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## E-MARKETING A BOON FOR AGRICULTURE: A REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

In the current era the Internet has changed the entire world and it playing a vital role in all the sectors. A world-wide market is now accessible to any industry with a Web site and agro-industry is no exception. Agriculture is the backbone of India and one of the main sources of Indian economy and more than 60 per cent of farmers are involved in agriculture. However, many agricultural products are perishable in nature, numerous considerations for effective marketing is the need of hour to the growers. E-Marketing (Electronic Marketing) is the process of marketing of products and services over internet and telecommunication networks. E-marketing includes use of internet for all the activities like advertising, promotion publicity, channel of distribution, marketing research to find out customers' wants and need. In India many farmers using internet as a way of selling their agricultural products to agribusiness industry and other sector through e-market platform *i.e.* the e-National Agriculture Market (eNAM) which was launched by our Prime Minister Narendra Modi and this eNAM playing vital role, which is boon for farming community. There are some applications also available in play store related to agriculture and allied sciences *i.e.* eFarming, Farmers eMarket, Aggrigate and e-NAM etc. Agricultural producers are also trying to develop this marketing channel even though there are many barriers of selling agro-products *via* the Internet. Farmers may use the Internet to sell their agricultural products for consumers. Hence, e-marketing is most useful way to many farmers since the benefits are high and electronic systems are ready to serve customers all over the world and open for 24 hours in a day and the cost incurring is also low.

**Keywords :** e-Marketing, Customers, e-NAM, agricultural product, agribusiness

### Introduction

Agriculture is the backbone of India and one of the main source of Indian economy and more than 60 per cent of farmers are involved in agriculture. The share of agriculture in gross domestic product (GDP) has reached almost 20 per cent for the first time in the last 17 years, making it the sole bright spot in GDP performance during 2020-21, according to the Economic Survey 2020-2021. Agriculture was the key development in the rise of sedentary human civilization, whereby farming of domesticated species created food surpluses that enabled people to live in cities (Peter and Latha, 2021). Generally farmers sell their products to APMC Mandis, available local markets, to wholesalers or to retailers or directly to consumers (Ajitha *et al.*, 2021). Agricultural producers are also trying to develop this marketing channel even though there are many barriers of selling agricultural products via the internet.

E-marketing is referred to those strategies and techniques which use online ways to reach target customers. E-marketing is also known as Internet Marketing, Web Marketing or Digital Marketing or Online marketing. E-

marketing not only includes marketing on the Internet, but also includes marketing through e-mail, wireless media etc. E-marketing of agricultural products means marketing of agricultural products through online ways from agricultural producers to any business houses, agro industry or ultimate consumers. In the World from last two decades everything is being converted into digital platforms and all industries became the digital. Following the same way in marketing, organizations started selling their product on e-commerce platforms. Promotion activities have started in social media like e-mail, websites, social media messages etc. Being understood the convenience, effectiveness and efficiency of digitalization Indian Government also launched "Digital India" scheme under which Government is promoting the use of technology in organizational function. Even though it seems somewhat inconvenient to use these types of technologies in unorganized sectors like agriculture, Government of India has announced in its "Union Budget 2016-2017 central Government stated that, the Unified Agricultural marketing e-platform will be launched for wholesale markets in India and 100 per cent FDI to be allowed through FIPB route in marketing of food Products

produced and manufactured in India. Considering these changes are going to affect the marketing and trading of agricultural products tremendously.

In India several government organizations involved in agricultural marketing like, CACP (Commission of Agricultural Costs and Prices), FCI (Food Corporation of India), CCI (Cotton Corporation of India), JCI (Jute Corporation of India), etc. There are specialized marketing bodies like tea, coffee, tobacco, rubber, spices and vegetables which are involved in marketing. Government of India has launched new website called AGMARKNET, where prices of all crops in various district and urban markets are compiled and updated on daily basis. These prices include grain, pulses prices, fruits and vegetable prices, meat, fish prices, rare cereals and pulse, fruit prices (IndiaAgroNet.com). In India many farmers using internet for selling their agricultural products to agro-industry and other sector through e-market platform i.e. the e-National Agriculture Market (eNAM) which was launched by our Prime Minister Narendra Modi. There are some applications also available in playstore related to agriculture and allied sciences i.e., eFarming, Farmers eMarket, Aggrigate, eNAM. Agricultural producers are also trying to develop this marketing channel even though there are many barriers of selling agro-products via the Internet. E-marketing is most useful to the many farmers since the benefits are high and electronic systems are ready to serve customers all over the world and open for 24 hours in a day and the cost incurring is also low.

### Review of Literature

Network marketing is carried through internet and helps the farmers decrease the selling cost of the agricultural products, increase effective competitiveness and also helps the farmers to raise their income (Bao and Liu, 2014).

Experience and the potential of agribusiness franchising of commodities in India is growing at a rapid extent and the interest among the people for agro start-ups is more (Sukhpal Singh, 2014).

Agricultural marketing functionaries, marketing of agriculture produce, importance of agriculture produce (Kiruthiga *et al.*, 2015).

Telephone is used as means of communication for marketing of produce in India. Number of mobile enable services is addressing the information needs of the stakeholders to some extent (Singh, 2015).

Consumers' inclination towards online marketing is low in the study area and most of them wish to purchase yam flour and livestock products like skimmed milk, eggs and live chickens online. Due to limitations like, risk of fraud, poor network infrastructure and supply of inferior products they are not ready to go for online purchasing of products (Badiruand Afolabi, 2016).

Online marketing helps the customers to find substitutes for their products within a click and also it offers immense opportunities for the companies too. Consumers behave in the same way whether it is online oroffline (Chitra *et al.*, 2017).

For a developing nationlike India, digital marketing is a very much needful thing. Farmers in Puducheerry region use social media for agricultural purposes. If the government,

NGOs, and other bodies can help farmers in improving their agriculture marketing (Khou and Suresh, 2018).

Digital marketing is considered as best e commerce solution. Through this we can reach out a wide number of audience and customers and also it is more affordable than traditional offline marketing. The main benefit of digital marketing is the results can be tracked and monitored easily (Shirisha, 2018).

The buying behaviour of the consumers has changed during the lock down period, the importance for the essential products has been increased (Patil and Patil, 2020).

COVID-19 pandemic has turned into a stumbling block for e-commerce business and if the situation goes on like this, the global economic growth will be reduced by 2%. E-Commerce platforms and their sales are not that much in line but they have proved that e-commerce sites will be a solution to crises like covid pandemic (Patil, 2020).

### Objectives

1. To analyse role of e-marketing for agriculture produce
2. Impact of e-marketing on agriculture produce

### E-Marketing



**Fig. 1 :** E-marking tools

E-Marketing (Electronic Marketing) is the process of marketing of products and services over internet and telecommunication networks. E-marketing includes use of internet for all the activities of advertising, promotion publicity, channel of distribution, marketing research to find out customers' needs and wants. Electronic marketing is interchangeably used to mean online marketing, web marketing, internet marketing and digital marketing.

### Importance of e-marketing

In modern era where most of the work and transactions are happening through online channels only, it becomes every important for marketers to reach out to customers through right channels. Smartphones, tablets, smart TVs, laptops are being used globally to run businesses and buy and sell goods. E-marketing helps in reaching out to your audience on these channels along with traditional offline channels as well. Sometimes for some offerings, e-marketing is the only viable option. E-marketing is very transparent in terms of its effectiveness as compared to offline marketing. One thing which makes e-marketing standout is the ability to measure the impact in real time. Marketers can see the performance and tweak the messaging accordingly which can be very effective when compared to offline marketing. In the times of pandemic, online marketing becomes even more

prominent when the offline or traditional marketing channels cannot deliver the optimum return on value.

### Advantages of E-Marketing

1. Any time market: E - Marketing provides 24 hours and 7 days "24/7" service to its users.
2. Direct contact of end consumer.
3. Customer can buy whatever they want/ need just by browsing the various sites.
4. Save effort and time.
5. Good quality at better price along with transparent pricing information.
6. Quality and variety segregation for the ease of buying and exploration.
7. Eliminate time variable from pricing and quality so that the system becomes more accessible.
8. Destroy dependency on vendors in pricing
9. Replace bargaining by standardization.
10. Encourage formation of cooperatives.
11. Profit for all with minimum wastage by regular buying (on both ends) (Daniel Shija, 2019)

### Disadvantages of E-Marketing

1. High Cost for E-marketing which requires a strong online advertising campaign a for which company has to spend large amount. The cost of web site design, software, hardware, maintenance of business site, online distribution costs and invested time, all must be factored into the cost of providing service or product online.
2. It is not suitable for small size business and also deters customers from buying who lives on long distances.
3. While the number of customers are continuously growing, companies hardly update the information on website.
4. Many buyers are suspicious about the security of the internet.

**Most of the farmers and small and medium scale enterprises men have not used or practice on e-marketing because of the following problems:**

1. Lack of knowledge of electronic medias majority of the farmers do not have computers knowledge and unable to operate android mobiles.
2. Low speed of internet connections are another barriers
3. From the buyers perspective the inability of shoppers to touch, smell, taste or try on tangible goods before making an online purchase can be limiting.
4. Cyber-crime: Many consumers are hesitant to purchase items over the internet because they do not trust that their personal information will remain private.
5. Low e- marketing education/ lack of knowledge or skill about the users
6. High cost of production, because virtually all production of technique are imported from the developed world.

### Different Ways to Sell Agricultural Products through Online

**1. Place of Online Marketing:** In India there are many physical market place for agricultural products, there is also online market place for it. Some examples are Kisan market, Farmers market etc. Now Very much famous online plot farms are eNAM. With the proliferation of online market places, selling agricultural products online just got a lot easier. Listing your agro products on these platforms is another way to get more exposure, and subsequently sales. For selling any agriculture produce on an online market place is to read all their terms & conditions. These would usually contain their charges and general rules and regulations.

**2. Online Grocery Store:** In Indian condition the online groceries stores/shops are a good place to sell off agricultural products. While the food items online grocery stores sell may differ per store, if you area farmer that probably grows agricultural products like potatoes, poultry product (e.g. chickens), aquatic animals (e.g. fishery products), and a couple of other farm products. Big basket (online super market in India is one of the examples for online grocers).

**3. Social Media:** In current era the Social Media is playing vital role in marketing. The success of Instagram, WhatsApp, and many other social networks has helped many small business owners and small farmers to reach large number of customers. Social media marketing is growing stronger day by day and many farmers are using social network for marketing their agro product. In other way to increase the company's fame and spread through several social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube and Instagram.

**4. Personal Web Store:** Owning own web store is the best online way to sell your agricultural products as compared to selling your agricultural products on social media, an online grocery store, and an online market place, because having personal web store enables you to control your farm products sales on your platform, in case you get kicked off the rest.

**5. E-mail Marketing:** Marketing through e-mail is one of the first methods of e-marketing. E-mail marketing includes marketing a agro product or service to a database through targeting a certain segment of customers via e-mails. E-mail marketing is considered one of the best e-marketing methods. Its low cost, targeting the correct category, simple to use and increasing the return of investment.

**6. Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** Search engine optimization is considered the art of increasing the appearance of your website in the first results of search engines such as Google search engine. This is done by targeting keywords in your website to appear in search engines in the top results.

**7. Paid Advertising:** Paid ads are those ads that appear in search engines and they are considered one of the best types of e-marketing. They appear beside or above the search results. Paid ads depend on the keywords used in the search engines. To help ads appears in the search engines a substantial amount.

**8. Online Food Delivery System:** Now-a-days the many food product selling through online via a food delivery service. There are many restaurants that deliver food to customers when customers order food online. The food delivery is usually done via online food shopping sites like Hello Food, Food Panda etc.

**9. Mobile SMS and Call :** Simple interface that works on mobile, SMS to upload produce details and respond via phone and SMS Interface for anyone to buy the product/vegetable – initially visit the stock which appear on the android application.

### E-marketing platform for Agricultural products in India

**(a) KisanMandi.com:** It is the online Agricultural Market or Sell or Advertise fruits & vegetables, agro produce or any agro machinery or Tools or Tractors etc. really fulfils our dream "Sabko Sahi Mol" Kisanmandi Online Agri Market Private Limited is incorporated/ registered as a Private Limited Company on 26-04-2016, is recognized as a start up by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Govt. of India. It has three verticals as under : A. Online Vegetable store in Main cities of India. B. Online Portal here farmers can submit their Agricultural Products for Sale. C. Online Portal here Manufacturers or Big Distributors can sell agri Machinery and products, Packing and food storage Materials to the Farmers.

Also, Kisanmandi.com will be catering to almost all the needs of the agriculture fraternity where they will find all commodities/ items ranging from Tractors. Diesel Engines, Pump Sets, Agro Farm Implements, Cattle feed, seeds, Grain storage bins, Water Tankers, Wheel Barrows, Trolleys, Tree Guards and Gardening tools etc.

**(b) E-National Agriculture Market or eNAM:** National Agriculture Market (eNAM) is a pan-India electronic trading portal launched in April 2016, which networks the existing APMC mandis to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities. Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) is the lead agency for implementing eNAM (under the aegis of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India). This market helps farmers, traders and buyers for online trading in commodities and also helps to discover better price for the agro products and smooth marketing of agricultural products. The market transactions stood at 36,200 crores by January 2018, mostly intra-market. More than 90 commodities including staple food grains, vegetables and fruits are currently listed for trading. The eNAM markets are proving their greatness as it is witnessed with some aspects like the crops are weighed immediately and the stock is lifted on the same day and the payments are cleared online. In February 2018, some attractive features like MIS dashboard, BHIM and other mobile payments, enhanced features on the mobile app such as gate entry and payment through mobile phones and farmers database is helping adoption even more ([www.enam.gov.in](http://www.enam.gov.in)).



Fig. 2 : eNAM Process flow

The present trading is done mostly for intra-market, but in phases, it will be rolled out to trade in inter-market inter-state, creating a unified national market for agricultural commodities. The eNAM platform facilitates farmers to trade directly on their own through mobile app or through registered commission agents. The eNAM is linked with 585 markets (APMCs) in 18 states and 3 union territory. 45 lakh farmers got membership in 15 states (Shantinath Mahaveer Bhosage, 2018).

**(c) Kisan Rath App:** It will help farmers for transporting farm produce to markets from farm gate. This KisanRath will bring together 5 lakh trucks and 20,000 tractors on mobile platform. Kisan Rath app will help farmers to bring their commodities to mandis and other market yards. An "All India Agri Transport Call Centre" to facilitate interstate movement of perishables during lock down was also launched recently. Both these services will help farmers reach out to buyers and get competitive price for their produce (Singh, 2020).

**(d) Agricultural Marketing Information Network (AGMARKNET):** This was launched by the Union Ministry of Agriculture in March 2000. The Directorate of Marketing and Inspection (DMI), under the Ministry, links around 7,000 agricultural wholesale markets in India with the State Agricultural Marketing Boards and Directorates for effective information exchange. This e-governance portal AGMARKNET, implemented by National Informatics Centre (NIC), facilitates generation and transmission of prices, commodity arrival information from agricultural produce markets, and web-based dissemination to producers, consumers, traders, and policy makers transparently and quickly.

### Opportunities of e-marketing

- Online auction of agro-produce (Online bidding)
- Reaping the benefits of better price
- Timely payment

### Challenges for E-marketing of agricultural products

1. **Lack of knowledge of Electronic medias:** Majority of the farmers do not have computer knowledge and unable to operate android mobiles so may difficult them to go with agricultural products.
2. **Worldwide competition:** Number of sellers from different geographical areas of different countries. So it is difficult to expect sell of our products with right price and right time.
3. **No security:** Sometimes farmers may enter fake websites or fake online portals
4. **Cannot fully depend on E-marketing:** Because still many number of customers prefer to purchase the products physically. So it is necessary to depends on offline market also.
5. **Centre wants States to shift from APMCs to e-NAM** (Sivakumar, 2021).

### Impact of e-marketing on agriculture produce

In India e-choupal by ITC, Reliance, "More" (Adithya Birla group) AGMARKNET, M & M (Shubhlabh), Godrej group, N.A.F.E.D, NAAPANTA APP, A.P.M.C. etc., are playing an important & responsible role for the welfare of the



farmers. Digital marketing of agricultural products increases the income, especially to the small holder producers (farmers). Hence it is encouraging the small holding rural youth to continue in the agriculture as the future seems to be bright.

**Kisan Mandi Online Agris :** It incorporated/registered market as a Private Limited Company on 26-04-2016, is recognized as a start up by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Govt. of India.

**E-Choupal:** It is a digital marketing department of ITC (Indian Tobacco Company limited) started in the year of 2000. e-Choupal links rural farmers via internet and digital media to procure the agriculture products like coffee, soyabean, wheat, Rice, Pulses, Oil seeds etc. ITC has distributed computers, & has given the internet access in the villages where farmers can directly discuss about the price and other information. Farmers collect the information on market prices, good farming practices, weather forecast through the digital media. They can also purchase the required agro chemicals, manures & other farm products by internet enabled digital media.

**Reliance Group:** Mr. Mukesh Ambani (Reliance group) has a strategy to establish 5000 acres of contract farming business in Karnataka, Andhra & Telangana immediately. This can help to emerge as one of its best agriculture business hub for farm produce exports. Also planning to setup warehouses across the India. Reliance fresh stores will be purchasing the fruits, vegetables, grains & other agricultural commodities from the farmers directly, and thus saving the time, energy, efforts & also saving on transportation expenses.

**Agmarknet:** Electronic trading portal integrating 585 markets across 16 states. More than 164.53 lakh M.Ts. of farm commodities have been transacted on e-NAM. It is developed to transport the agri products from one market to another in smooth way to save the produce.

**NAFED:** It is the apex body of the cooperative marketing system at our country level. It is an excellent & oldest cooperative body established in the year of 1958 for the benefit of the Indian Horticultural crops' farmers. It is helping the farmers by giving fantastic profits & prices by removing the middlemen system.

**IKISAN:** It is an Information Technology based organization to help the farmers from seed to seed business. It provides market information, products' prices, weather and other agriculture management techniques etc.

**Mahindra and Mahindra Group:** Mahindra & Mahindra group has started two divisions namely d Mahindra krishi vihar in Madurai in the year 2000 to provide agricultural extension services to farmers. and buyers a lot of produce And the second one is "MAHINDRA SHUBH LABH", a farm implements division for providing tractors, ploughs, disc harrows, power tillers, ferti-cum seed drills etc.

**Uzhavan App:** Tamil Nadu government launched bilingual app in Tamil and English. It is an android mobile application based system where in the farmers get all market information and extension services.

**Napanta App:** It is an internet based app launched to serve the farmers across the villages of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Market information of more than 3650 agricultural

markets and 3 concurrent & consecutive years' price trend & graph could be provided for more than 95 commodities. It is developed in Telugu & English language (Sudhakar Reddy, 2021).

The digital marketing platforms are helpful to reduce the marketing cost of their agriculture (products) output like cotton lint, paddy, maize grains, pulses, horticulture crops etc. Out of 500 respondent farmers 327 farmers (65.4%) have happily told that their agricultural products' quality is assured for longer period by the digital marketing platforms. Farmers about 49 % who have responded have had expressed their view that no middle men interference and less storage cost helped them to get more income after selling their produces on digital platforms. Nearly 69.80% of the respondent farmers have had replied as they have been getting maximum price to their products. About 90.00 per cent of farmers are expressing that the digital marketing in agriculture is good & having advantages (Sudhakar Reddy, 2021).

The study conducted in Covid Pandemic and reveals that COVID19 made the market unreachable for farmers to sell their products. The reasons why more customers go for online shopping during COVID pandemic is because of the benefits like comparability of various models and brands, wide selection of products, social distance can be maintained and no need to travel. About 85%-90% of the customers' find- saves time and effort, get detailed information of the products and 24x7 access as the benefits to enter into online shopping during the COVID crisis. The least benefit chose by the customers was quality assurance. (Ajitha *et al.*, 2021).

The maximum of 40% of the farmers of online sales in paddy, 5% farmers sales in fruits, 22% sales in vegetables, 20% sales in coconut and 8% sales in chillies through online marketing (Peter and Latha, 2021).

**Successful initiatives of e-Marketing:** e-Choupal-the world's largest rural digital infrastructure-empowering 4 million farmers. It is an initiative by ITC in the year 2000, 'e-Choupal' leverages Information and Communications Technology (ICTs) to virtually cluster all the value chain participants. Delivering the same benefits as vertical integration does in mature agricultural economies like the USA. ICT enabled chain of information flow and market signals. With a judicious blend of click & mortar capabilities, village internet kiosks managed by farmers-called sanchalaks.

## Conclusion

The rate at which technology innovations like the internet information is adopted by consumers constitutes an important part of the technology change or integration. There are a number of studies on adoption of new technology in many sector, but only a handful of studies focus on the agricultural related industry. E-Platform for agricultural products is helpful for farmers as well as governments and other stake holder in agro industry. In this process every sector has to support to the Indian farmers. The agriculture development is totally depend on farmer how are helping to increase national. By giving e-marketing or online marketing education to farmers which will be boon for them and they will get marketing opportunity to their products that will contribute lot to the development of the nation.

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