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"A STUDY ON IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON FARMERS"

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 crisis has exposed the vulnerability of India's agriculture and food markets. Both demand and supply shocks emphasise the need for reforms to connect farmers to markets, ensure adequate labour supplies, and create safety nets to make them more resilient. While supply chain and workforce vulnerabilities hurt farming of all scales and forms in India, the most affected have been dairy farming, fruit production, fisheries, and poultry farming.Nearly 90% of India's agricultural sector is made up of small and marginal farmers. These farmers are particularly vulnerable to economic shocks, include those sparked by COVID-19 lockdowns.

The COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest global humanitarian challenge the world has faced since World War II. The virus has spread widely, and the number of cases is rising daily as governments work to slow its spread. India had moved swiftly, implementing a proactive, nationwide, 21-day lockdown, with the goal of flattening the curve and using the time to plan and resource responses adequately. India's effort to combat COVID-19 virus has been praised over the globe. However, the lockdown came with an economic cost and cascading impact on all the sections of society. The Covid-19 induced lockdown in India was a huge economic shock. It started across the country on 24 March 2020 and is still ongoing with restrictions in one form or other. It stalled the economy with complete closure imposed on enterprises across all sectors. Even though agricultural activities were exempted, in the initial phases of the lockdown the agriculture value chain also faced large-scale disruptions. This had a serious detrimental effect on the rural Indian economy.

1. INTRODUCTION

FARMER

India's National Policy for Farmers 2007 defines farmer as:

For the purpose of this Policy, the term "FARMER" will refer to a person actively engaged in the economic and/or livelihood activity of growing crops and producing other primary agricultural commodities and will include all agricultural operational holders, cultivators, agricultural labourers, sharecroppers, tenants, poultry and livestock rearers, fishers, beekeepers, gardeners, pastoralists, non-corporate planters and planting labourers, as well as persons engaged in various farmingrelated occupations such as sericulture, vermiculture, and agro-forestry. The term will also include tribal families / persons engaged in shifting cultivation and in the collection, use and sale of timber and non-timber forest produce.

A farmer is a person engaged in agriculture, raising living organisms for food or raw materials. The term usually applies to people who do some combination of raising field crops, orchards, vineyards, poultry, or other livestock. A farmer might own the farmed land or might work as a laborer on land owned by others, but in most developed economies, a farmer is usually a farm owner, while employees of the farm are known as farm workers, or farmhands. However, in other older definitions a farmer was a person who promotes or improves the growth of plants, land or crops or raises animals (as livestock or fish) by labor and attention.

Over half a billion farmers are smallholders, most of whom are in developing countries, and who economically support almost two billion people. Globally, women constitute more than 40% of agricultural employee

HISTORY

Farming dates back as far as the Neolithic, being one of the defining characteristics of that era. By the Bronze Age, the Sumerians had an agriculture specialized labor force by 5000–4000 BCE, and heavily depended on irrigation to grow crops. They relied on three-person teams when harvesting in the spring. The Ancient Egypt farmers farmed and relied and irrigated their water from the Nile.

Animal husbandry, the practice of rearing animals specifically for farming purposes, has existed for thousands of years. Dogs were domesticated in East Asia about 15,000 years ago. Goats and sheep were domesticated around 8000 BCE in Asia. Swine or pigs were domesticated by 7000

BCE in the Middle East and China. The earliest evidence of horse domestication dates to around 4000 BCE.

Vedic literature provides some of the earliest written record of agriculture in India. Rigveda hymns, for example, describes ploughing, fallowing, irrigation, fruit and vegetable cultivation. Other historical evidence suggests rice and cotton were cultivated in the Indus Valley, and ploughing patterns from the Bronze Age have been excavated at Kalibangan in Rajasthan. Bhumivargaha, an Indian Sanskrit text, suggested to be 2500 years old, classifies agricultural land into 12 categories: urvara (fertile), ushara (barren), maru (desert), aprahata (fallow), shadvala (grassy), pankikala (muddy), jalaprayah (watery), kachchaha (contiguous to water), sharkara (full of pebbles and pieces of limestone), sharkaravati (sandy), nadimatruka (watered from a river), and devamatruka (rainfed). Some archaeologists believe that rice was a domesticated crop along the banks of the river Ganges in the sixth millennium BC. So were species of winter cereals (barley, oats, and wheat) and legumes (lentil and chickpea) grown in northwest India before the sixth millennium BC.[citation needed] Other crops cultivated in India 3000 to 6000 years ago, include sesame, linseed, safflower, mustard, castor, mung bean, black gram, horse gram, pigeon pea, field pea, grass pea (khesari), fenugreek, cotton, jujube, grapes, dates, jack fruit, mango, mulberry, and black plum[citation needed]. Indians might have domesticated buffalo (the river type) 5000 years ago.

According to some scientists agriculture was widespread in the Indian peninsula, 10000–3000 years ago, well beyond the fertile plains of the north. For example, one study reports 12 sites in the southern Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka providing clear evidence of agriculture of pulses Vigna radiata and Macrotyloma uniflorum, millet-grasses (Brachiaria ramosa and Setaria verticillata), wheats (Triticum dicoccum, Triticum durum/aestivum), barley (Hordeum vulgare), hyacinth bean (Lablab purpureus), pearl millet (Pennisetum glaucum), finger millet (Eleusine coracana), cotton (Gossypium sp.), linseed (Linum sp.), as well as gathered fruits of Ziziphus and two Cucurbitaceae.

Some claim Indian agriculture began by 9000 BC as a result of early cultivation of plants, and domestication of crops and animals. Settled life soon followed with implements and techniques being developed for agriculture. Double monsoons led to two harvests being reaped in one year. Indian products soon reached trading networks and foreign crops were introduced. Plants and animals—considered esses "reeds that produce honey without bees" being grown. These were locally called Sākhara. On their return journey, the Macedonian soldiers carried the "honey bearing reeds," thus spreading sugar and sugarcane agriculture.[39][40] People in India had invented, by about 500 BC, the process to produce sugar crystals. In the local language, these crystals were called khanda , which is the source of the word candy.

Before the 18th century, cultivation of sugarcane was largely confined to India. A few merchants began to trade in sugar – a luxury and an expensive spice in Europe until the 18th century. Sugar became widely popular in 18th-century Europe, then graduated to become a human necessity in the 19th century all over the world. Sugarcane plantations, just like cotton farms, became a major

driver of large and forced human migrations in the 19th century and early 20th century – of people from Africa and from India, both in millions – influencing the ethnic mix, political

conflicts and cultural evolution of Caribbean, South American, Indian Ocean and Pacific Island nations.

The history and past accomplishments of Indian agriculture thus influenced, in part, colonialism, slavery and slavery-like indentured labour practices in the new world, Caribbean wars and world history in 18th and 19th centuries.

ADVANCEMENTS IN TECHNOLOGY

In the U.S. of the 1930s, one farmer could only produce enough food to feed three other consumers. A modern-day farmer produces enough food to feed well over a hundred people. However, some authors consider this estimate to be flawed, as it does not take into account that farming requires energy and many other resources which have to be provided by additional workers, so that the ratio of people fed to farmers is actually smaller than 100 to 1.

TYPES

More distinct terms are commonly used to denote farmers who raise specific domesticated animals. For example, those who raise grazing livestock, such as cattle, sheep, goats and horses, are known as ranchers (U.S.), graziers (Australia & UK) or simply stockmen. Sheep, goat and cattle farmers might also be referred to, respectively, as shepherds, goatherds and cowherds. The term dairy farmer is applied to those engaged primarily in milk production, whether from cattle, goats, sheep, or other milk producing animals. A poultry farmer is one who concentrates on raising chickens, turkeys, ducks or geese, for either meat, egg or feather production, or commonly, all three. A person who raises a variety of vegetables for market may be called a truck farmer or market gardener. Dirt farmer is an American colloquial term for a practical farmer, or one who farms his own land.

In developed nations, a farmer (as a profession) is usually defined as someone with an ownership interest in crops or livestock, and who provides land or management in their production. Those who provide only labor are most often called farmhands. Alternatively, growers who manage farmland for an absentee landowner, sharing the harvest (or its profits) are known as sharecroppers or sharefarmers. In the context of agribusiness, a farmer is defined broadly, and thus many individuals not necessarily engaged in full-time farming can nonetheless legally qualify under agricultural policy for various subsidies, incentives, and tax deductions

TECHNIQUES

In the context of developing nations or other pre-industrial cultures, most farmers practice a meager subsistence agriculture—a simple organic-farming system employing crop rotation, seed saving, slash and burn, or other techniques to maximize efficiency while meeting the needs of the household or community. One subsisting in this way may become labelled as a peasant, often associated disparagingly with a "peasant mentality"

In developed nations, however, a person using such techniques on small patches of land might be called a gardener and be considered a hobbyist. Alternatively, one might be driven into such practices by poverty or, ironically—against the background of large-scale agribusiness—might become an organic farmer growing for discerning/faddish consumers in the local food market.

FARMING ORGANIZATIONS

Farmers are often members of local, regional, or national farmers' unions or agricultural producers' organizations and can exert significant political influence. The Grange movement in the United States was effective in advancing farmers' agendas, especially against railroad and agribusiness interests early in the 20th century. The FNSEA is very politically active in France, especially pertaining to genetically modified food. Agricultural producers, both small and large, are represented globally by the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), representing over 600 million farmers through 120 national farmers' unions in 79 countries.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SUPPLY, DEMAND AND WAGES OF AGRI-LABOUR

The pandemic and the subsequent lockdown imposed to curb its spread had a significant impact on the supply, demand and wages of Agri-labour at all-India level. The country has also witnessed large number of migrant labourers attempting to return back to their native places. This had significantly impacted the supply of labour in some of the states. Agricultural labour supply had shown a decline in 70% of the districts covered in the survey. The labour supply had remained the same only in 17% of the districts. Labour supply had also seen an increase in 13% of the districts which may be attributed to return of migrant labour to their native places. As regards the demand for labour, at all India level, the demand for labour had increased in 43% of the districts whereas it had declined in 25% of the districts. In 32% of the districts, the demand for labour had remained the same. As far as wages were concerned, it was reported during the survey that wage rate had increased in 41% of the districts, decreased in 13% of the districts and remained the same in 46% of the districts. The dynamics of supply and demand in rural areas showed a mixed trend due to outflux of labourers from agriculturally advanced states to influx of labour in relatively backwards states. The aggregate magnitude of decline in labour supply was estimated to be about 20% percent at the all-India level whereas aggregate magnitude in increase in demand for labour was estimated to be about 6%. At all-India level, the wage rate was estimated to increase by 8.36%. This slight increase in wage rate could be attributed to the decline in supply of labour due to restricted mobility and increase in demand of labour at all India level.

IMPACT ON MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE

In order to assess the impact of COVID-19 on marketing of the agricultural produce, the survey included questions relating to multiple dimensions of the marketing of agricultural produce. The analysis of received responses depicted a significant adverse impact on different aspects of marketing of agricultural produce, as shown in Figure 3.10. For instance, at all-India level, among all captured variables relating to marketing of agri-produce, conduct of weekly markets/hats had been affected adversely in nearly 87% of sample districts whereas procurement by Govt. agencies had been adversely affected in 44% of the sample districts. This was mainly because of complete ban on operation of such rural hats by the administration to stop the gathering of people so as to check the spread of the corona virus. Notably, the degree of impact on marketing of agricultural produce had witnessed some variations across different states in respect of each of the marketing aspects

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

This survey was conceptualised and launched with the major objective of assessing the impact of COVID-19 on Indian agriculture

1. Agriculture and allied sector production, farm gate prices, supply and demand of agricultural inputs, etc.
2. Marketing of agricultural produce of farmers.
3. Banking activities in terms of access to credit, recovery and digital transactions
4. To suggest policy measures for agriculture and rural sector to ameliorate the adverse situation prevailing in the post COVID-19 situation

SAMPLING METHOD:

The sampling method is simple sampling method in order to collect the data for the above mentioned universe for my research work.

UNIVERSE:

The universe comprises of the Villagers in awakhal village ,sinor vadodara.

RESEARCH DESIGN:

Exploratory research Design: The researcher used Exploratory research design because the research problem is contemporary and is an issue that is less focused. An exploratory research project is an attempt to lay the groundwork that will lead to future studies, or to determine if what is being observed might be explained by a currently existing theory. Most often, exploratory research lays the initial groundwork for future research.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT:

The researcher used a structured questionnaire as a tool of data collection. The questionnaire consisted of close ended questions.

Sources of Data:

Primary and Secondary sources

Primary Source:

Primary data will be collected through a questionnaire containing of closed-ended from Villagers.

Secondary Data:

Information will be collected from secondary sources like books, journals, website sources, research articles etc.

Tools for data analysis

The researcher has used a Google form to analyse the collected data

Tools for research:

The Tools which will be used in this research are Google Forms, Google Docs and Microsoft**.**

2. FINDINGS

- It is found that majority of the respondents were males.
- It is found that majority of the respondents were from age group of 20-30 years.
- It is found that majority of the respondents were have 2-5 members in their family.
- It is found that majority of the respondents were have 1 child in their family.
- It is found that majority of the respondents were don't have Covid positive case in their family.
- It is found that majority of the respondents were have their own land for farming.
- It is found that majority of the respondents were have 5 – 20 viga of farming land.
- It is found that majority of the respondents were grow castor in their farm.
- It is found that majority of the respondents were tell that Magnitude of production is increase.
- It is found that majority of the respondents were have problems in this covid time.
- It is found that majority of the respondents were get easy materials of farming in this covid time.
- It is found that majority of the respondents were price of fertilizer is increase in this covid time.
- It is found that majority of the respondents were price of pesticide is increase in this covid time.
- It is found that majority of the respondents were rent of agriculture machinery is increase in this covid time.
- It is found that majority of the respondents were have fear to get affected to covid.
- It is found that majority of the respondents were Has the supply of labour increase in this covid time.
- It is found that majority of the respondents were Average wages of agri/rural labour increase in this covid time.
- It is found that majority of the respondents were Average price of the crops product was increase this covid time.
- It is found that majority of the respondents were have bigger problem of both (covid & lockdown).
- It is found that majority of the respondents were don't get any support from the government.

3. SUGGESTIONS

- Launching awareness camps and disseminating information on coping/dealing with COVID-19 or similar such emergencies by SHGs, FPOs and FCs in rural areas.
- Due to disruption in marketing of agri produce through mandis and rural haats, and reduced farm gate prices, the income stream of farmers have dwindled leading to poor recovery. Therefore, interest waiver for agri term loan for at least one year may be considered.
- Expanding digital infrastructure for online trading of agricultural goods
- Due to decline in agriculture and allied sector production, income support may be provided to farmers in general and particularly those engaged in poultry and fisheries sector. In this connection, enhancing the income support through PM-KISAN could be a good option
- Due to poor recovery, interest waiver for argic term loan for at least one year may be provided by Banks
- Banks to be nudged to enhance credit linkage and next dose of credit to eligible SHGs
- MSME sector to be supported through credit support (working capital) at concessional rate and interest subvention schemes and waiver of interest for at least two quarters for existing loans

- Proper Infrastructure and purchase of small road transport vehicle to take advantage of new emerging opportunities for direct selling of agri and horticulture produce to consumers.

- Universalization of MNREGS for covering more labourers, including the migrant workers who have returned from bigger cities

4. CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic lockdown period will have a greater effect on the agriculture sector and farmers in India. In India agriculture sector is facing a lot of problems with labourers and farming goods. Even though agriculture products are exempted from lockdown directives, but agriculturist are facing lot of problems due to some restriction. In India agriculture sector facing rainfall disruptions, crop damage and presently they are facing disruptions created by the Coronavirus. The study concluded that central and state government should take serious efforts to help the farmers.

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