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Challenges and Opportunities of Agricultural Marketing in India

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Abstract:

Today in India agriculture is constrained by various factors. The increasing development of agricultural production has brought its significance. There are many kinds of agricultural products produced in India and the marketing of all these farm products generally tends to be a complex process. Agricultural marketing involves many operations and process through which the food and raw materials move from the cultivated farm to final consumers. Agriculture also provides goods for consumptions and experts and manufacturing sectors. The issue of agriculture and agricultural marketing is dealt with both by the state as well as central government in the country. Challenges and opportunities that the global markets offer in the liberalized trade regime are also to be addressed. For the farming community to benefit from the new global market access opportunities. The internal agricultural marketing system in the country needs to be integrated and strengthened. Awareness of farmers on different components of market information and its ability was very poor (11 to 37%) as compared to that of trades (75%). Therefore, there is a need to create awareness among the farmers. The present paper focuses on growth of agriculture sector in India, SWOT analysis of agriculture in India and problems and prospects of agriculture marketing in India.

Keywords: Agriculture marketing, SWOT Analysis, Problems and Prospects, global market.

Introduction: Agriculture is an important sector in contributing more revenue to the Indian economy. With the greater importance agriculturist should have good marketing facilities as economy adopt new policies. In India, about 65 percent of the population still relies on agriculture for employment and livelihood. In short, India is the first in the world in the production of milk, pulses, jute and jute like fibres , second in rice, wheat, sugarcane, groundnut, vegetables, fruits and cotton production and is a leading producer of spices and plantation crops as well as livestock, fisheries and poultry. The 11th five year plan (2007-12) witnessed an average annual growth of 3.6 percent in the gross domestic product(GDP) from agriculture and allied sector. the growth target for agriculture in the 12th five year plan (2013-2018) is estimated to be 4 percent.

Agriculture marketing covers the services involved in moving an agriculture product from the farm to the consumer. Agricultural marketing includes the act of buying supplies renting equipment and paying labour. Marketing has to be customer oriented and has to provide the farmers, transporter, trade, processor etc. with a profit.

In western countries considerable agricultural marketing support to farmers in often provided. In the USA for example the USDA operates the agricultural marketing services.

In this way there is need to create awareness among the farmers through the agricultural extension agencies like the state Development of Agriculture, krishi Vigyan Kendras. So that the marketing information on agricultural commodities are incorporated in the extension services along with the production aspects to the farmers.

Objectives of the Study:

- 1) To study the role of APMCS.
- 2) To study the impact of ICT in Agriculture Marketing in India.
- 3) To evaluate the Challenges and Opportunities of the agricultural marketing.

Research Methodology:

The present study is purely based on secondary data. The main sources like references, books, journals, periodical and various web sites.

Role of Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees (APMCS):

The role of APMCS in India is very important one is going opportunities to rural farmers to sell their Agri-products at good prices. The basic aim in the setting up of a network of physical market has been to ensure reasonable gains to the farmers by creating a market environment, where there is fair play of supply and demand forces. To regulate market practices and to attain transparently in transactions there is need of APMCS. There were 286 regulated markets in the country at the end of 1950; their number has increased to 7157 by 2010, therefore this shows the positive to agricultural

development. To facilitate this all the State Agricultural Produce marketing act for the establishment of regulated markets. The main aims of a regulated market is to eliminate unhealthy market practices, to reduce marketing charges and to interests of farmers.

Importance of ICT in Agriculture Marketing in India:

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors of nation and could benefit tremendously with the applications of ICTs especially in bringing changes to social-economic conditions of poor in backward areas. Farmers from rural areas have to deal with failed crops and animals illness frequently and due to limited communication facilities, solutions to their problems remain out of reach. Therefore connectivity technologies have been the greatest achievement in ICT and have unleashed new functionalities for the business community. Agricultural marketing involves many operations and processes through which the food and raw materials move from the cultivated farm to the final consumers. Numerous factors could influence ICT in Agriculture Marketing Organizations and can be grouped into following categories i.e. adoption, access to IT, demographic, IT training/education, perception, trust and time. ICT offers a variety of programmers both the social development and the economic development. An assessment of the impact was felt essential so as to determine whether there is any significant change on the part of the farmers before and after their ICT application in Agriculture. In short, it is to be noted that the change which a farmers does not possess before ICT application in Agriculture may take place in the farmers after his ICT Application in Agriculture. In this way the Indian Govt. is being made a remarkable achievements especially in the area of Agriculture by giving various facilities to the farmers in which the ICT services is one among which is helping the farmers to understand the modern cultivation methods, availability of Agriculture inputs, irrigational sources, availability of pesticide and fertilizers for increasing the production and productivity of crops.

Important factors directly related to ICT use in the area include of education, farming experience, flock size access to credit level of income and membership of organization.

Opportunities to Rural Farmers in Agriculture Marketing:

- With the regulation on Agri-market Govt. provided to rural farmers by such facilities like infrastructure development, private sector investigation and improvement in marketing information system using ICT, human resource development in Agricultural marketing and measures needed for promotion of exports.
- The marketing research and Information Network (AG MARKNET)- this is a central sector scheme that was launched by the Development of Agriculture and corporation in March 2000. This includes networking of markets, development of regional portals, market led extension activities and development of market at has on Global Information Systems (GIS) Platform.
- Grading and Standardization- the scheme for the development of Agricultural marketing infrastructure grading and standardization was launched on 20 October 2004.
- The Terminal Markets- This scheme introduced to promote modern terminal markets for fruits, vegetables and other perishables in important urban centers in India.
- ICT development- The ICT development has been trending now and likely in the future as per ITU. The ICT development index prepared by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) ranks a total of 157 countries on the basis of ICT usage, access and skills. IDI is a composite index that combines 11 indicators classified under three sub-indices of access, use and skills in to one measure that helps monitor and compare developments in ICT across countries.

Challenges for Agricultural Marketing:

There are several challenges involved in Agricultural marketing. The challenges for rural farmers are as follows-

- Inadequate storage facility of food grain.

- There is limited access to the market information, literacy level among the farmers is low, multiple channels of distribution that eats away the pockets of both farmers and consumers.
- Cold storage facility problem.
- Inefficiency in the wholesale markets result in a long chain of intermediaries, multiple handling, loss of quality and increase in the gap between the producer and consumer prices.
- Improper transportation.
- Packing facility problem.
- The Govt. funding of farmers is still at nascent stage and most of the small farmers still depend on the local money lenders who are leeches and charge high rate of interest.
- There are several loopholes in the present legislation and there is no organized and regulated marketing system for making the Agricultural produce.
- Lack of development of an appropriate market infrastructure in tandem with changes in production, intermediation has tended to continue resulting in post harvest losses at every stage there by reducing the farmer's share in consumer's price.

Recent Trends in Agricultural marketing:

On 4th January 2015, principal Secretary, Agriculture. Poonam Malakondaiah said that the Telangana Govt. plans to bring about total changes in the present marketing system to address the problems being faced by farmers at market yards. The vegetable market will also be shifted to the Agricultures market yard and all necessary facilities for farmers, traders and customers will be provided soon. We will also ensure good coordination between farmers and traders.

On 8th January 2015 in Hindustan Times; The Maharashtra Govt. has reiterated it would not be able to eliminate middlemen from the Agricultural marketing but is working out a system to provide relief to the farmers.

There are 305 APMCs across Maharashtra, which have annual turnover of around Rs. 37,000 crore and are controlled by agents and traders. The APMCs at Navi Mumbai, Pune, Lasalgaon in the Nashik district and Nagpur are largest in Maharashtra state.

Conclusion: Considering the above information it is concluded that, agriculture is an important sector in contributing more revenue to the Indian economy. Challenges and Opportunities that the global markets offer in the liberalized trades regime are also to be addressed. It is also concluded that, to avoid the isolation of small farmers to the benefits of Agricultural products, they need to be integrated and informed market knowledge and concepts fluctuations, supply and demand, which are the core of the economy.

In short, Agricultural marketing strategies using ICTs can be bring innovative and creative opportunities for India.

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