

## **A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF COVID 19 ON THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF FARMERS: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WASHIM DISTRICT IN MAHARASHTRA STATE**

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### ***ABSTRACT:***

*In the present research, the prevalence of Covid-19 has affected various elements in the society. The peasantry also plays a major role in this. The period during which the Covid-19 outbreak occurs is the middle of the agricultural season. Most of the farmers kept their produce at home or in the field so that it would fetch a good price during the summer, but due to the high prevalence of Covid-19 throughout the summer, the farmers had to sell their produce at the price they could afford. Moreover, the required agricultural inputs for sowing in the current season could not be obtained as expected. It has adversely affected the economic condition of the farmers.*

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The foundation of Indian economy was agriculture; agriculture is and will continue to be. Evidence of this is also seen in the ongoing Covid-19 global crisis. This is a unique crisis. This time no vaccine but a weapon named lockdown has been used as a defense against its virus. Most of the production activity in India as well as all over the world has come to a standstill, but even in such a crisis, farmers have harvested the crops in their fields and are currently preparing for the next crop and are doing it.

Along with the doctors, the farmers are also fighting the battle as a soldier in this crisis. It is the responsibility of the farmers that even when the whole of India was closed, the food items were able to reach the homes of the people. This is the result of the success that India has achieved in food production in the last three decades. But there is also a fact that there is no effective change in the income and standard of living of the farmers in proportion to the increase in food production.

The effect of Covid-19 is not the effect of a single area. It is affecting the whole world geographically, socially and economically. The Indian economy is also going through its worst phase. All sectors of the economy and the people working in them are badly affected. The agriculture sector, manufacturing and service sectors are all looking towards a deep recession. The lockdown has severely negatively impacted the agricultural sector. A large population is returning to the village due to which additional pressure for livelihood can be increased on the agricultural sector. The supply-chain for agro-based products has also been affected to some extent. There are many companies that manufacture agro-products. But due to the ongoing lockdown, the raw material coming out of the villages is ruined due to not being used. This had assumed the form of a major crisis on the income of the farmers. Demand for vegetables had come down due to the closure of hotels, restaurants etc. in the cities. Farmers cultivating flowers were also affected due to restrictions on events and religious places. Amid rumors, poultry farmers have also suffered a major loss.

Due to the lock down at the time of Rabi harvest, it was not possible to supply the seeds that the farmers needed and the relief miles where it was compulsory for the farmers to get the seeds in the price. In this research analysis of the economic effects of Kovhid-19 on farmers of Washim district has been done.

## **1.2 NEED AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY:**

The epidemic of Covid-19 has disrupted the lives of the entire society and has had a direct and indirect effect on the agricultural sector and farmers as well. The lockdown imposed by the government has created huge difficulties for farmers in meeting their agricultural needs. Moreover, it has not been possible to sell the produce in the market during this period, which has also had an adverse effect on the farmers. This needs to be studied in the current context.

## **1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:**

1. To study the effect of Covid-19 on the economic condition of farmers.
2. To study the impact of Covid-19 on the income level of farmers.
3. To study the effect of Covid-19 on the purchase of agricultural resources.
4. To study the damage done to the crops of the farmers by Covid-19.

## **1.4 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:**

1. There is no significant effect of Covid-19 on the economic condition of farmers.
2. There is no significant impact of Covid-19 on the income level of farmers.

3. There is no significant effect of Covid-19 on the purchase of agricultural resources.
4. There is no significant impact of damage of crops of the farmers by Covid-19.

### 1.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

The research work presented is limited to farmers in Washim district. This study has studied the impact of the outbreak of Covid-19 on the economic condition of farmers.

### 1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Survey methodology has been used in the present research. For this, a total of 200 farmers from Washim district were selected for this research. Facts were collected from them by keeping physical distance. In addition, the necessary facts were collected through Google Forms from the families of the farmers who have mobiles. The techniques of frequency, percentage and kai square were used to analyze and interpret the data obtained.

### 1.7 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA:

The facts analyzed in the presented research were as follows.

**Table no. 1.1**  
**Table showing the effect of Covid-19 on farmers' income level**

s.n.	Description	N	%	Chi Square
1	Income levels were adversely affected	108	54.00	44.32
2	There was a positive effect on the income level	32	16.00	
3	There was no effect on income level	60	30.00	
	Total	200	100	

**Table no. 1.2**

**Table showing details of difficulties faced by farmers in purchasing agricultural inputs due to the outbreak of Covid-19.**

s.n	Description	N	%	Chi-square
1	There were difficulties in purchasing agricultural inputs	98	49.00	81.40
2	The high cost of agricultural materials had to be pity	52	26.00	
3	The materials needed for agriculture could not be obtained	41	20.50	
4	There were no difficulties in purchasing agricultural inputs	09	4.50	
	Total	200	100	

**Table no. 1.3****Table showing the impact of Covid-19 outbreak on farmers' crop damage**

	Description	N	%	Chi-square
1	The farm could not be sold so he lay down	43	21.50	75.60
2	It deteriorated because it could not sell its produce	11	5.50	
3	The price of agricultural commodities was negligible	49	24.50	
4	Expenses incurred by selling agricultural commodities have not gone up	97	48.50	
	Total	200	100	

### 1.8 CONCLUSION:

Covid-19 has adversely affected 54.00% of farmers' income levels. Covid-19 appears to have a positive effect on the income status of 16.00% of the farmers and has no effect on the income level of 30.00% of the farmers. It is clear from this that Covid-19 has adversely affected the income status of most farmers, meaning that their yields have been lower than before due to the epidemic.

Covid-19 made it difficult for 49.00% of the farmers to buy agricultural inputs, out of which 26.00% of the farmers had to pay exorbitant prices for the inputs, 20.50% of the farmers could not get the inputs they needed for their farms so they had to take what was available. The opposite effect is on the production of agricultural commodities. 4.50% of the farmers did not face any difficulty in cultivating in the conditions of Covid-19. It is clear from this that most of the farmers are facing a lot of difficulties in the situation of Covid-19 while doing agricultural inputs. As a result, they either had to pay a higher price, and the non-availability of the required materials has led to a sharp decline in agricultural production and yield in the current year.

Covid-19 has affected the loss of agricultural produce of the farmers. Out of this, 21.50% farmers could not sell their covid-19 due to the prevalence and government regulations. 5.50% of the farmers could not sell their produce in this epidemic so their farm produce was damaged due to short duration and they had to bear huge financial burden. 24.50% of the farmers sold their produce at negligible price in this Covid-19 situation as they needed money but they could not get any income from it. So 48.50% of the farmers sold agricultural commodities in the conditions of Covid-19 but they could not even get their expenses from the sale of those commodities. All these factors appear to have adversely affected the economic condition of the farmers.

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