

RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



**HEALTHCARE FOR WHOM
AND AT WHAT COST?**

PRIYANKA CHAPPARIA

**HOW THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR LEVERAGED
A PANDEMIC TO INTRODUCE SOME MUCH
NEEDED CHANGES**

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From the CEO'S Desk

Writing this message in the earlier edition of our newsletter, I was cautiously hopeful that lessons from the COVID19 pandemic and the ensuing lockdown will guide us as we recover better. A few months later as I write this piece, the wheels of industry have started to turn and there is growing realisation that life has to go on, albeit with the necessary health and safety measures. There are growing signs that lessons from the pandemic are being seriously considered, including at the highest international level.

The UN High level Political Forum on SDGs held in mid-July 2020 to assess progress towards the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development resolved with commitments in this direction. The forum declaration asserts, "We need an integrated approach that will leverage inter-linkages and minimize trade-offs across Goals and targets, lead to sustainable and inclusive recovery, and accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the framework of the decade of action and delivery".

The challenge remains of transforming commitments into actions. Not only national governments and multilateral organisations, but international businesses have also had limited success in driving sustainable and inclusive transformation across value chains and networks. This includes the most vocal advocates of sustainable development and SDGs. Therefore, it is clear that 'business as usual' will not be enough. The spirit of redefining the purpose of a Corporation united 181 CEOs of major global companies into the Business Roundtable in mid-2019. It remains to be seen how their commitment translate into actions protecting the interest of all stakeholders, post COVID19.

At CRB we have and will continue to support integration of sustainable, inclusive and equitable principles in rebuilding societies, governments and businesses post COVID19. One of the platforms we aim to highlight some of the possible pathways for achieving this in India is the 7th edition of CRB's annual sustainability conference – India and Sustainability Standards 2020. We have decided to organise this conference virtually, for obvious reasons on 28-30 October 2020 (<https://www.sustainabilitystandards.in/>). Our Board has been supportive of this idea, as they have been through these last few months.

The theme of this year's CRB annual conference is – 'Sustainability a key to Business Resilience in an Uncertain World'. We have already started to receive support and interest from many like-minded national and international organisations and experts for this year's event. Together with the conference partner organisations, we will develop and adopt a resolution at the end of the event that will highlight pathways for rebuilding our economy and society post COVID19 in a resilient, inclusive and sustainable manner.



Rijit Sengupta
CEO, CENTRE FOR
RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

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COVER STORY

HEALTHCARE FOR WHOM AND AT WHAT COST?

PRIYANKA CHAPPARIA



"Give people what they need: food, medicine, clean air, pure water, trees and grass, pleasant homes to live in, some hours of work, more hours of leisure. Don't ask who deserves it. Every human being deserves it."

-Howard Zinn

If only we could do justice to the above call to treat humans like humans. It sounds utopian, especially in the wake of the current COVID-19 crisis which has unearthed huge disparities in access to the "needs" listed above, including healthcare. Access to quality healthcare has been an issue of discussion among policy makers. The UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) spell out the need for healthcare. Specifically, SDG 3 talks about "ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being at all ages."

COVID-19 has revealed the gaps that exist in the current healthcare infrastructure, at all levels. Indian newspapers and new channels have been broadcasting stories about the overburdened and inadequate infrastructure, pointing towards lack of medical services. The debate on the accessibility to the health infrastructure has intensified the issue of healthcare for whom? The lack of healthcare infrastructure is not the outcome of the current crisis; COVID-19 has only pulled the rug under which the issue was brushed off.

Such is the magnitude of the pandemic that countries all over the world are struggling to treat its citizens. The situation in India is also grim, there is a shortage of healthcare personnel and affordable infrastructure, both in rural and urban areas. India has 1.7 nurses per 1,000 population, 43% less than the World Health Organisation (WHO) norm of 3 per 1,000, doctor-population ratio of 1:1,404 against



IMAGE SOURCE: PTI

WHO prescribed ratio of 1:1,000. The estimates of the public healthcare system are a concern with only one government doctor for more than 11,500 people and one government bed for about 2,000 people, with regional differences in these estimates.

While talking about healthcare, mental health cannot be ignored. COVID-19 has obvious physical manifestations, but it also has socio-psychological implications. People, who seem to be physically fit, are also grappling to make sense of the situation. Although efforts are being made to attend to infected patients, the inadequacies of mental healthcare have been revealed. The imposition of lockdown resulting in sudden loss of job, restriction on mobility, and isolation has had an adverse impact on the mental health of people. According to a report by Centre for Monitoring India Economy (CMIE), the rate of unemployment in the country shot up to 27.11% for the week ending on May 3 from 6.74% at the end of March 15, 2020. There has already been reports of rise in psychological and social issues such as domestic violence, depression, and suicide.

Government has taken cognizance of the importance of mental health. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has published announcements related to mental health and also launched a helpline but efforts from all stakeholders need to combine to first recognize the existence of issues and challenges in the space of mental health and then to come up with interventions.

Healthcare as public good

The exorbitant prices of private healthcare points to the greater role that governments will have to pay in providing medical care and infrastructure. COVID-19 has highlighted that the landscape of healthcare would have to be redesigned. In economics, a public good is a product or service which is non-excludable and non-rivalrous, meaning that (a) no-one can be excluded from its use, (b) and its use by one person does not diminish its availability to others. National defense, clean air, public parks are some of the examples of public goods. In strict sense, healthcare cannot qualify as a public good but the public healthcare system can be strengthened with heavy public investment and holistic policies.

Over the years, the government has increased the spending on healthcare but it is still low; for the financial year 2019-20, the expenditure on healthcare by the Centre and states was 1.29% of GDP and the country's total healthcare spending (out-of-pocket) and public stood at 3.6% of GDP. As per OECD, these numbers are much lower than that of other countries, the average of which was 8.8% of GDP. The government, as per the recommendation of National Health Policy 2017, launched Ayushman Bharat to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC). The flagship programme has two components—Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) and Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY). PM-JAY is the largest health assurance scheme in the world which aims at providing a health cover of Rs. 5 lakhs per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization to over 10.74 crores poor and vulnerable families (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries) that form the bottom 40% of the Indian population. Under the scheme, 2,132 people have availed or are undergoing treatment for COVID-19. The investment and the reach have to be expanded to cover maximum citizens and provide affordable services.

Public-Private Partnership (PPP)

Creating an efficient ecosystem of public private partnership is a complex task but a task that holds promise of efficiency and plugging the gap in access to healthcare services. Private sector plays a dominant role in the provision of healthcare services, constituting over 70 percent. The new National Health Policy 2017 and PM-JAY highlight the need for public-private partnership. NITI Aayog in 2018 released guidelines for different PPP models that can be adopted at the district level—management of contract, purchasing of services,

build, operate and transfer model or a co-location model. An appropriate model that reduces out of the pocket expenditure and makes available quality infrastructure for all has to be worked on.

Moving Forward

The current pandemic has served as a wakeup call for countries across the globe. It has highlighted the need to spruce up healthcare infrastructure and carve out a more robust path to recovery that we need to stay on. Technology has a huge role to play in ensuring that everybody receives timely and quality healthcare. Efficient use of technology, such as telephonic consultations, making use of modern gadgets, can provide sustainable solutions in taking basic healthcare to the last mile. Investment in technology and access to it needs to be strengthened with increased public private partnership and investment.

For a holistic view on healthcare, the long and rich history of traditional healthcare in India has to be included. The government has streamlined the indigenous alternative medicine system through the Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH). The Ministry has time and again notified advisories and guidelines for possible interventions of alternative medicine. Systematic research and creating awareness would go a long way in developing safe and effective traditional systems of medicine.

The importance of partnerships and international collaboration cannot be overemphasized when it comes to the advancement of research in healthcare and delivery of timely medical attention. These international collaborations have come to light in the wake of global pandemic and should be sustained with conscious efforts as countries worldwide are in different stages of recovering from the current crisis.

CRB ACTIVITIES

RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

TASK GROUP ON CATALYSING SCIENCE-BASED POLICY ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION

CRB is a Member of this global Task Group (comprising 20 organisations) and coordinated jointly by the International Resource Panel (IRP) and One Planet Network (OPN) initiatives of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). Rijit Sengupta represents CRB on this task group, which aims to enhance uptake among businesses/governments and the international community of available scientific data and other reliable sources on sustainable consumption and production - especially across three sectors/value chains viz. food, construction and textiles. CRB has been contributing its inputs regularly to this Task Group based on the activities/engagements across apparel and agri-food related sectoral activities of the organisation.

PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE VALUE CHAINS IN INDIA FOR AN EFFECTIVE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO THE SDGs (PROGRESS)

Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) and Aston University, UK have teamed up to explore and investigate how private sector companies - as part of Global Value Chains (GVCs), production networks and FDIs in India have/could better contribute towards achievement of specific SDGs, particularly employment and decent work for the youth (SDG 8), women's social and economic empowerment (SDG 5), sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12), and Climate Action (SDG 13). This project referred to as the **PROGRESS project** is being supported by **International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada**. The generated evidence is being used to engage and support policy and practice (industry) level discussions and actions through multi-stakeholder processes in four key sectors viz. **i) Apparels & Textiles, ii) Agro-Processing, iii) Pharmaceuticals, and iv) Gems & Jewellery** and is also used to engage with the international actors to highlight the contributions through this GVC approach and areas that need attention. It would thereby highlight and demonstrate methodologies for achieving sustainable and inclusive GVCs aimed at benefiting the youth, women and local environment in India.

CIRCULAR APPAREL POLICY INNOVATION LAB (CAPIL)

Circular Apparel Policy Innovation Lab (CAPIL) was launched in 2019 with support from Laudes Foundation (erstwhile C&A Foundation) to facilitate a process of inclusive policy making for circular textiles and apparel in India through dialogues involving brands, suppliers, industry experts, policy makers and other key stakeholders.. The CAPIL project focuses on **identifying CE priorities and linked potential policy interventions** based on interaction with stakeholders on the ground. These **stakeholders** include **national and international brands, suppliers and manufacturers, design institutes, innovators and start-ups operating on CE business models, academia, and relevant central and state policy actors**. The project in its current phase has shortlisted Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Panipat and Tirupur for engagement with stakeholders on the ground. State level policy briefs for Gujarat and Karnataka have been prepared and shared with relevant government departments while interactions for the other 2 locations are underway. The findings from the interactions will be discussed in a national level workshop that is being planned in late June/ early July.

BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

At the Centre for Responsible Business the work structured around Business and Human Rights traverses both the policy and practice space. Overtime with the discourse on Business & Human Rights garnering greater attention both nationally and internationally, the CRB portfolio has evolved to include multi-stakeholder policy dialogues, awareness and capacity building and policy research. In the last quarter, much of CRB's work on the topic has centred on supporting the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MoCA) in the development of India first National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights. In February 2019, the MoCA released the 'Zero Draft' of the National Action Plan with the intent to develop the NAP. The Zero draft served to lay out the broad context that would notify the Action Plan. CRB's role in supporting the Ministry in taking the NAP development forward has been multi-fold ranging from providing research support & technical inputs, facilitating multi-stakeholder consultations and meetings and offering secretarial support.

REPRESENTATIONS

MEDIA WEBINAR ON 'BUSINESSES WITH PURPOSE: FUTURE-PROOFING BUSINESSES IN A POST COVID19 WORLD'

16th April 2020

The media can play a critical role in creating awareness and sensitizing businesses, consumers and other stakeholders on the concept of 'businesses with purpose'. Understanding the importance of media engagement, a webinar was organised on the theme "Businesses with Purpose Future-Proofing Businesses in a Post COVID-19 World" by CRB, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and WWF-India on 16th April 2020.

The webinar saw various actors from the field of businesses, media, think tanks and civil societies express their thoughts and opinions on media and businesses working together during and post the pandemic to push the sustainability agenda forward collectively. They also mentioned that efforts like creating awareness, helping consumers as well as businesses understand sustainability and sustainable growth can create demand for sustainable goods and intensify sustainable business practices.

WEBINAR ON 'THE ECONOMICS OF ECOSYSTEMS & BIODIVERSITY: PROMOTING A SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE & FOOD SECTOR'

29th April 2020

To mark the launch of TEEBAgriFood business implementation project by UNEP in India, a webinar was organised by CRB together with The Capitals Coalition on 29th April 2020.

The webinar addressed multiple facets of the food sector in India along with ways to develop a new guidance for agribusiness and how to gain access to training sessions on multi-capital assessments.

CRB AT THE NIFT WEBINAR ON 'SIGNIFICANCE ON INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY DURING COVID19 LOCKDOWN'

29th May 2020

A workshop on 'Significance on Information & Communication Technology in integrating Sustainability during COVID-19 lockdown' on 29th May 2020, organised by NIFT Delhi, was moderated by Rijit Sengupta, CEO, CRB. The webinar saw eminent speakers who discussed how the ICT sector has incorporated sustainability in India; and emerging/new ways of promoting sustainability post COVID-19.

WEBINAR ON 'COVID19 & ITS IMPACT ON FOOD WASTE – A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE'

19th June 2020

CRB hosted a virtual roundtable discussion on 'COVID-19 & its Impact on Food Waste – a multi-stakeholder dialogue' on 19th June 2020. The webinar discussed the impacts on the agricultural value chain – specifically the problem of food waste due to COVID-19 and how policies, private sector initiatives & ground-level interventions can help find lasting solutions, especially in the context of SDG12 – Sustainable Consumption & Production.

CONVENINGS

SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL COALITION FOR INDIA (ISPOC) THIRD MEMBERS' MEETING

24th April 2020

The Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition for India (I-SPOC) organised its third meeting of Members virtually on 24th April 2020, which was attended by the Members and Observers of the Coalition. Representatives from 20 organisations and businesses came together to discuss the government policy, supply chains and consumer behavior involved in the uptake of sustainable palm oil in India. The objective of this meeting was to formally introduce the members to their Working Group and their Group Chairs and finalize the Action Plan 2020-21.

RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

NEWS ROUND UP

BY RAMANUJ MITRA & BHAVYA SHARMA



PRIVATE SECTOR & SDGS

A SUSTAINABILITY LED APPROACH IS IMPORTANT TO CREATE RESILIENT SOCIETIES FOR THE FUTURE AND FIGHT THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL TURMOIL CAUSED BY THE PANDEMIC

The United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) look at creating a sustainable and equitable world. The journey towards the SDGs, however, might now be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. A new study published in the Nature Climate Change journal has found that, compared to 2019, global carbon emissions fell 17 percent between this January and April due to the global lockdowns. (SDG 13: Climate Action and SDG 15: Life on Land). However, those in vulnerable categories—blue collar workers—find themselves without basic necessities such as money (SDG 1: No Poverty), food (SDG 2: No Hunger), soap and clean water (SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitisation). The crisis has affected their children's education (SDG 4: Quality Education), and their ability to keep a roof over their head (SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities). The absence of social safety nets has only worsened the crisis. Private sector leaders feel that this is an ideal time to intervene—investments must be redirected to new, more resilient economic systems, to bring India, and the world on track towards sustainability.

Read more [here](#)

BUSINESS & HUMAN RIGHTS

CHANGE IN LABOUR LAWS

The lockdown enforced by the Indian government to control the spread of the covid-19 pandemic has had severe economic implications: millions have lost their jobs, and tragic humanitarian consequences have emerged, such as the migrant labourers' crisis. Governments around the world have taken this opportunity to dilute environmental and labour laws. In India, many states have suspended laws above and beyond those required to ease hiring and firing—environmental and safety standards have also been brought down. In the short term this might favour the industries, but on the long run this will damage the trust between workers and industries, and also degrade the ecosystem services that are crucial for industrial prosperity. The private sector must stand up and ensure that rights of workers aren't damaged.

Read the article [here](#).



Image Source: CNN

BUSINESS & HUMAN RIGHTS

DEADLY GAS LEAK IN VIZAG, GRIM WAKE-UP CALL FOR GLOBAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRY

According to UN experts, a deadly toxic gas leak at a Korean-owned polymer plant in Vizag, Andhra Pradesh on May 7, should be considered as a wake-up call for the chemical industry who should acknowledge and fulfil its responsibility to respect human rights.

The incident left 12 dead and over 350 hospitalised. Over 2,000 people were evacuated from the villages within a radius of 1.5 to 3 km from the plant. Many questions are being raised on the cause of the incident at LG Polymers, efficacy of the safety mechanisms in the plant and the reasons for the company preferring to not obtain necessary environmental clearances. Many from the area who fled their homes are still afraid to come back and a few who returned complain of continuing discomfort.

Read more [here](#) and [here](#).



Image Source: Business Today



CLIMATE CHANGE

CLIMATE CHANGE FAVOURS LOCUST SWARMS, PUTTING INDIA AT AN INCREASED RISK

The warming of the Indian Ocean due to climate change is cited as the main reason for the proliferation of locusts that are now ranging from the horn of Africa to the Arabian Peninsula to the Indian subcontinent. A swarm of locusts measuring 1 sq. km can eat as much food as 35,000 people in one day, according to FAO's Locust Information Service. Locusts thrive in humid conditions, and outbreaks often follow floods and cyclones. Unseasonal rains in arid regions in 2019 provided the perfect breeding conditions for locusts. As of 2 June, the largest locust swarm in close to three decades is filleting farmlands in 41 districts across 5 states - Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, spreading panic among farmers getting ready to sow the country's main summer crop. Provincial governments in Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Telangana and Karnataka have sounded alerts.

Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

SMES & SUSTAINABILITY

PSBS DISBURSE RS 12,201-CR LOAN TO MSMES UNDER EMERGENCY CREDIT LINE SCHEME.

On 16 May, the government had announced a comprehensive economic package for the micro, small and medium enterprises sector, which included the ₹3 trillion collateral-free automatic loan scheme, ₹20,000 crore subordinate debt scheme for stressed micro, small and medium enterprises and ₹50,000 crore equity infusion scheme through a fund of funds. According to the Finance Ministry data, the size of the package notwithstanding, public sector banks have so far sanctioned loans worth ₹8,320 crore till 5 June to micro, small and medium enterprises in 12 states under the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS). Of this, ₹599 crore has already been disbursed to 17,904 accounts. Till 9 June 2020, the public sector banks have disbursed Rs 12,200.65 crore till June 9, under the Rs 3-lakh crore Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) for the MSME sector, hit hard by the coronavirus-induced lockdown. Business units of Tamil Nadu have got highest cumulative sanction of Rs 2,637 crore from banks, while disbursement was to the tune of Rs 1,727 crore which was followed by Uttar Pradesh with a sanction of Rs 2,547 crore, with disbursement of Rs 1,225 crore.

Read related articles [here](#) and [here](#)

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

A MIXED BAG FOR CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN INDIA

The Covid-19 pandemic has created both challenges and opportunities for the adoption of circular economy in India. While the global disruption in supply chains has provided further evidence for the need to rethink our production and consumption systems, the government and industries are responding by relaxing environmental and social norms, which form the backbone of a circular and just transition. On the ground, practices like segregation and landfill diversion have taken a back seat due to the lockdown and other logistics issues. PPEs are typically of synthetic origin, which are either disposed off or incinerated due to contamination risks. The opportunity presented by the pandemic should be utilized to make out systems circular for the long run. Many industry experts believe that a resilient circular economy is must for recovery and preparedness.

Read more [here](#) and [here](#).



TRENDING NOW

COVID-19:

HOW THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR LEVERAGED A PANDEMIC TO INTRODUCE SOME MUCH NEEDED CHANGES

BY NITYA CHIBBER



When studying supply-side challenges of fruits, vegetables and grains as per the agricultural chain, one must consider the policy landscape.

The State Agricultural Produce Marketing (Development and Regulation) Act of 2003 (also referred to as the APMC act) provides for the establishment of Private Markets/ yards, Direct Purchase Centres, Consumer/Farmers Markets for direct sale and promotion of Public Private Partnership in the management and development of agricultural markets in the country. This is mentioned in the online copy of this legislation. This act was replaced by the Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (APLM) (Promotion & Facilitation) Act, 2017. This still maintained the APMC-aligned mandi, which is a source of procurement for fruits and vegetables as well as grains. The Food Security Act, 2013 facilitates the procurement of food grains by the Central Government and the State Governments through minimum support price operations. This is being carried out by the state-level units of the FCI. Finally, consider the Essential Commodities Act (1955), which prevents stockholding on behalf of suppliers and ensures the consumer does not face high prices for goods that are in demand.

There has been on-going evaluation of the APMC-aligned mandi in terms of its limitations but the Act itself has its strengths. One limitation of the APMC-aligned mandi was that it led to less inclusivity as it became the only option for selling agricultural produce as all notified agricultural produce would need to be sold in the market yards/ sub market yards or in the private yards of the licence holder. Furthermore, there was the feature of the payment of licence fees. The hierarchical structure that was constituted by the Act included a Market Committee. The Marketing Board received funds from the Marketing Committee a contribution of such percentage of its income derived from licence fees and market fees as may be prescribed by the State Government by notification in the official gazette.



Farmers had to ensure an understanding of the system as farmers often had to interact with middlemen which led to inefficiencies. Secondly, the Act fell short in implementation in contrast to the spirit of the Act, which was to encourage a level playing field for both public sector and private sector players to enter into the domain of agriculture marketing and build appropriate market structure.[1]

Nature and expected impact of the reforms

The newly introduced agri-reforms will benefit farmers hugely and which have been introduced in the form of ordinances as follows:

- Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion & Facilitation) Ordinance 2020'
- 'Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance 2020'
- The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Ordinance 2020

Farmers will have a choice in terms of selling their produce to both the APMC-aligned mandi as well as private players. The notification of the 'Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion & Facilitation) Ordinance 2020' is to ensure that farmers and traders enjoy the freedom of choice relating to sale and purchase of farmers' produce which facilitates remunerative prices through competitive alternative trading channels[2]. In addition, 'Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance 2020 allows farmers as well as groups of FPOs to enter into contracts that keep their best interests in mind. Contracts can be entered into with individuals, partnership firms, companies, limited liability groups and societies. This will be achieved by mentioning the price to be paid for the purchase of farming produce in the farming agreement itself.[3]

In terms of impact on the private sector players, they will benefit from the freedom of association granted to Farmers as per the Ordinance on Farmers Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance 2020.' In other words, private sector players can now directly enter into agreements[4] with farmers, given fair and transparent agreements that ensure that all parties mutually agree on price. In terms of the Amendment to the Essential Commodities Ordinance means that there are no stockholding limits to adhere to, which will only come into force during certain scenarios. This would allow stakeholders in the ecosystem to have more freedom in relation to their approach to the produce with one possibility being ensuring even more investment in the ecosystem than before.

Conclusion

The reforms have been in the making as per the details of the APLM Act below, which is the model piece of legislation governing the agricultural sector:

- Creation of a conducive environment for setting up and operating private wholesale market yards and farmer consumer market yards
- Promotion of direct interface between farmers and processors/ exporters/ bulk- buyers/ end users

The features of the Act highlighted above had been identified as areas that needed to be addressed. It was in response to the COVID19 threat that presidential decrees in the form of ordinances were announced. The reforms are only being introduced in a manner that complements existing features of the agricultural value chain, such as the electronic National Agricultural Market (e-NAM).

The COVID19 threat gave momentum to ensure the implementation of policy-based measures to support the agricultural supply chain, many of which had been identified and discussed amongst stakeholders in the industry. The COVID19 pandemic particularly highlighted supply chain disruptions which affected fruits and vegetable supply to buyers downstream as many of the mandis were closed but the government, especially, intervened to ensure procurement of grains. As a result, the farmers suffered due to the increased supply of the fruits and vegetables, which could not reach areas of demand.

CRB as a thinktank realizes the importance of multi-stakeholder collaborations and has been studying the contribution of sectoral stakeholders towards the SDGs including in the agricultural value chain. The role of logistics is an integral one in the supply chain to ensure the streamlined movement of goods from rural areas which are sources of produce to urban areas or where there is demand. Logistics, which forms part of the infrastructure required in a supply chain is also important from a food loss and waste point of view and thereby assuring farmers a good price for their produce. Looking ahead, the union government is considering framing a law, namely the National Logistics Law Efficiency and Advance Predictability Act in order to streamline the logistics ecosystem in the country.

[1]http://agricoop.nic.in/sites/default/files/APLM_ACT_2017_1.pdf

[2] <http://agricoop.nic.in/sites/default/files/219745.pdf>

[3] <http://agricoop.nic.in/sites/default/files/219750.pdf>

[4] <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1629750>

ABOUT CRB

Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) was established in 2011 as think-tank to pursue its vision, 'businesses integrate sustainability into their core business practices'. Given that sustainability is a multi-dimensional problem especially in the context of India and other emerging economies, CRB has adopted a model of engaging multiple stakeholders to develop action plans for promoting sustainable/responsible business, across various sectors in India.

CRB has consolidated its programmatic activities into the following thematic areas:

- Circular Economy
- Business & Human Rights
- Private Sector & SDGs
- Voluntary Sustainability Standards
- SMEs & Sustainability

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She is currently working at the Centre for Responsible Business on a project funded by the IDRC. In her spare time, she is a fitness enthusiast and dabbles in cooking.

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