

Covid -19 and Its Impaction Agriculture

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What is Covid 19?

- Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.
- Most people who fall sick with COVID-19 will experience mild to moderate symptoms and recover without special treatment. However, some will become seriously ill and require medical attention.

How It Spread?

- The virus can spread from an infected person's mouth or nose in small liquid particles when they cough, sneeze, speak, sing or breathe. These particles range from larger respiratory droplets to smaller aerosols.
- You can be infected by breathing in the virus if you are near someone who has COVID-19, or by touching a contaminated surface and then your eyes, nose or mouth. The virus spreads more easily indoors and in crowded settings.

How It Effect on Human Life?

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and presents an unmatched challenge to public health, food systems and the world of work. The economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic is devastating: tens of millions of people are at risk of falling into extreme poverty, while the number of starved, people, currently estimated at nearly 690 million, could increase by up to 132 million by the end of the year.

In the COVID-19 crisis food security, public health, and employment and labour issues, in particular workers' health and safety converge. Adhering to workplace safety and health practices and ensuring access to decent work and the protection of labour rights in all industries will be crucial in addressing the human dimension of the crisis. Immediate and purposeful action to save lives and livelihoods should include extending social protection

towards universal health coverage and income support for those most affected. These include workers in the informal economy and in poorly protected and low-paid jobs, including youth, older workers, and migrants. Particular attention must be paid to the situation of women, who are over-represented in low-paid jobs and care roles. Different forms of support are key, including cash transfers, child allowances and healthy school meals, shelter and food relief initiatives, support for employment retention and recovery, and financial relief for businesses, including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. In designing and implementing such measures it is essential that governments work closely with employers and workers.

Impact on Agriculture

Millions of agricultural workers – waged and self-employed – while feeding the world, regularly face high levels of working poverty, malnutrition and poor health, and suffer from a lack of safety and labour protection as well as other types of abuse. With low and irregular incomes and a lack of social support, many of them are spurred to continue working, often in unsafe conditions, thus exposing themselves and their families to additional risks. Further, when experiencing income losses, they may resort to negative coping strategies, such as distress sale of assets, predatory loans or child labour. Migrant agricultural workers are particularly vulnerable, because they face risks in their transport, working and living conditions and struggle to access support measures put in place by governments. Guaranteeing the safety and health of all agri-food workers – from primary producers to those involved in food processing, transport and retail, including street food vendors – as well as better incomes and protection, will be critical to saving lives and protecting public health, people's livelihoods and food security.

Impact of COVID-19 first wave on India's agriculture

- When India was hit by the first wave of COVID-19 from January to June 2020, agriculture turned out to be a bright spot. The Economic Survey estimated that India's GVA for the entire economy will contract by 7.2 percent in 2020-21, primarily due to a steep decline in the first half of the FY.
- In this mayhem caused by the nationwide lockdown, agriculture was the only bright spot and it is estimated that the GVA for agriculture clocked a positive growth of 3.4 percent at constant (2011-12) prices.

Impact of COVID-19 second wave on India's agriculture

- Can the agriculture sector be a saviour again when the second wave of COVID-19 has hit India with much more intensity than the first wave? This time, it seems that rural India has not been spared.
- A news report highlighted the pitiful situation in various districts of Uttar Pradesh; even though the state administration was still in denial of the seriousness of the epidemic. Further, a recent CRISIL report has also sounded an alert about the second wave rising in rural India as its share of infection has risen from 21 percent in March to 30 percent in April.
- In large parts of India, the rabi crop has largely been harvested. Up to April 30, 28.039 million tonnes of wheat had been procured. UP was far behind its target of 5.5 million tonnes, while Bihar, like in 2020, had procured only 3,000 tonnes of wheat.



Issues Faced by Agricultural and Supply Chain

- COVID-19 is disrupting activities in agriculture and supply chains.
- The non-availability of migrant labor is interrupting some harvesting activities, particularly in northwest India where wheat and pulses are being harvested.
- There are disruptions in supply chains because of transportation problems and other issues. Prices have declined for wheat, vegetables, and other crops, yet consumers are often paying more.
- India's \$14 billion (or Rs 1 trillion) poultry market has begun a culling exercise as consumers have started keeping off chicken products for fear of catching coronavirus.



- Weak demand from the poultry sector has resulted in a sharp decline in feed prices too, with both soybean and maize prices falling by nearly 25 per cent in the past two months. The poultry market consumes around half of soybean and maize production in India. Industry estimates peg the loss to the market at Rs 1,000 crore.
- With the mango season just starting and nearly 40 per cent produce is sent to foreign countries. Due to closure of exports farmers will suffer huge losses.

Conclusion

The world is attempting to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on all sectors, given more priority on health, food, and agriculture. Because of disruptions in the agricultural labor movement, the global supply chain is under in threat of food insecurity, particularly in developing South Asian countries. The study mainly focuses on the impact of COVID-19 on agricultural production and distribution. Agricultural production is not only the result of one or two factors. Proper agricultural production depends on many factors, including intermediary inputs, agricultural labour force, and external and internal forces of country-to-country export and import situations. This study tries to acknowledge all these points. This study also shows how COVID-19 affects the distribution of agricultural products and the economic losses of farmers. The governments of South Asian countries have taken different measures and policies to save the agriculture sector. Moreover, to mitigate the long-term effect on the agriculture sector, the following recommendations from this study would support the government in taking necessary steps to feed the people.