

“Stability Of Agricultural Businesses In Covid-19”

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ABSTRACT:

The spread of the epidemic has had far-reaching consequences for India's informal economy, notably the agricultural sector. This study aimed to examine the consequences of COVID-19 on the agricultural sector in Panchgani, Maharashtra, during the city's closure. The report looks at the impact of the shutdown on farming and related industries. The study also intends to examine the effects of the study region on the cheese making and dairy farming industries. There are many different types of businesses, but they may all be categorised as "agro-based" since they use agricultural goods as their primary raw resource. Panchgani's primary economic drivers are the agriculture-based "Pure Gold" and "Pure Berry's" sectors. In my opinion, the manufacturers have lost money on the distribution and sale of their products. Due to price decreases during the lockdown, farmers had to increase losses in the case of milk and agricultural items. Due to a debt crisis, businesses had to delay making any immediate investments. Therefore, the cost of the COVID-19 shutdown has been estimated by analysts to be 4% of GDP. Both primary and secondary data were used to determine the industry's future potential. As a result of the pandemic, we expect a decline in net profit of 15–20%.

Keywords : Increased losses, financial problems, and the COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

While the first statewide lockdown lasted for 21 days, the Indian economy had to brace itself for an average of over 32,000 corers every day. Many jobs were lost in the indigenous and informal economies. The unregulated part of the economy has had a devastating effect on people's daily income. Nearly half of all small, medium, and cottage firms had difficulties during the lockdown, including shortages of raw materials, a stop in payment recovery, lower product sales, and other issues (The Indian Express 2020). The agro-based community, consisting mostly of small and marginal farmers that grow food crops, was put in an uncomfortable position.

Everyone felt the effects of the pandemic's spread, but those in the informal economy, such as farmhands and factory labourers, took the most damage.

Prominent research and surveys found that 95% of businesses were negatively affected by the nationwide lockdown that took place in April of 2020. About 70% of the total was supplied by business and other business-related operations, all of which were impeded and affected until August 2020. It was not until the end of February 2021 that over 40% of businesses and associated activities were back to normal, according to new studies and evaluations.

There have been far-reaching and severe repercussions for the economy, society, and finances as a result of India. It has also hurt the future of global corporations. IoT techniques have been used to locate the afflicted persons, who may contribute to the spread of the horrible virus, and are therefore the best approach to restore things back to normal and restart the economy. (Kumar Sandeep, M. 2020).

The unique covid-19 epidemic has posed two difficulties for nations everywhere: first, the need to restore or restructure their health systems; and second, the dwindling economy, which has become particularly susceptible. The Indian economy had to stay strong despite severe setbacks at this time. While the economy required time to recover and the virus to be unlocked and contained, financial support was essential. To comply with a variety of rules and regulations, the government had to unlock the system gradually. It made every effort to prevent permanent economic harm. by (Rajeshwari Sengupta and S. Mahendra Dev)

It's safe to say that the agricultural sector in India was significantly impacted by the epidemic. The lockdown began in the midst of harvest. The shortage of labour needed to harvest fruit crops, transport the fruit, and export the fruit was a huge problem since export had set new requirements. The horticultural business, which produces perishable commodities, has a strict no-weddings and no-churches policy. The cattle market will be closed for four months starting in February. The food processing and canning industries shared a similar plight. A. K. Singh (2020).

The unexpected shutdown affected people's lives and the economy for quite some time. Nearly 50 million migrants have returned to their hometowns and villages on foot after losing their jobs and livelihoods, most of them in the unorganised sector, which comprises daily wage employees and small business owners (as mode of transport like trains were not functioning). There were a lot of fatalities. People fled to government and NGO-run colleges when the state

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closed its borders. Reports suggest that some of them have come back to the cities in search of employment. Tossing the items was a hassle. Millions of people lost their jobs and their disposable income plummeted, causing them to put off buying non-essential items like fast moving consumer products and fast moving consumer durables. In addition to hitting at a period of sluggish GDP growth and rising unemployment, this crisis also highlighted the economy's broader weakness. The previous years were not promising, and the peak of the economy is also noteworthy. Even though the bulk of India's GDP now comes from services rather than manufacturing or agriculture, the agricultural sector is still the country's most important economic driver. This industry has been hit harder by the pandemic than others like manufacturing and services. Logistics failed at this time. The agricultural industry has difficulties with harvesting, gathering, sorting, and packaging due to a lack of workers and limited access to transportation. Due to the ban on gathering and the subsequent shutdown of restaurants, malls, mandies, and supermarkets, there was a shortage of fresh produce, seafood, and meat.

One of the most important sectors of the Indian economy is the agricultural sector. It's a big business that helps sustain communities in both the country's cities and its rural areas. To make it through these tough times, the sector's untrained and disorganised workforce has been pushing itself to the limit.

OBJECTIVES:

- During COVID-19, we want to assess the rate of expansion in the food-processing sector.
- Analyze how COVID-19 will affect Pure Berry's food manufacturing industry.

Research Methodology

The research methodologies include a survey, interviews, and observations, and the study is descriptive in nature. The Pure Berry plant in Panchgani, Satara District is the site of the investigation.

The methodology used in this study was descriptive and empirical in nature.

MAIN INFORMATION SOURCES:

The information was gathered from both secondary and primary sources. Questionnaires including in interviews are the primary means through which this information is acquired. Books, scholarly articles, and other online resources all serve as secondary sources of information.

PURE GOLD AND PURE BERRIES EDUCATION

Owner of "Pure Gold" and "Pure Berry's" health food items, Mr. Hussain Mala, talks about his company's offerings and gives an inside view at the production of honey, cheese, and pure berry's goods. The name "Pure Berry's" has become almost synonymous in India with nutritious eating options. He established the firm in 1984 and started marketing and retailing products under the "Pure Gold" and "Pure Berry's" labels. The company's guiding principle is "Quality, and nothing but Quality." Known as hill stations, Mahabaleshwar and Panchgani attract visitors from all over the globe. Tourists visit throughout each of the three seasons. In fact, because of the pleasant environment, companies do quite well in this area. He was aware of the widespread interest in honey and strawberries. Because of this, they started purchasing honey from neighbourhood residents. He dug deeply into the company's financials and ushered in a whole new age of honey collection. Using cutting-edge methods developed in-house, the firm strives to provide customers with 100% pure honey. They think that being truthful is essential to making it as a professional here. As they see it, this can only be achieved by extensive testing and the dissemination of relevant information among farmers and indigenous communities. The honey industry in Mala is currently a significant source of employment. Along with running a hotel and honey business, he also established the brand Pure Berry Jam. The quality of this jam much exceeded that of competitors. It was anticipated that the product would not sell well because of its high price. Mala, on the other hand, had faith in his wares and conquered the market for innovative jams. These days, their product is in great demand all around the globe. Through their company, they want to acquire farmer consumption items while also providing assistance for organic farming. Mustafa has his father's full support in both business and charity work. Mustafa's innovative idea and his father's encouragement have helped the 'Pure Gold' brand see some initial success. Today's

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business world sees a surge of youthful entrants, but many of them quickly give up after experiencing early disappointment. Mustafa tells these novice individuals that hard effort is necessary in every profession. It's not easy to achieve success.

Mustafa Mala, Hussain's son, too embarked on a working life of his own. By helping his father establish a business, he became familiar with the industry's fundamentals. The entrepreneurial spirit runs in his family, so it's no surprise that he's quickly established himself as a respected business leader. Not only that, but with the aid of the very popular Pure Gold Hasta Band, they've developed a brand-new dairy product. The 'Boutique Cheese Factory' was founded by Mustafa Mala in August of 2016. The milk in this area is perfect for creating cheese. From their minds sprang the concept of a cheese factory with a more specialised focus on producing artisanal cheeses. His first step was to collect milk from nearby farms and turn it into cheese and yoghurt. The steps involved in creating the item. Everyone can see it; no one else has it. There has been no sacrifice made to the items' quality.

CONSEQUENCES FOR BUSINESS IN THE YEAR OF THE VIRUS COVID-19

In the realm of food manufacturing, "Pure Berry's" is presently among the most prominent names in India. The sum of money made by these businesses is more than \$20 million. Turnover has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 epidemic that has been plaguing this business over the previous two years. As a result, they see a 15-25% decline in income.

Berries, both fresh and dried, are cultivated in abundance in Mahabaleshwar and Panchgani, and their consumption has been shown to have positive effects on health. Since then, the Pure Berry industry has been able to keep up its high standards of quality and gain widespread respect in the marketplace. As a consequence of the lockdown, the company lost a lot of money in offline and online marketing as well as in marketing to tourists and hotel guests.

This business is headquartered in Panchgani, Maharashtra. The raw materials come from the local villages (70%) and other parts of Maharashtra (30%). There is a detrimental impact on raw material transit due to lockdown. Farmers were particularly hard hit by the epidemic and saw their incomes plummet. There is a detrimental effect on the company's capacity to produce on a wide scale because of the insufficient quantities of raw materials that are delivered at inopportune times. India's sales, marketing, and business would all take a hit if production drops. Because of this, the firm's ability to recover financially and make debt payments was severely affected, and the company now has bad debt of up to 50 lakhs.

What follows is a list of the company's most significant losses as a consequence of the epidemic.

The firm usually makes a respectable profit off of the hospitality services they provide each year thanks to the big influx of both one-time visitors and repeat customers that stroll in, but during the lockdown period, they lost a lot of money.

- Product sales at the plant decreased by 60% while it was closed.
- Put an end to selling things by the unit.
- The manufacturing and advertising departments will be directly affected.
- A major setback occurred in the company's online marketing.

In spite of the grave circumstances, the firm continued to pay its workers, but they made an effort to do so in a more flexible manner. As long as they followed the covid-19 requirements and procedures, they let half the personnel work in two shifts once the lockdown was removed. Financial difficulties, poor marketing, falling tourist numbers, weak market demand, and a lack of bad debt recovery are just some of the other problems the business is facing. As a consequence of the pandemic problem, prices for everything from raw materials to packaging to shipping have gone up by anywhere from 25 percent to 20 percent, driving up the cost of MRP as a whole. But industry can't afford to raise production expenses. They fixed their issues and are ready to go back to running Pure Berry. The director of the firm, Mustafa Mala, came up with a plan and put it into action, enabling him to successfully steer the company through any challenge. The industry, however, has plans to increase prices over the next years. Almost all farmers depend on Pure

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Berry, which is why it is important that it be a totally food processing agro-based enterprise. In light of the fact that farmers can't stop farming even during the lockdown and the firm can't afford to lose the farmers' revenue, director Mr. Mustafa Mala has opted to keep the farmers on the payroll.

CONCLUSION:

Our research shows that during COVID-19 in India, production, sales, and income in the agro-based businesses suffered, and that farmers' ability to sell their crops and dairy products was negatively impacted. A lack of essential inputs and a lack of workers led to a major drop in productivity in the early days of the lockdown. The global and national economy will be impacted in the long and short term by this one-of-a-kind corona virus epidemic. These repercussions are not only relevant to the overall functioning of agro-based companies, but also have a substantial bearing on the pricing strategies for agro-based food commodities and export policies.

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