



COVID-19 AND ITS SEVERITY ON FARMING SOCIETY

Jagriti Rohit^{1*}, Kirit Saurabh², V. Girija Veni¹, G. Srikar Reddy¹, S.Vijaya Kumar¹

¹ICAR-Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture, Hyderabad, 500059

²ICAR- Research Complex for Eastern Region (ICAR-RCER), Patna, 800014

*Corresponding author email: jags.rohit@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has led all of us to an unprecedented and unanticipated challenging situation. The Indian Government imposed the lockdown all over the country within a short period to prevent the Covid-19 transmission, which immediately impacted the public within no time. Lockdown in the States, rules and regulations to be followed during this volatile time and its impact on the public, farming community was a superior matter of consideration. Agriculture is considered as the most vulnerable and sensitive sector, which can be affected by many factors. The fear of infection in people has impacted farming as both the production and marketing have been severely affected resulted in the decrease of regular agriculture activities. In the entire country, due to COVID-19, 47% of the sample districts have shown a decline in overall production in the agricultural and allied sectors. There is a sort of support in the form of MSP from the government for staple food produces, but for many perishable produces like fruits and vegetables, there are no such proper policies.

INTRODUCTION

Now, coronavirus is a daily pointer in everyone's life, waking up with its news to ending our day with its update; most of us have been facing this scenario since 2019. For the past 2 years, checking and keeping up with all those jumbling numbers of people infected, recovered and affected in our Country, State, and surroundings had been a routine. Noting the changes in coronavirus strains to change in the mode of transmission and spread as the first wave, second wave and third wave, were all these had become eye-catching issues in society to everyone.

Lockdown in the States, rules and regulations to be followed during this volatile time and its impact on the general public, farming community was a superior matter of consideration. The economic and revenue loss and the mental health of the people have also been severely affected by Covid-19; facing all these head to head physical & emotional tackling conditions was tough for everyone to overcome. Introduction of vaccine in the country its effect, importance and distribution at State and Central level. Moreover, origin of covid-19 associated disease such as black fungus, white fungus, and yellow fungus were also observed in this 2 years slack period.

As of now, over 228 Million people has been infected with this deadly virus and about 4.6 Million deaths occurred in the world till now and in our country alone there have been around 30.3 million confirmed cases of covid-19 with about 0.44 million deaths have been reported (WHO, 2021).

EFFECT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON GENERAL PUBLIC

The covid-19 pandemic has challenged people with their health life and livelihoods, securing the necessities of life and mental and physical health is the main perplexity at everyone. At the early stage of covid-19 to prevent the transmission the lockdown has been imposed all over the country within short period, thus the sudden change in norms and practices has shown a quick impact on the public within no time.

The families with daily wage as main source have suddenly gone workless, all of sudden getting daily food essentials has become the main priority to all; even getting those daily necessities was difficult to many. By the time of government intervention, many have lost their source of income, unemployment and hunger has hit hard in the country. Dealing with economic and revenue crises at one end and health crises at other, increase in transmission of covid-19 and further spread of virus and further extension of lockdown had been continue for a long period in the country and has affected many. Many families have lost their family members in this battle and many crises affected families have not yet been able to recover for this economic and health crises.

SOME NOTABLE PROBLEMS

Battling the covid-19 health crises, Meeting food requirements, revenue issues, transport gap, lack of work to local arcticians, Closure of business has effected business families, research, service sector has been closed for long period, mental and physical health of people has been affected.

COVID-19 AND ITS MULTI-FACETED IMPACT ON FARMING SOCIETY

Agriculture is most vulnerable and sensitive sector, which many factors can effect. As farming sector has already been unstable and bearing many problems this covid-19 has added much more burden on farmers. Due to COVID-19 in the entire country, 47% of the sample districts have shown a decline in overall production in the agricultural and allied sectors (NABARD, 2020).

From its early stage to the last stage, farming depends on many factors and many practices are majorly dependent on daily labour which has hampered the marketing value chain systems. The fear of infection in people has impacted farming as both the production and marketing have been severely affected resulted in a decrease of regular agriculture activities. The small farmers who were completely dependent on the farming as the crop loans, cost of cultivation, market prices, marketing behaviour, and government norms have made their pathway harder in this tough time. Mostly, the farmers of perishable goods like vegetables fruits & flowers has been effected the most. In May, markets saw increased arrivals due to distress sale and market reforms insulated farmers from lower prices (Varshney et al., 2020). In case of producing perishable products, production harvesting and marketing everything is highly time bonded. The main challenge lies during the marketing of the produce, as the rules and regulation of lockdown has created the time restriction for sale, thus effecting the sale and the unsold produce which is left with farmer used to be waste the availability of transport on daily basis and movement of produce on daily basis will increase

the cost. Thus, most of produce used to be left either in market or in field without harvesting, the self-life of these produces is limited thus spoilage and crop loss will increase, in case flowers most of the produce was unsold as there was no demand. There is a sort of support in the form of MSP from the government for staple food produces, but there are no such proper policies for many perishable produces like fruits and vegetables.

Not only these, many other factors were affecting the farming sector, but during the covid-19 farmers have faced some of these major problems; labour shortage, reduced number of marketing points, change in consumer behaviour, and lack of proper transport & marketing channel, decrease in buyers count. Farmers face less Demand and Supply of their produce, Scarcity in Capital, Scarcity of labour, Demand for seeds and fertilizers and Transportation, as most of the farmers revealed that covid-19 showed a high level of impact on their livelihood (Dhinakaran and Neela 2020).

SOME SUGGESTIONS TO TACKLE THE SITUATION

- Selection of crops and seed varieties should be done carefully, the self-life and storage life of produce will also stay important while making decision
- According to the situation, the cropping pattern and cropping system should be planned Instead of taking single crop in large scale suggestable go for mixed or multiple cropping's in order to minimize risks during market fluctuations.
- Most probably consult the agriculture officers and relevant scientists before making decisions and consider their suggestions and plans while planning
- Try to pre-plan the schedule of all agriculture activities and act accordingly in order to avoid sudden issues.
- While try to stay in contact with relevant Agriculture officers and get update relevant to the contingent planning and contingency planning helps to raise from downfall and utilize the situation
- Crop insurance will always stays ideal to every farmers for all natural calamities and unexpected caused losses.

CONCLUSION

Calamities disasters and pandemics will never be in mankind's control, but raising from collapse, mounting from a defeat will always be a strong indicant to human nature and their willpower, This Covid-19 has tested such will-power and mental strength of humans. In one way or another, all the sectors have been affected by this pandemic, but the agriculture and farmers were always on the most vulnerable sides, which gets impacted by minimal changes in system. So, this pandemic has also shown its great impact on agrarian community market behaviour, marketing patterns, and lockdown has affected most of the farmers, most importantly the horticulture sector, as time was the main concern as shelf life of the produce is rather less as compared to others. Therefore, being prepared and early groundwork for this covid-19 pandemic and structured support from government in channelling the vulnerable sectors to overcome the present situation and efforts towards pre-planned preparations for many such scenarios will help many as preventive measures before causing loss.

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