

Impact of COVID-19 on Agriculture Sector

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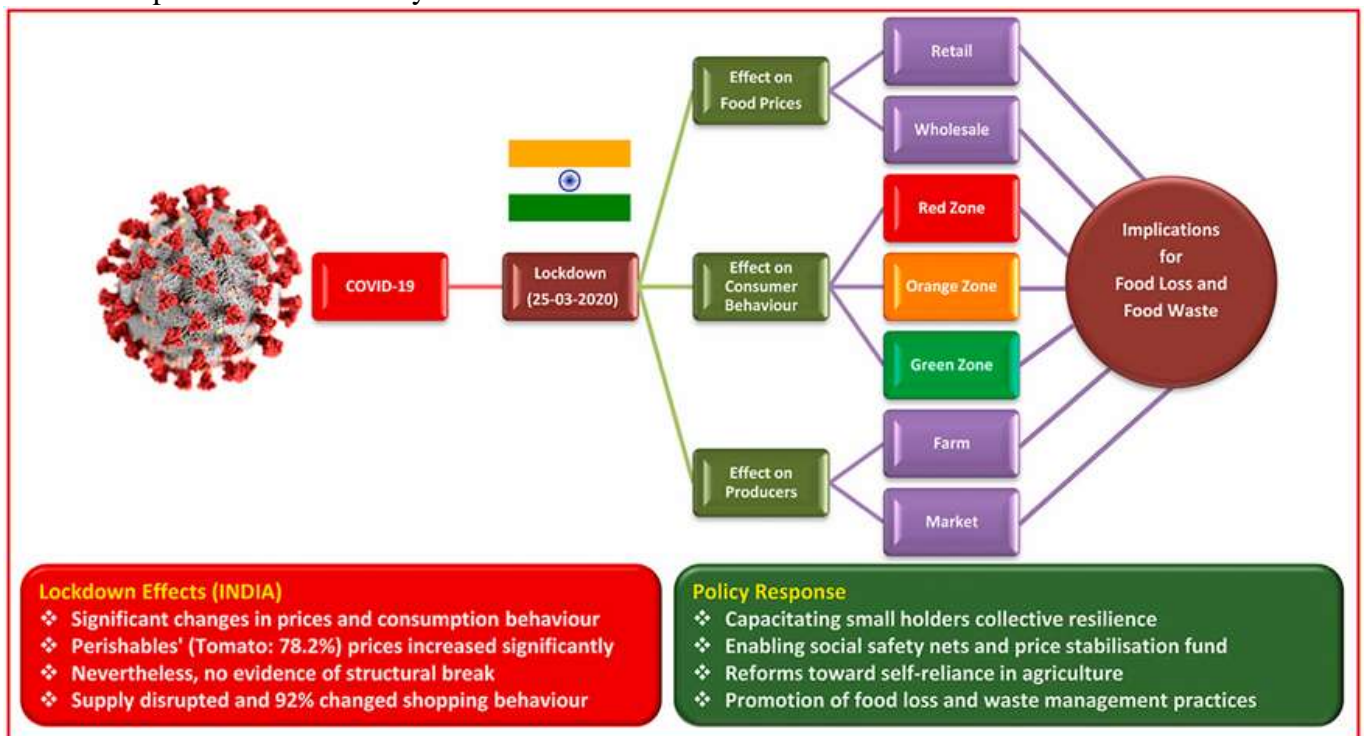
SUMMARY

The entire world's population is under stress as a result of the recently identified COVID-19 pandemic, which is progressively encroaching on the economic system and negatively affecting the health, manufacturing, distribution, and marketing systems, among other systems. Along with this, the community as a whole shows strong feelings of decency against the impact of this virus, which is causing post-pandemic discourses. Restrictions on the movement of people and goods can have a huge socio-economic impact on people's livelihoods, affecting not just the most vulnerable populations but also those who have experienced past pandemic situations and similar ones. These effects extend beyond direct health effects. The foundation of growing nations like India is agriculture, which makes the largest contribution to the creation of national assets.

INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has created an unusual situation globally (Alam and Khatun, 2021). In the year 2020, the unusual nature of coronavirus caused most governments to implement stringent steps in their countries to restrain the virus's spread. Almost all nations and territories have been impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. In December, the outbreak was initially discovered in Wuhan, China, in 2019.

The pandemic has also resulted in the loss of livelihoods due to prolonged shutdowns, which had a rippling effect on the global economy (Casella *et al.*, 2022). The virus wreaked havoc on the agricultural production sector, which is at the heart of the food chain (Pu and Zhong, 2020). The global spread of coronavirus resulted in the greatest economic downturn since World War II (Hanna *et al.*, 2020; Xu *et al.*, 2021). The epidemic's major impact on agricultural labor input was the restriction of labor mobility. Farmers were not permitted to just go out and gather in any way except to purchase essentials. This resulted in a manpower scarcity and reduced mass production efficiency.



Source: Cariappa *et al.*, 2022

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Undoubtedly this pandemic affected the agriculture and allied system causing disruption to some activities in agriculture and supply chain because of non-availability of migrant labor and transportation problems.

The demand for fresh agricultural products decreased as a result of restaurant closures, tea stall closure, and transportation issues. Farmers in general and farmers who produce perishable goods like fruits and vegetables in particular have difficulties in marketing their goods as a result of transport being stopped. Due to the farmer's inability to harvest during the lockdown, perishable agricultural products including fruits and vegetables go to waste. Fruit producers also suffered massive losses because of disruption of exports, fruit and vegetable growers were unable to acquire fertilizer and insecticides for their crops during the first several weeks of the lockdown and collapse of domestic market and less availability of cold storages Farmers were unable to send their goods to the market hubs because of the transport disruption. Most farmers sold their goods for less than market value in order to at least break even on the local market. The reverse migration of labor led to scarcity of workforce which effected harvesting of the winter(November-March) crops like wheat and pulses adversely in the intensively cultivated north-western plains of India (Dev,2020).

CONCLUSION

Agriculture and food are not immune to the effects of COVID-19. This pandemic has an impact on crops, livestock, and fisheries. Right now, food security and safety are major worldwide concerns. COVID-19 has had the greatest impact on the supply chain, endangering the food security of the most vulnerable population segment. Additionally, the majority of seasonal, migrant, and informal farm labourers are losing their jobs, which could have an impact on the demand for food. As a result, the government should implement pandemic control measures while taking citizen food security into account and without interfering with the food supply chain.

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