

## **Kisan Rath "Kisan ka apna Vahan" an Ambulance for Farmers in Covid Times**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The consequences of fighting a dreadful pandemic named Covid-19, the nation is going through strict lockdown which is overlapping the harvesting of rabi crop. The lockdown announced initially never gave a thought concerning farmers. Ceasing the farmers to attend their fields, harvest crops and selling them, putting rabi-procurement at jeopardy. Threatening their livelihoods and drudging an artificial shortage. Could-not escape, the vegetable farmers are suffering severely. May be dependency of government on buffer stocks sidelined these calamity. Moreover, now shortage of labor has hiked up the labor cost due to stigmatization of the diseased and brutality by police, cracking the market price owing to insufficient demand at market. To combat this disaster and support the farmers during lockdown period, the Department of agricultural cooperation and farmer welfare, Government of India is taking several measures to normalize the harvesting of rabi crops and sowing of zaid crops. Setting an important milestone in agri-produce transportation, the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmer's welfare, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, launched an farmer ally android application named- "Kisan Rath". The mobile App has been developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC). It will succour searching transport vehicles by farmers and middleman for Primary and Secondary of agricultural and horticultural produce.

**Key Words :** Kisan , Covid-19, Buffer, Mandis, FPOs

### **INTRODUCTION**

India's bedrock is identified through agriculture. Here farmers work in acres not in hours. Indispensable duty of every farmer is to feed the second largest citizenry of world. Near about 65% of agricultural activities are carried out in our country exporting million tonnes of farm produce. Sowing of seeds, following cultural practices and harvesting in slotted time has an immense stake for high and most productive agriculture. The farmers have always fought behind the curtains either for us or for themselves.

The result of fighting a terrible pandemic *i.e.* Covid-19, the nation is going through a lockdown that overlaps with the harvesting of the *Rabi* crop. Lockdown announced that it never gave any thought to farmers.

Stopping farmers from attending their fields, harvesting and selling crops, putting *Rabi*-procurement in jeopardy. The vegetable and fruits farmers are suffering severely as they are perished easily. The government's dependence on buffer stocks may have sidelined this disaster. Moreover, labour shortages have now increased labor costs due to stigmatization of the sick and brutality of the police, cracking the market price due to insufficient market demand. To combat this disaster and to support farmers during the lock-up period, the Department of Agricultural Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare, The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has launched 'Kisan Rath' mobile application (app) to facilitate transportation of foodgrains and perishable during lockdown The application has been developed by the National Informatics Centre -NIC (backed by the

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology). It will support the search for transport vehicles by farmers and middlemen for primary and secondary agricultural and horticultural products.

Farmers would transport their farm produce to mandis, FPO collection centre and warehouse etc. through primary transportation. Secondary transportation includes transport of produce from mandis to destined platform *i.e.* inter-state and intra-state mandis, processing units, warehouse etc. This app facilitates traders in transportation of perishable commodities by refrigerator vehicles. All other right mode of transportation for movement of different farm produce like cereal pulses, fruits, vegetables, oilseeds, log, flowers and bamboo etc. This app is expected to connect farmers and traders to a network of more than 5 lakh trucks and 20,000 tractors. Transportation of agri-produce is most called for portion of supply chain to meet the need of demand.

The farmer, FPOS, buyer/traders can smoothly put an order for transportation on this app which is disseminated to transport aggregators in the market, who in turn porthole with various truckers and fleet owners for obtaining a competitive quote against the requirement and passes back the analyzed requisition and trucker details to the consignor.

Then the dealer/farmer directly negotiates offline with the truckers and finalized the deal. Once the trip is completed, the user can provide feedback for the trucker. Tagline “Kisan ka Apna Vahan”- rightly justified as stepping stone towards provision of timely transportation services at competitive price for farmers and traders, besides achieving a reduction in food wastage and ensuring better prices of the produce to farmers.

The app is having option for 08 languages initially in Hindi and English and is ready for pan-India use. In a life after the pandemic, this app will enhance the networking of farmers directly to the sellers and reduce the dependency of farmers in reaching the traders increasing their profits and curbing agricultural wastage.

#### **Important steps taken by the government:**

- The app is expected to connect farmers and traders to a network of more than 5 lakh trucks and 20,000 tractors.
- It is meant to help farmers and traders who are searching for vehicles to move produce. This includes:
  - Primary transport from the farm to the mandis, local warehouses or the collection centres of farmer

producer organisations.

- Secondary transport from the local mandis to intra-and inter-State mandis, processing units, railway stations, warehouses or wholesalers.

- The Government has granted relaxation in the nationwide lockdown for activities related to agriculture-farming and allied activities with a view to address problems being faced by the farming community.

- The app will be a stepping stone towards provision of timely transportation service at competitive rates for farmers and traders, besides achieving a reduction in food wastage.

- This will help in ensuring better prices of the produce to farmers.

#### **Other measures taken by Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers’ Welfare and other ministries:**

Railways introduced 65 routes for running 567 Parcel Specials (out of which 503 are time table parcel trains) to supply essential commodities at fast speed. These trains have transported 20,653 tonnes of consignments across the country. Under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Scheme during the lockdown period from 24.3.2020 till date, about 8.78 crore farmer families have been benefitted and an amount of Rs. 17,551 crore has been released so far. Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PM-GKY) about 88,234.56 MT of pulses has been issued to the States/UTs. In order to facilitate the Seed sector during lockdown period, the Government has agreed to extend the validity of license of Seed dealers which are expired or going to be expired till 30.09.2020. Under Plant Quarantine system, it has been decided to extend the validity of all pack-houses, processing units and treatment facilities whose validity is expiring up to 30th June 2020 for a period of one year without physical inspection of such facility through a simplified procedure to facilitate export of agriculture products.

#### **Conclusion:**

The Mobile Application named “Kisan Rath” with tagline “Kisan ka apna Vahan”, is an important milestone in agri-produce transportation facilitates farmers and traders in identifying the right mode of transportation for movement of farm produce ranging from foodgrain (cereal, coarse cereal, pulses etc.), Fruits and Vegetables, oil seeds, spices, fiber crops, flowers, bamboo, log and

minor forest produce, coconuts etc. This will also help in giving boost to Inter-mandi and Inter-State trade of agriculture and horticulture produce in the country. The app will be a stepping stone towards provision of timely transportation service at competitive rates for farmers and traders, besides achieving a reduction in food wastage. This will help in ensuring better prices of the produce to farmers.

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