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Impacts of a National Lockdown on Smallholder Farmers' Income and Food Security: Empirical Evidence from Two States in India

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Impacts of a national lockdown on smallholder farmers' income and food security: Empirical evidence from two states in India

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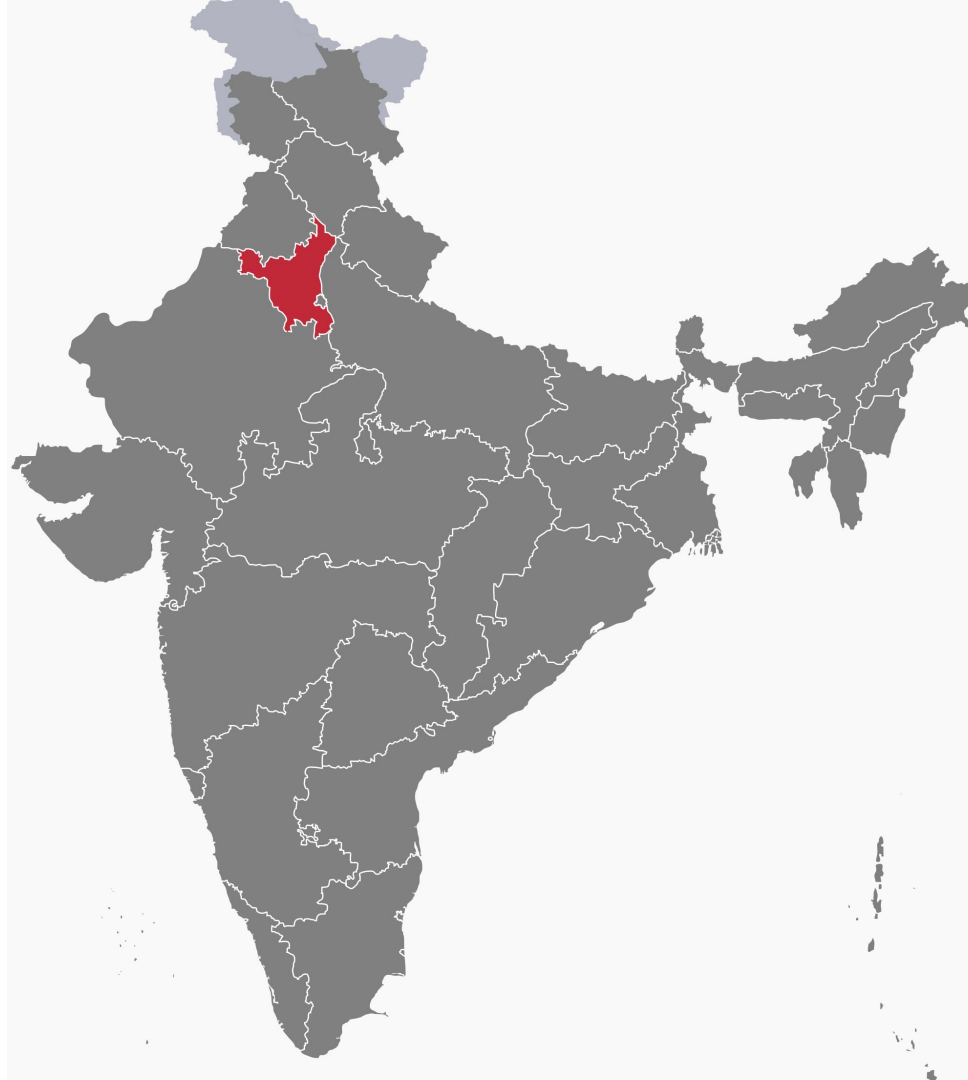


1. Introduction

- COVID's disproportionate effect on economies worldwide
- >2/3s of the world's poor depend on agriculture
- Effect of the COVID lockdown on farmers' livelihood: income, food security, etc.

Haryana

- Dominant winter crop is wheat and is harvested in the first three weeks of April
- Reliance on machinery to get crop





Odisha

- Winter crops include paddy, pulses, and oilseeds
- Reliance on manual labor

India's Response to COVID-19

All India measures

March 15th
100 confirmed cases in India

March 25th
Nationwide lockdown announced for a period of 21 days

March 27th
Exemption for agricultural and associated activities announced.

April 14th
Nationwide lockdown extended, but with localized conditional easing based on number of COVID cases

April 20th
Exemption extended for agri-businesses, input supply stores, banks and government centres.

April 29th
Guidelines and provisions introduced to facilitate inter-state movement of people

May 4th
Movement of people, private and public transport allowed to resume in less affected zones

State-specific measures

April 20th - HARYANA
Staggered procurement of wheat begins at APMC mandis

May 7th - ODISHA
Procurement of limited quantities of pulses and oilseeds begins

Wheat harvest window (All districts, Haryana)

Black gram harvest window (Jajpur district, Odisha)

Challenges for farmers

- *Mandis* or market yards, where farmers sold majority of their crop remained closed
- Interstate movement of goods was delayed
- Local authorities interpreted the new policies in different ways

Differing Local Policy

Haryana

- Divided up groups of farmers that could enter mandis so it was staggered
- Efforts were made to reach all farmers
- 61% of registered farmers were able to sell their produce through this method

Odisha

- Procurement of crops was announced much later than Haryana and much later than the harvest window
- Limited to farmers who could register with agricultural organizations

The Study

- Primarily phone based, right after announcement of the lockdown and harvest season in both Haryana and Odisha
- Covered 1515 farmers in the two Indian states
- Phone surveys were complemented with interviews and review of policy



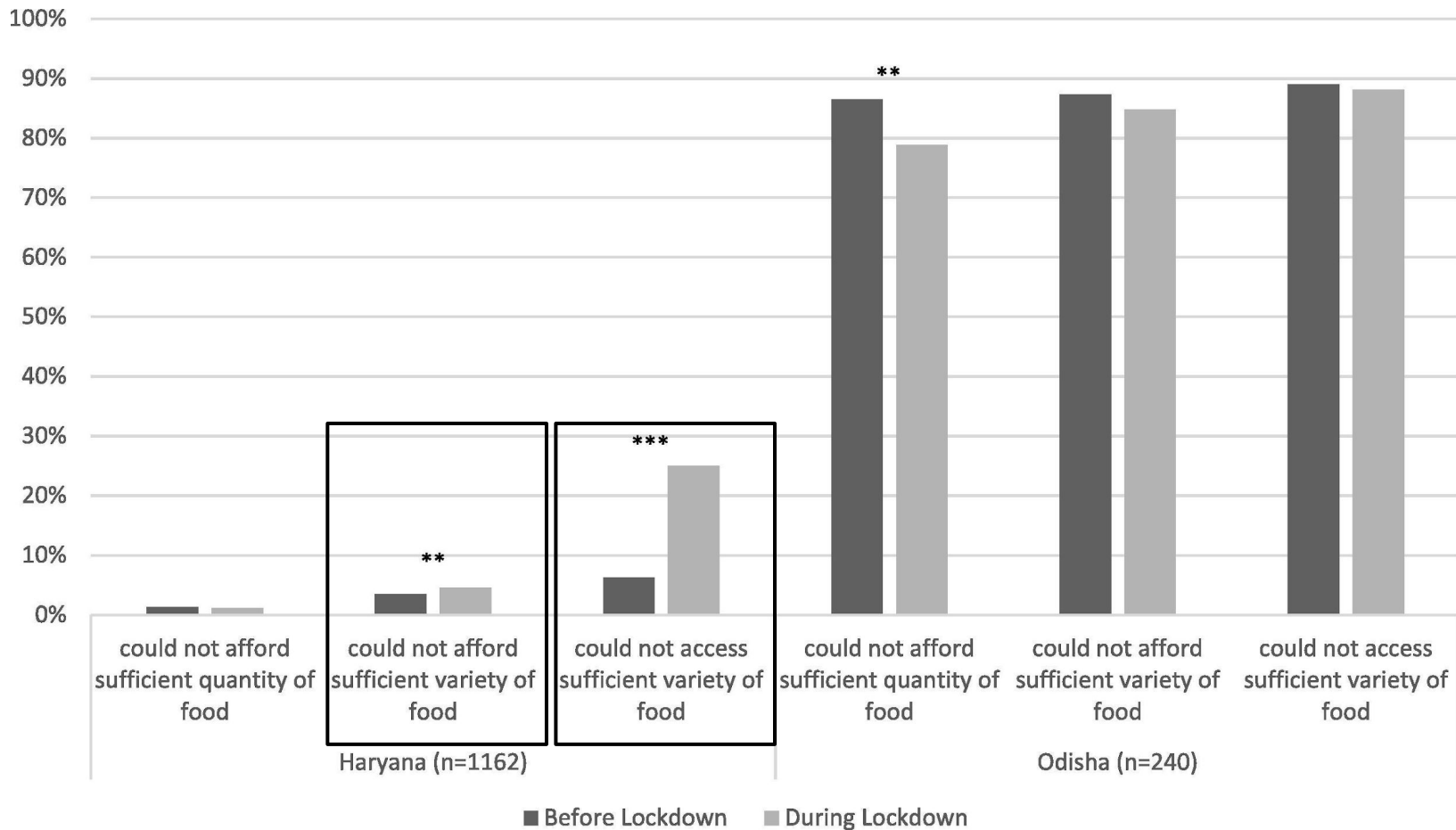
The Survey

- Conducted in farmers primary language
- 97% consent rate in Haryana and 100% consent rate in Odisha
- 1275 respondents from Haryana and 240 respondents from Odisha
- Questioned about access to food during the lockdown and the month before the lockdown.

Results

Variable	Haryana	Odisha	
	(wheat)	(black gram)	
	(1)	(2)	
As a result of lockdown measures, farmer had to ...			
... Harvest earlier than normal	11%	57%	**
... Harvest later than normal	32%	35%	
... Spend more on harvest	41%	80%	
... Spend more on labor for harvest	25%	73%	**
... Spend more on machinery for harvest	23%	38%	
... Spend more on transport to the market	25%	52%	*
... Store harvest to sell or consume in future	61%	74%	
If stored: Farmer lost or discarded harvest in storage	15%	n/a	
... Sell the harvest for a lower price than what farmer would normally get	0%	36%	***
... Borrow money to cope with agricultural losses due to this crisis	2%	14%	*
Farmer received notice of compensation from government	0%	4%	***
Total number of respondents	1275	240	

Food Insecurity in Haryana vs Odisha





The study highlighted several considerations for aiding in economic recovery for farmers

Conclusions

Labor Supply: labor supply was affected more in Odisha, where farmers didn't have access to mechanized alternatives. In regions with local labor shortages, wages could go up, affecting farmer incomes. In regions with labor excess, wages could go down, affecting labor incomes

Market Access: established public procurement system in Haryana protected wheat farmers during the lockdown

Technology: database of farmers in Haryana offered many positive possibilities during this pandemic

Food Security: policies would need to target areas with lower food production diversity and higher diversity differently



Discussion

- What are possible limitations of this study?
- When navigating between strict COVID policy and ensuring food security in poorer areas, where should we draw the line?
- How can the results of this study be implemented

CITATION

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