

## **E-MARKETING – AN ADAPTATION FOR FARMERS TO SUSTAIN COVID-19 AND POST- COVID-19 SITUATION**

Article Id: AL202182

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India is regarded as a developing country with an agriculture-based economy. The agricultural and allied sector is important to the economy and is considered the backbone of the Indian economy. It accounts for approximately one-sixth of Indian national GDP and employs nearly half of the labor force (NABARD, 2020). Initiatives of the government and other organizations have helped improve agricultural production over the years; the major problem lies in the very low income of farmers (Beriya. A. 2020). Small landholdings, low productivity, insufficiency of the market channel, middleman dominance in marketing make farming unprofitable, leading farmers to turn away from farming and become miserable year by year.

To pore water on drawn mouse global pandemic, COVID-19 has hit the country and has had a negative influence on the economy as well as other sectors, including agriculture. To counteract COVID-19, the government imposed a lockdown, causing a disruption to the Indian economy. Though agricultural operations were exempted, the agriculture value chain saw significant disruptions in the early stages of the lockdown due to limitations on vehicle movement and a total prohibition on the opening of rural ‘haats’ by the country's local authorities (NABARD, 2020). In addition to that, fish and fisheries product export decreased due to the closing of state and nation boundaries.

One of the ways of sustaining farming activity is to enhance farmers’ incomes through the use of Digital Technologies in the Agriculture marketing process.

## **Benefits of E-Marketing to Farmers**

### **1. Large market**

Farmers may sell their products all over the world as it provides a virtually global distribution marketplace. Online marketing serves a vast number of clients from many states and nations.

### **2. No scheduled time for selling**

Farmers may sell their produce at any time they choose because the online market is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### **3. Less expensive**

Online selling of agricultural produce is less expensive because this eliminates the needs of the middleman; the commission expense is low or, in certain cases, free.

### **4. Better price**

Farmers get a negotiating power in online marketing as they are trading from their home, and if they don't get a good deal for their products, they don't spend a penny, unlike offline marketing, where they face a subsequent cost of transportation and labor. They just need to sell their items to the appropriate person if they obtain a fair price for them.

### **5. Reduction of agricultural waste.**

Most agricultural items are occasionally destroyed as a result of consumers failing to be available on time. There is no waste of any product because digital shopping is a continuous market.

## **Factors influencing E-Marketing of Agricultural Products**

There are three key factors responsible for the growth of E-marketing of agriculture produce and will influence future growth. They are:

1. Increase in smartphone and high-speed internet penetration among farmers.
2. Improvement of digital skills among farmers and rural population.

3. A community that is accustomed or eager to adopt digital agri-preneurship and innovations.

(Bose, S. C., &Kiran, R., 2021)

India has seen unprecedented growth in smartphone and high-speed mobile internet penetration in recent years, which has helped in increasing digital literacy and also has increased customer base. With newly acquired skills in digital technology, people find it convenient to use digital purchasing. With an increase in customer base, the number of different online portals, mobile apps, social media, and digital engagement platforms has significantly increased, which has improved access to information and services for those who are involved in agriculture production and distribution. With the entry of e-commerce giants such as Amazon, Flipkart, Alibaba common people have become habituated to online buying and started to trust online portals as an alternative marketplace. Also, the Government of India has taken up several initiatives, the most significant being the "Digital India Movement" in 2015, which is aimed at transforming rural India into a digitally powered economy. All these has created an opportunity for farmers to sell online and to get a fair price for their produce.

### **E- Platforms for Marketing of Agricultural Products in India**

There are many digital platforms offering facilities to farmers to discover better prices & sell their products online. Some of them are-

#### **1. National Agriculture Market or eNAM**

The National Agriculture Market (eNAM) is a pan-India electronic



trading site that connects present APMC mandis to form a unified national market for agricultural commodities. It was

*Source- [enam.gov.in](http://enam.gov.in)*

launched on 14 April 2016, by the

Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. This market assists farmers, traders, and buyers in online commodity trading. It also assists in the discovery of better prices for items and the seamless marketing of agricultural products. The eNAM platform helps farmers to trade directly through a mobile app or through registered commission agents (eNAM, 2021; Bhosage, S.M., 2018)

## 2. Agricultural Marketing Information Network (AGMARKNET)

In March 2000 the Ministry of Agriculture launched the Agricultural Marketing Information Network, commonly known as AGMARKNET. AGMARKNET is a government of India portal on agricultural marketing that is supported by a wide-area information network that connects agricultural markets, state marketing boards/directorates and provides links to the websites of major national and international organizations. The site gives simple access to commodity- and variety-specific daily pricing and arrivals information for over 2000 varieties and 300 commodities from wholesale marketplaces around the nation.(AGMARKNET, 2021; S.M., 2018)



Source-  
[agmarknet.gov.in](http://agmarknet.gov.in)

## 3. e-Choupal:

e-Choupal is developed by ITC Limited to link farmers and businesses via the internet for procurement of agricultural and aquaculture products like wheat,



Source- [www.itcportal.com](http://www.itcportal.com)

coffee, soybeans, and prawns. The program places PCs with Internet connections in rural parts of India to provide farmers with up-to-date marketing and agricultural information. Farmers may use online access to get information about mandi pricing and best farming techniques, as well as place orders for agricultural supplies like seeds and fertilizer. This assists farmers in improving the quality of their crops and receiving a higher price (e-choupal, 2021; S.M., 2018).

## 4. KisanMandi.com

KisanMandi Online Agri market Private Limited (KisanMandi.com) is providing assistance to farmers and helping them to develop skills of grading, packing, logistic support to sell their agricultural products directly to end customers, and claims that farmers will get the better price of agricultural produce as compared to the current APMC mandi price. It was registered as a Private Limited Company on 26-04-2016



Source- [kisanmandi.com](http://kisanmandi.com)

and recognized as a startup by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Govt. of India (S.M., 2018; S.M., 2018).

## **5. Others**

There are numerous online trading websites that provide a platform for marketing farm products directly to buyers without any need for middlemen. Like - krishi-market.com, agrimp.com, agribazaar.com, Ninjacart.com etc.

## **E- Platforms for Marketing of Fishery Products in India**

Fish, unlike any other agricultural commodity, is very perishable. In general, the fish supply chain operates on a four-day cycle, during which all stakeholders do not necessarily follow scientific criteria. In the absence of a proper cold chain, bacterial contamination usually occurs within 30 minutes causes smell and bad taste. (Sajeev, M. V. 2020). There are many mobile apps that provide facilities to farmers to sell their products online and deliver the customer a quality product at their doorstep. Some of them are- Aqua Pulse, Daily fish India, Marine fish sales, Smart fish, Delybazar etc.

There are even more than a number of e-commerce websites; [www.freshtohome.com](http://www.freshtohome.com), [www.dailyfish.in](http://www.dailyfish.in), [www.mathafreshfish.com](http://www.mathafreshfish.com), [www.suvichar.in](http://www.suvichar.in), [www.wildfish.in](http://www.wildfish.in), [www.biggro.com](http://www.biggro.com), [www.healthyfishonline.com](http://www.healthyfishonline.com), [www.freshandhealthy.in](http://www.freshandhealthy.in), [www.onedaycart.com](http://www.onedaycart.com), [www.onlinekochi.com](http://www.onlinekochi.com), [www.nallameen.com](http://www.nallameen.com), [www.bigbasket](http://www.bigbasket) These fish E-commerce firms provide a wide range of options, especially from the local coast. Pre-ordered fresh fish is delivered to clients' homes in curry cut, steak, totally cleaned, or whole fish form at prices that satisfy the most discerning housewife. (Sajeev, M. V. 2020).

## **Challenges for E-marketing of Agricultural Products**

### **1. Inadequate knowledge of electronic media**

Because the majority of farmers lack computer expertise and are unable to use Android phones, they may find it difficult to engage in e-marketing of agricultural products.

## **2. High competition**

There are a large number of suppliers from various geographical locations and nations. As a result, it is impossible to anticipate our items to sell at the appropriate price and at the right time.

## **3. Risk of fraud websites:**

Farmers may occasionally access fake websites or online portals. This will be a waste of time and resources.

## **4. Consumer preference**

Because many buyers still prefer to buy items in person. So it is necessary to depend on the offline market also.

## **5. Communication**

India is a multi-lingual country having 22 scheduled languages. Rural farmers do not have multilingual skills, limiting their capability to communicate and sell products of their own.

## **Conclusion**

Traditional agricultural markets in India have several challenges, including low competition, fragmentation, inefficiency, the presence of executive middlemen, and frequent price manipulation. The introduction of an E-Platform for agricultural goods is critical to eliminating these disadvantages. Farmers' development is critical to the development of the nation since farmers, as the nation's backbone, directly or indirectly support the growth of the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy. Through online marketing, farmers will get better marketing opportunities, with a better price for their goods, which will contribute significantly to the nation's growth.

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