

Challenges and Opportunities of Indian Agriculture during Covid-19 : A Review

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ABSTRACT

The risk of global recession due to COVID19 in 2020-2021 will be very high. Not only India, the whole world facing this pandemic situation. Government is also dealing with this dangerous situation. Some important rules gave by the Ministry of home affairs like social distancing, wearing mask, continuing wash your hands etc. After lockdown 1 when government announced unlock 1 and 2 process they excluded agri business, workers can go to work and permission to open agri input shops. But still lack of labour, transportation, unavailability of resources, less demand and poor supply these major difficulties faced by Indian economy. The agriculture sector also not untouched by these difficulties. But the government of India announced 20 lakh crore Remedial plans for this sector to face this pandemic situation. Finally researcher resulted that this pandemic situation will also give great experience and opportunities for Indian economy.

Keywords:- Global, Agriculture, Covid -19

I INTRODUCTION

Today whole world facing pandemic situation. Due to corona virus every sector badly affected. This is an unexpected shocked for all over the world. The Indian economy has been loaded with lockdown approximately six months. As according to the IMF, per capita income basis, India ranked 139th by GDP(Nominal) and 118th by GDP in 2018, but it has reduced by 1.9% in March 2020 and some rating agencies expects Covid-19 management to improve, allowing for normalization of economic activity. The GDP forecast for the country for 2021 is 8.6% projected earlier. This is very crucial time for India, when we calculated contribution of GDP by sector than we analysed agriculture have 15.4%, industry 23% and service sector give 61.5%.The World Bank and rating agencies stated that downgraded India's growth for fiscal year 2021, it has seen in three decades since 1990.

Due to covid-19 pandemic induced market instability and lockdown Indian economy facing unemployment, stress on supply chain, low government income, totally major fall down in tourism industry, reduced consumer activity and so on.

But in this crucial period how does Indian agriculture sector respond?

The government of India is implementing several guidelines to overcome the negative impact. The farm economy faced harvesting problem, the produce crops could not reach mandis, thus disrupting the supply chain. Apart from these problems Indian agriculture sector to grow at 3% in 2020-2021 and during lockdown period the central finance minister was announced, an INR 1.7 trillion package (including farmers) for safe from any adverse impacts of the Corona pandemic. The Reserve Bank of India has also announced relief package for 'burden of

debt. Servicing' due to pandemic COVID19. Agricultural term and crop loans have been granted for three months (till May 31st) by banking institutions with 30% concession on interest rate. The situation would not have been the same in the absence of timely and appropriate government support. The government both central and state has taken many initiatives to run smooth Agricultural activities during the lockdown

II REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Covid-19 is highlighted as the most difficult challenge for the country. Many studies conducted on this pandemic situation. Ajaz Ahmed wani stated that agriculture sector is in complex situation, lack of transportation, slumping the harvest and produced crops not supply in mandis. Researcher felt that supply chain totally destroyed and disturbed. Christian ellebyet.al. resulted that decrease in international meat prices by 7-18% in 2020 and dairy products by 4% compared to a business with normal situation due to that the sharp decline in economic growth happened. Raul Siche examined that the Covid-19 badly affected on food supply chain, food demand and food safety and population also.

III OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In covid-19 situations all sectors are badly affected. In this study researcher focused agriculture sector. This sector is backbone of Indian economy. With following objectives study carried out-

- (a) To explore the influence of COVID19 on agriculture in India.
- (b) To know government immediate relief plans for agriculture sector.
- (c) To identify opportunities and challenges during covid-19.

IV RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is descriptive and analytical in nature. Secondary data have been used for this study. Secondary data collected from different sources like published articles, journals, books, newspapers and websites.

V RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

After study of secondary data researcher highlighted that-

- (a) **Remedial plans announced by government –**
- (i) Finance Minister Ms. Nirmala Sitaraman announced 20 lakh crore economic Remedial plans for improving farmer's income. Needed such long term investments and changes, rather than of focus on Short term crops loans.
 - (ii) For enable better price realisation for farmers Central Government amend essential commodities act, due to this fluctuations of prices for cereals, oils, oil seeds, pulses, onions and potatoes. This amendment will help in promoting investment and making agriculture sector more competitive.
 - (iii) According to a central law farmers will free to sell products on their choices and it will also design for trading of Agricultural produce.
 - (iv) Government will provide rupees 1 lakh crore for aggregators , farmers, producers, organizations, primary agric operative societies, agri entrepreneurs and start-up's under this fund.
 - (v) The government will also announced Rs.20,000 crore for fisherman through the Pradhan Mantri Matsya SampadaYojana for the development of marine and inland fisheries.
 - (vi) Government provide to farmers 30,000cr. For additional emergency working capital through National Bank for agriculture and Rural development as well as the Rs.2 lakh crore it plans to put into Kisan credit cards for 25 million farmers.
 - (vii) Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi announced Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Plan which has been focused on Agricultural activities. A host of related sectors are animal husbandry, fisheries, herbal cultivation, infrastructure related to marketing agriculture products.
 - (viii) During lockdown period a total of Rs.74,300 crore of minimum support price purchased have been taken place. The PM Kisan fund transfers amounted to Rs. 18700 crore during this period.

Above mentioned declarations are the assistance given by government of India to the farmers in the hour of this pandemic situation. Now the need is that all these announcements should be completed on time so that farmers don't have to face trouble.

VI CHALLENGES DURING COVID-19 FOR AGRICULTURE SECTOR

- (a) **Migrant labour-** lack of labour is a major challenge for agriculture due to shortage of Migrant labour harvesting problem arises. Migrant labours have returned home from urban areas and this has led to a sharp decline in Agricultural wages.
- (b) **Barriers in transportation-** In a number of interstate transportations are stopped during lockdown period. So in this case crops like onions, mango, cotton, flowers and vegetables are totally destroyed by farmers. This rise in labour costs and farmers are starting at huge losses.
- (c) **Struggle to sell crops-** when the lockdown was announced some crops and vegetables were ready to sell but unfortunately there were no buyers. Big hotels, restaurants and hotels are closed down and household demand for vegetables dipped drastically because fear of corona virus but after some days go out Indian government announced that farming is an essential service and agriculture markets are exempted from lock down.
- (d) **Harvesting challenge-** The Indian council of Agricultural research (ICAR) has advised to farmers to postpone their harvest due to COVID19. March and April is peak time for Harvesting in India, when crops like wheat, chickpea, flax seed, pea, potato, mustard plant, cotton are reaped and sold. But the current pandemic time this cannot happen. A healthier and growing agriculture could not have happened at a better time.

Apart of these supply chain has been badly affected, busses, trains services have been suspended. Even trucks were faced strict check in morning crossing the state. Some more challenges are labour unavailability, inability to access market for produced goods and transportation etc.

VII OPPORTUNITIES DURING COVID-19

Indian agriculture sectors for 15% of India gross domestic product and it a source of livelihood for more than half of the country's 1.3 billion population. Government of India announced post pandemic agenda and a new set of agriculture reforms to cut down on archaic regulations, raise farm gate prices, unify domestic markets as well as integrated the farm economy into global value chains, now these reforms are creates opportunities for farmers, they take

positively and will perform better as compared to now a days. Agriculture sector cannot only be leveraged in the process of recovery but it could not gain from this opportunity by jumping into a new area of growth, development and enhanced farmer welfare.

VIII CONCLUSION

We are blessed with huge buffer stock of wheat and rice and its granaries are overflowing with nearly 60 million tons of food grain. A time when most of the countries are racing to save and protect food stock or protect food stock, we have sufficient food grains and enough supply to give to those who need it in the country. The agriculture sector is functioning smoothly as there has been no shortage of food grains, vegetables and dairy products.

The forecast of good Southwest monsoon, sufficient water level, in reservoirs, increase in kharif sown areas, rise in off take of fertilizers and seeds all these factors are in favour of farm sector growth...

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