agriculture commodities across the major highways. vii) Closure or limited operations of APMC mandis [markets] and Prices have declined for wheat, vegetables and other crops but yet Consumers are paying more.

Agricultural reforms:

The reforms in the agricultural sector announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday i.e. 15 May 2020 that government was looking to amend the Essential Act to deregulate prices of food items including cereals, edible oils, oilseeds, pulses, onions, and potatoes among others. She announced in the third tranche of the Rs 20,000 crore AtmaNirbhar Bharat special economic package.

1) One lakh crore Agri Infrastructure Fund for creating farm-gate infrastructure for farmers including cold chain and post-harvest management structure in the vicinity of farm gate. Financing facility of Rs 1,00,000 crore will be provided for funding agriculture infrastructure projects and aggregation points. This fund is to be created immediately.

2) Rs 10,000 crore scheme for formalization of Micro Food Enterprises. This scheme promotes 'Vocal for Local with Global Outreach' vision outlined by PM Narendra Modi in his last address to the nation, where he stressed on self-economic growth in the post coronavirus world. The scheme, government said, will help 2 lakh MFEs, farmer producer organization, self-help groups and cooperatives in technical upgradation, improved incomes, better health and safety standards and integration with retail markets.

3) Rs 20,000 crore for fisherman through Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) to fulfill critical gaps in fisheries value chain and for integrated sustainable inclusive development of marine and inland fisheries. Out of this, Rs 11,000 crore is meant for marine, inland fisheries and aquaculture and Rs 9,000 crore is meant for infrastructure like fishing harbours, cold chain, markets etc. This fund infusion is likely to help in additional fish production of 70 lakh tones over 5 years and gain in employment to over 55 lakh persons.

4) A total outlay of Rs 13,343 crores for National Animal Disease Control programme was announced.

5) Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund of Rs 15,000 crore created for supporting private investments in Dairy processing and value addition and cattle feed infrastructure.

6) Rs 4,000 crore was earmarked for the promotion of herbal cultivation bring in an additional 10,00,000 hectare of land under cultivation in the next two years. Such a corridor could be developed on both sides of river Ganga, said Sitharaman.

7) Rs 500 crore for bee-keeping initiatives in the rural areas.

8) Rs 500 crore for Operation Green to prevent the wastage of agricultural produce due to disruption of supply chains during the lockdown. This will be extended for the next six months from crops like tomatoes, potatoes and onions to all fruits and vegetables. This involves subsidy for transportation and storage.

Few measures proposed to assist the agriculture sector:

Following the announcement of the lockdown extension, the home ministry set guidelines. These guidelines were set bearing in mind their challenges the agriculture sector.

1) The supply chain will resume as usual while employing social distancing. This is exclusively for milk, milk products, poultry, tea, rubber plantation and so on.

2) The center allows normal functioning of agriculture, health services, and industries in rural area.

3) Some of the main functional activities are cultivation, horticulture, agro-procurement, mandis,

repair shops, farm machinery, and Custom Hiring Centres.

4)MSP operations will be functional including the food grain procurement.

5)MNREGA projects will resume while also abiding the rules of lockdown and social distancing.

6)PM Kisan scheme action, PM- CARES, RBI relief measures, Borrowers moratorium, and so on are few measures to safeguard the farmers and other vulnerable sections.

Conclusion:

From the whole research, I am able to conclude that there are many adverse impact of Covid-19 in Agricultural as well as other sectors not even in India but in the whole world. Farmers in Karnataka state threw the tomato as they were neither getting a good prices and this decrease their income. There are many issues also like worker's migration, sharp fall in the price of product, storage problems due to lockdown. India's Fruits and vegetable export market is closed therefore, the govt. of India should focus on such issues and should take some actions for the betterment of our Indian economy and also for our agricultural sector.

Relaxation of the norms by Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs) allowing farmers to sell their produce beyond the designated mandis will certainly ease the burdens of farmers. State Governments must gear up their machineries for smooth procurement operations of farmer's marketable surpluses at MSP (minimum support price) or through other price support schemes. Restrictions on movement may prevent farmers from accessing markets and result in food waste. Many climate models predict a favorable monsoon in the 2020 season (the India Meteorological Department has also since officially announced) as the El-Nino weather phenomenon, that disrupts rainfall in India, is not evident. This is indeed a good news in the COVID scenario, assuming agriculture can practice largely unscathed. Structural reforms such as land leasing, contract farming, and private agriculture markets etc. have long been advocated to bring enhanced investments into the agriculture sector and to push its growth. However, there has not been uniform implementation of these legislations by State Governments and so the full potential of the sector is unrealized. These reforms need significant political will. Concerns of a slowdown in the zeal of States, post-COVID scenario, could be tackled with suitable incentive mechanisms by the Federal Government to the States. Making the food grains, fruits and vegetables and other essential items available to consumers, both in rural and urban areas, is the most critical challenge for Government machinery during the lockdown period.

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