



E-Marketing Platforms and Their Impact on Farmers' Income

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INTRODUCTION

Agricultural marketing is vital for determining farmers' income, profits, and overall livelihood. In India, the traditional marketing system mostly relies on local mandis, commission agents, and intermediaries. Although this system has operated for decades, it often leads to inefficiencies, a lack of transparency, and the exploitation of farmers, resulting in lower prices for their produce.

Recently, digital technologies have spurred the rise of electronic marketing (e-marketing) platforms in agriculture. These platforms give farmers direct access to a broader network of buyers, allow for transparent price discovery, and lessen reliance on intermediaries. As a result, e-marketing platforms are changing the agricultural marketing system and significantly boosting farmers' income and market efficiency.

2. Concept of E-Marketing in Agriculture

E-marketing in agriculture involves using digital technologies, such as internet platforms, mobile apps, and electronic trading systems, for buying and selling agricultural products. It allows farmers, traders, processors, and consumers to interact without the limitations of physical markets.

One key feature of e-marketing platforms is the ability to conduct online trading, enabling farmers to sell their produce digitally. These platforms provide real-time market price information, helping farmers make informed selling decisions. Transparent bidding systems ensure fair price discovery, while direct links between farmers and buyers cut out unnecessary middlemen. Digital payment systems also streamline financial transactions, boosting trust and efficiency in agricultural marketing.

3. Major E-Marketing Platforms in India

India has seen the rise of several e-marketing platforms designed to improve agricultural marketing efficiency. A major initiative is the National Agriculture Market (e-NAM), introduced by the Government of India. This platform connects various Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) mandis into a national market, allowing online trading and transparent price discovery across states.

Another significant platform is e-Choupal, started by ITC, which offers farmers real-time market information, weather updates, and advisory services. It also enables direct procurement of agricultural products from farmers, which decreases the role of intermediaries.

Additionally, many agri-startups have emerged as important players in digital agricultural marketing. Platforms like DeHaat provide services such as input supply, advisory, and market connections, while Ninjacart focuses on linking farmers directly to retailers through efficient supply chains. Retail companies like BigBasket and Reliance Fresh also source directly from farmers to ensure better prices.

Mobile apps like Kisan Suvidha, AgriMarket, and Krishi Network improve accessibility by offering farmers information on weather, prices, and market trends directly on their smartphones.

4. Functioning of E-Marketing Platforms

E-marketing platforms work through a system that promotes efficient trading. First, farmers need to register on the platform and provide necessary details. After registration, they can upload information about their produce, including quantity, quality, and location.

Buyers, including traders, processors, and retailers, can view the available produce and place bids online. The platform allows for transparent price discovery through competitive bidding, ensuring farmers receive fair market value. Once the bidding is finished, the produce goes to the highest bidder. Payments are usually made digitally, ensuring timely and secure transactions.

5. Impact of E-Marketing on Farmers' Income

E-marketing platforms positively impact farmers' income by fixing key issues within traditional marketing systems. One significant advantage is improved price realization; as competitive bidding ensures farmers get fair prices for their produce. Reducing intermediaries limits exploitation and increases farmers' earnings.

E-marketing platforms also help cut marketing costs by lowering expenses for transportation, storage, and commission fees. Direct selling lessens the handling of products, which helps maintain quality and reduces losses.

Another benefit is increased market access. Farmers can reach national and even international markets through digital platforms, broadening their customer base and enhancing income opportunities.

Transparency in transactions improves significantly, as farmers access real-time price data and market trends. This decreases the chances of fraud and manipulation. Furthermore, digital payment systems offer quicker and more reliable payments, enhancing financial security for farmers.

E-marketing platforms also open opportunities for value addition by connecting farmers directly to processors, retailers, and exporters. This encourages activities like grading, sorting, and packaging that can further boost income.

6. Role in Strengthening Agricultural Value Chains

E-marketing platforms are essential for strengthening agricultural value chains by improving connections among different participants. They create direct links between farmers, consumers, processors, and agribusiness firms, reducing inefficiencies in the supply chain.

These platforms enhance supply chain efficiency by streamlining procurement, transportation, and distribution. They also minimize post-harvest losses by allowing faster movement of produce from farms to markets. Additionally, digital platforms improve

traceability and quality assurance, which are vital for both local and export markets.

7. Challenges in Adoption of E-Marketing

Despite their benefits, adopting e-marketing platforms faces several challenges. One major issue is the limited digital literacy among farmers, which hinders their ability to use these platforms effectively. Many farmers are not familiar with digital tools and need training and support.

Poor internet connectivity in rural areas also complicates the adoption of e-marketing systems. Inadequate infrastructure, such as the lack of storage facilities, grading units, and efficient logistics, presents significant challenges.

Trust issues form another barrier, as some farmers may hesitate to adopt online systems due to concerns regarding transparency and payment security. Small and fragmented landholdings further limit the amount of marketable surplus, making it challenging for farmers to benefit fully from digital platforms.

8. Government Initiatives and Support

The Government of India has launched several initiatives to encourage the uptake of e-marketing in agriculture. Expanding the e-NAM platform across mandis is a key step towards creating a unified national agricultural market.

The Digital India initiative seeks to improve digital infrastructure and connectivity in rural areas, facilitating access to e-marketing platforms. Various training programs raise farmers' digital literacy and promote adoption.

Support for Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) is also a vital initiative as FPOs enable collective marketing and enhance bargaining power. Furthermore, investments in infrastructure like warehouses, cold storage, and logistics strengthen how well e-marketing platforms work.

9. Opportunities and Future Prospects

The future of e-marketing in agriculture looks promising, with numerous growth and innovation opportunities. Integrating technologies like artificial intelligence and big data analytics can help forecast prices and improve farmers' decision-making.

Blockchain technology could enhance traceability and transparency in agricultural supply chains. The growth of agri-startups is likely to drive innovation and improve service delivery.

Supporting Farmer Producer Organizations will encourage collective marketing and boost farmers' participation in digital platforms. E-marketing also has the potential to promote exports by giving farmers direct access to global markets.

Moreover, the increasing availability of smartphones and mobile internet in rural areas is expected to further encourage the adoption of mobile-based e-marketing solutions.

10. Way Forward

To maximize the benefits of e-marketing platforms, it is crucial to improve digital literacy among farmers through targeted training programs. Enhancing internet connectivity in rural areas is essential for ensuring easy access to digital platforms.

Improving logistics and supply chain infrastructure, including storage and transportation facilities, will enhance the efficiency of e-marketing systems. Promoting FPO-based marketing models can help small and marginal farmers engage more effectively in digital markets.

Creating user-friendly platforms in regional languages will boost accessibility and adoption. Encouraging partnerships between public and private sectors can foster innovation and investment in digital agricultural marketing systems.

CONCLUSION

E-marketing platforms have significantly changed agricultural marketing by improving price discovery, increasing transparency, and broadening market access for farmers. These platforms empower farmers by reducing their reliance on intermediaries and enabling direct participation in the market.

Although challenges like digital literacy, infrastructure limitations, and connectivity issues remain, the potential of e-marketing platforms to boost farmers' income is substantial. With

ongoing technological progress, supportive government policies, and greater farmer awareness, e-marketing is set to transform India's agricultural system into one that is more efficient, transparent, and focused on farmers.

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