

Market Inefficiencies: Navigating Regulatory Hurdles of Farmers in Agricultural Marketing

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture stands as a primary income source for the majority of the Indian population, holding immense potential for economic growth; therefore, agricultural production needs to enhance. When agricultural production increases but isn't supported by improved marketing plans it leads to various hurdles. Thus, for a country predominantly dependent on agriculture, an efficient agricultural marketing system is extremely essential and vital. This paper aims to explore and review the regulatory hurdles on inefficiencies within agricultural marketing, highlighting common challenges faced by Indian farmers. The study was conducted in the Dibrugarh district of Assam, involving 300 rural farmers selected through a stratified random sampling method. The study aims to identify the hurdles encompassing production, economic aspects, communication, as well as hurdles related to storage, transportation and marketing. Key hurdles identified include the lack of timely access to quality inputs, unremunerative prices, difficulty in obtaining market-related information from distributors, retailers, suppliers, or input dealers, inadequate transportation facilities and the high perishability of produce. The paper also explores recommendations to strengthen the agricultural marketing sector. Suggestions include establishing local marketplaces (Mandis) in nearby areas and organizing training sessions and workshops on effective marketing strategies to empower farmers and enhance their market presence.

Keywords: Agriculture, Marketing, Hurdles

INTRODUCTION

Agricultural marketing encompasses the diverse range of activities involved in bringing farm-produced goods to consumers. It involves production, post-harvest handling, storage, transportation and distribution. Despite India being primarily an agricultural country and with over half of its population residing in rural area and in spite of being most significant area it is confronting numerous issues. Farmers often lack knowledge on negotiating fair prices for their produce, efficiently managing their goods and mitigating losses which contributes to market inefficiencies.

Market inefficiencies in agricultural marketing can disrupt the smooth functioning of the supply chain, limit farmers market access and hinder overall economic growth. These

inefficiencies often arise from regulatory obstacles that hinder effective market functioning. The efficient operation between production and marketing systems depends on one another. Both forward and backward linkages are pivotal in increasing income. Despite efforts in responding to changing consumer demands, competing in high-value produce markets, instituting reforms and policies fostering agricultural commercialization, adequate measures for farmers remain elusive. Challenges persist in integrating value chains, fostering competitive markets, managing market volatility and inefficiencies, addressing risks and vulnerabilities, post-harvest losses, and establishing a proper supply chain network, are new obstacles for marginal and small-scale farmers (Pani & Jena 2020).

Efficient agricultural markets require

transparency and access to timely information on demand, pricing and consumer preferences. However, limited market data, poor price transparency and unequal access to information create inefficiencies. Strengthening market information systems and price discovery mechanisms can address these issues. Insufficient infrastructure presents another obstacle to efficient agricultural marketing. Poor transportation systems, inadequate storage capacities and substandard market facilities contribute to delays, product spoilage and escalated expenses. These inefficiencies restrict farmers' access to market, constrain agricultural product availability for consumers, and hinder the growth of the farm sector.

India possesses sufficient technology, yet there is a crucial need for increased awareness among farmers to enhance its effective implementation. Therefore, effective preparation and timely planning are essential for agricultural marketing in a developing country like India, challenges within the farming market encompass issues like inadequate transportation and communication, poor infrastructure, limitations in law and order, and constrained access to financial resources. (Sharad, 2019). Unfortunately, smallholder farmers encounter challenges in accessing markets, leading to a failure in their effective functioning (Jari and Fraser, 2009).

However, market inefficiencies can arise at each stage of this value chain, detrimentally impacting the efficiency, profitability, and competitiveness of agricultural markets. Agriculture is consistently recognized as a significant occupation, deeply rooted in social customs, traditions, and stringent rituals associated with farming practices. In India, the agricultural sector contributes approximately 18.8 per cent of Gross Value Added (GVA) IN 2021-22 (GOI, 2022). Recent emphasis has been placed on enhancing the effectiveness of agricultural product marketing in India is often attributed to inadequate connections within marketing channels and poor marketing

infrastructure result in high and fluctuating consumer prices and only a minimal portion of the consumer rupee reaching the farmers (Jerome, 2017).

The existence of multiple distribution channels proves financially burdensome for both farmers as well as for consumers. The limited scope of government funding for farmers means that many small-scale farmers have no choice but to seek financial assistance from local moneylenders, who often impose high interest rates, exacerbating the financial strain on these farmers. The existing laws related to agricultural marketing have shortcomings and gaps, which create challenges for farmers. These loopholes contribute to the absence of a well-structured and supervised system for selling agricultural products. Farmers have to overcome many hurdles and endure hardships to receive a fair and compensation for their efforts in producing agricultural goods (Vadivelu and Kiran, 2013)

It is important to prioritize direct marketing of the agricultural produce at the present moment. Efforts should focus on enabling the complete sale of farmers' entire stock farmers are willing to sell at incentive price. Establishing storage facilities like warehouses and godowns proves beneficial, enabling farmers to retain stocks until prices stabilize. Typically, post-harvest, prices tend to be low, but exercising patience in holding stocks can lead to better returns. Brokers manipulate agricultural stock trading, exploiting farmers who lack proper market price information and understanding of these practices (Yadav, 2016). Keeping in view the present study aims to identify the hurdles faced by the farmers in Agricultural Marketing and Identify the recommend measures given by the farmers to overcome hurdles in Agricultural Marketing.

METHODOLOGY

Locale of the study and sample size

The study focuses on three villages- Chawolkhowa NC, Walkhabi, and Lengapather located in the Bogibill Gram Panchayat within the

Barbaruah development block of Dibrugarh District, Assam. A total of 300 rural farmers, actively engaged in vegetable cultivation and marketing were selected as the sample for the research.

The research followed a cross-sectional research design, utilizing stratified random sampling method to ensure representative data from different strata. To collect data, face-to-face interviews were conducted using a structured interview schedule. The research primarily explored the hurdles faced by the farmers while marketing such as production, economic, communication, storage & transportation and marketing. The study was conducted over a period spanning from August 2022 to January 2023.

The data were being collected and underwent analysis using frequency, percentage and Garrett Ranking. Subsequently, a ranking

system was developed based on the findings, providing a structured and clear assessment of the hurdles encountered within the agricultural sector. Garrett's Ranking Technique was employed to convert the sequence of hurdles faced by farmers into numerical scores. Each rank corresponds to a percentage position that indicates the proportion of farmers who rated a specific hurdle at that rank or higher. To quantify these rankings, the scale value was derived using the scale conversion table developed by (Garrett and Woodworth, 1973).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Production Hurdles experienced by the Farmers in Marketing Vegetables

Farmers face several production hurdles while cultivating vegetables, which can impact their ability to sell their crops successfully, as highlighted in the Table-1.

Table 1
Production Hurdles experienced by the farmers for Marketing

Sl. No.	Production Hurdles	n= 300		
		Average Garrett Score	Total Garrett Score	Rank
1	Lack of timely availability of quality inputs	77.62	22170	I
2	Limited understanding of advanced harvesting techniques	68.14	19511	II
3	Lack of access to post-harvest technology	61.14	17487	III
4	Unavailability of tractors for ploughing at the required time	56.92	16270	IV
5	Inadequate awareness of pest and disease control measures	52.12	14912	V
6	Insufficient irrigation facilities	48.22	13802	VI
7	Transition from subsistence farming to commercial farming	42.42	12127	VII
8	Fragmentation and reduction of land holdings	39.61	11327	VIII
9	Unavailability of seeds and planting materials at the required time	30.59	8719	IX
10	Limited scientific knowledge about vegetable cultivation	22.04	6341	X

The data in the Table-1 outlines, 'Lack of timely availability of quality inputs' ranks the highest with an average Garrett score of 77.62 that indicates timely access to quality seeds and fertilizers is essential for crucial stages of crop production, such as sowing and fertilization. Delays or poor-quality inputs disrupt these processes, leading to reduced crop yields and inefficiencies, which not only increases production costs but also discourages farm youth from viewing agriculture as

a viable livelihood option. Lohar & Madhuprasad (2023) highlights that the unavailability of timely and quality seeds and fertilizers creates significant challenges for farmers and making farming more difficult.

The average Garrett score of 68.14 for 'Limited understanding of advanced harvesting techniques' highlights its significant impact on productivity. Poor post-harvest handling results in low-quality produce, which reduced prices and a

decline in the production area's reputation over time. Enhancing harvesting and handling practices can improve the produce's appearance and shelf life, leading to higher market prices. (Dixie, 2005). 'Lack of access to post-harvest technology' with an average Garrett score of 61.14 highlight its significant impact on agricultural practices and farmer livelihoods. Post-harvest technology involves processes like protection, preservation, packaging, storage, distribution and marketing which ensure that the produce maintains its quality, extends its shelf life and reduces losses due to spoilage or damage. The absence of such technology often results in produce being poorly handled, leading to deterioration in quality and appearance. Faqeerzada *et al.*, (2018) stated that the primary goal of postharvest technology is to minimize product deterioration throughout the postharvest chain, ensuring maximum market value.

Limited scientific knowledge about vegetable cultivation received the lowest average Garrett score of 22.04. Traditional vegetable farming methods are deeply embedded in long-established

agricultural practices, influenced by local environmental factors and cultural traditions. Farmers often select seeds from the healthiest plants, demonstrating an early understanding of genetics (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024). However, many farmers lack awareness of modern agricultural practices, which hinders their ability to adopt more efficient and high-yielding methods. This absence of access to advanced technologies leads them to rely on familiar, low-cost, traditional techniques. While traditional farming practices may face fewer immediate challenges, such as easier resource management, they often don't maximize crop yields, meet market needs and address environmental issues effectively.

Economic Hurdles experienced by the Farmers in Marketing Vegetables

Economic hurdles consist of the financial challenges that farmers face in the course of their agricultural activities, which significantly affect their profitability and sustainability while marketing vegetables, as displayed in Table 2.

Table 2
Economic Hurdles experienced by the farmers for Marketing

Sl No.	Economic Hurdles	n=300		
		Average Garrett Score	Total Garrett Score	Rank
1	Lack of remunerative price	61.24	17704	I
2	Elevated labour costs	60.08	17452	II
3	High input cost	56.94	16154	III
4	Frequent price volatility	54.95	15555	IV
5	Cultivation costs exceeding profits	51.12	14816	V
6	Insufficient input subsidies	51.12	14532	VI
7	Irregular and rising prices	50.27	14341	VII
8	Market manipulation in trade	49.84	14203	VIII
9	Lengthy transaction processes	49.45	14261	IX
10	Limited access to credit for input purchases	48.23	13893	X
11	High cost of packaging material	39.62	11148	XI

The data shows that 'Lack of a remunerative price' scored the highest rank for the most critical hurdle, with an average Garrett score of 61.24. This implies that many farmers are not able to generate

adequate returns from their agricultural activities. Insufficient profit could be due to a combination of high input costs, low market prices and other financial constraints.

The second most pressing issue is the 'Elevated labour costs' for their produce, with an average Garrett value of 60.08. Producers of labour-intensive agricultural commodities, such as fruits and vegetables, face significant concerns regarding labour costs, which often constitute a substantial portion of their variable production expenses (Calvin et al.,2022). Vegetable crops heavily depend on manual labour for activities such as planting, pruning, harvesting, sorting and packaging, which often cannot be fully mechanized. The seasonal nature of agriculture exacerbates the issue, as demand for labour peaks during critical periods like planting and harvesting, driving up wages.

The average Garrett score of 56.94 for 'High input cost' scored the third highest hurdles. Farming input costs in India have risen sharply in recent years. However, neither the government's Minimum Support Price (MSP) nor the market prices offered in Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) mandis have kept up with the increasing input expenses (Kamra & Ramakumar, 2019). Farmers face substantial financial burdens in agricultural marketing due to the escalating costs of essential inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and irrigation, which are crucial for ensuring

productivity and quality. Consequently, high input costs strain profit margins, making it challenging for farmers to sustain their operations and invest in better marketing strategies.

The low Garrett value of 39.62 for 'High Cost of Packaging Material' indicates that farmers perceive this issue as less critical compared to other challenges in agricultural marketing. Packaging materials are an essential part of the post-harvest process, their relative cost is often overshadowed by more pressing expenses such as labour, transportation and input costs. The cost of packaging materials, though important, is considered a less significant hurdle in comparison to other economic challenges faced in agricultural marketing.

Communication Hurdles experienced by the Farmers in Marketing Vegetables

Communication hurdles are the challenges farmers face while communicating and interacting with various stakeholders in the agricultural sector. These barriers can hinder the flow of information, knowledge and resources that impact farmers' ability to make informed decisions, access support and improve their farming practices.

Table 3
Communication Hurdles experienced by the farmers for Marketing

Sl. No.	Communication Hurdles	n= 300		
		Average Garrett Score	Total Garrett Score	Rank
1	Difficulty in accessing market -related information from distributors, retailers, suppliers or input dealers	77.39	21837	I
2	Inadequate Distribution System	66.77	18756	II
3	Price fixation by middlemen	51.11	14325	III
4	High commission rates charged by middlemen	43.38	12227	IV
5	Middlemen interference in market transactions	43.64	12279	V
6	Inadequate physical infrastructure for communication	38.16	10826	VI
7	Weak linkages between producers and traders	34.40	10738	VII
8	Delayed cash payments from middlemen	33.62	9609	VIII

The data reveals that 'Difficulty in accessing market-related information from distributors, retailers, suppliers or input dealers' is ranked first with an average Garrett score of 77.39, indicating it as a critical challenge for farmers. The lack of access to such essential information creates inefficiencies, as farmers struggle with timing their production cycles effectively, negotiating fair prices for their produce, and selecting suitable inputs to meet market demands. This communication gap not only hampers their ability to align with market requirements but also reduces their profitability and competitiveness in the agricultural sector.

The average score of 66.77 for 'Inadequate Distribution System' highlights the challenges farmers face in getting their produce from farms to consumer markets. An effective distribution system is essential for bridging the gap between farms and consumer markets. However, poor distribution infrastructure remains a prevalent issue in many developing nations. Establishing wholesale markets near production zones can significantly reduce post-harvest losses and enhance farmers' bargaining power. Government subsidies as an initial incentive could support the development of such systems and promote better market accessibility for farmers (Nainggolan, 2016).

'Price fixation by middlemen' hurdle with an average Garrett score of 51.11 implies Intermediaries dominate the pricing, buying and

selling of agricultural products, creating an imbalance in the market. Farmers are unable to secure fair prices for their produce, while consumers cannot access products at affordable rates. Middlemen exploit the situation by purchasing agricultural products from farmers at low rates and reselling them to consumers at much higher prices. This practice not only undermines farmers' earnings but also creates inefficiencies and inequities in the agricultural market (Jeyaramya, 2022). 'Delayed cash payments from middlemen', with an average Garrett score of 33.62, is ranked as the least pressing issue among the hurdles faced by farmers. Delayed payment is less of a concern due to trust built through long-standing relationships with intermediaries, where farmers are confident that payments, although delayed, will eventually be made. Farmers may prioritize addressing more critical challenges, such as low market prices, high input costs, or inadequate infrastructure, which have a greater impact on their livelihoods.

Storage and Transporting Hurdles experienced by the Farmers in Marketing Vegetables

Farmers often encounter a range of challenges related to storage and transportation in both their agricultural practices and the marketing of their produce as presented in Table 4

Table 4
Storage and Transporting Hurdles experienced by the farmers for Marketing

Sl. No.	Storage and Transporting Hurdles	n= 300		
		Average Garrett Score	Total Garrett Score	Rank
1	Unavailable transport facilities	71.30	20106	I
2	Elevated transportation costs	66.37	18724	II
3	Inadequate and improper storage facilities	60.37	17039	III
4	Limited access to proper roads	49.23	13901	IV
5	Absence of storage facilities in cultivation areas	47.27	13298	V
6	Absence of processing industries in nearby regions	47.95	13517	VI
7	Vegetable damage during transportation	36.97	10422	VII
8	Shortage of trained personnel and equipment for processing	35.53	10024	VIII
9	Insufficient storage infrastructure	26.83	7552	IX

'Unavailable transport facilities' scored the highest rank with an average Garrett score of 71.30. The agricultural sector is primarily impacted by the lack of transport facilities, including all-weather roads, appropriate vehicles for transporting perishable goods and inadequate road links to mand is. Consequently, farmers incur high transportation costs, which consume a large portion of their earnings (Raj Roop, 2018). The 'elevated transportation costs,' with an average Garrett score of 66.37, reflect the substantial financial strain farmers endure due to high expenses involved in moving their produce from farms to markets. Despite the growing use of trucks for transportation, these costs continue to be a major burden. Consequently, farmers suffer from low profitability and reduced yields. Those situated in remote or rural areas are particularly affected, as the long distances to mand is or other market canters result in even higher transportation costs.

The hurdle 'inadequate and improper storage facilities,' with an average Garrett score of 60.37, is a significant concern for farmers, particularly in rural areas. Many farmers lack access to proper storage or warehousing infrastructure, which leads to substantial losses of their produce. Annually, 15 to 30 per cent of crops are damaged by pests like rats or adverse weather conditions, such as

rain, due to the absence of proper storage options. As a result, farmers are often forced to sell their surplus immediately after harvest at very low, unprofitable prices, as they cannot afford to hold onto the produce for longer periods. This not only reduces their income but also impacts the overall efficiency and sustainability of their farming operations (Yadav, 2017).

The 'Insufficient storage infrastructure,' with a Garrett score of 26.83, is regarded as a relatively less significant hurdle. Many farmers sell their produce immediately after harvest, minimizing the need for long-term storage. Also, traditional storage methods might suffice for their current practices, though limited, may meet their needs. For vegetable crops with a short shelf life, quick marketing take precedence over storage, further reducing the perceived urgency of this hurdle.

Marketing hurdles experienced by the Farmers in Marketing Vegetables

Marketing hurdles consist of the challenges farmers encounter when selling their agricultural produced in the market, which can impact farmers' ability to access profitable markets, obtain fair prices for their produced and sustain their agricultural businesses, as shown in the Table 5.

Table 5
Marketing Hurdles experienced by the farmers for Marketing

Sl. No.	Marketing Hurdles	n= 300		
		Average Garrett Score	Total Garrett Score	Rank
1	High Perishability of produce	84.37	23781	I
2	Lack of market-related information	72.71	20478	II
3	Insufficient marketing skills	67.98	19192	III
4	Unfair trade practices in unorganized markets	63.61	17931	IV
5	Low literacy levels	59.78	16878	V
6	Non availability of nearby market	58.31	16468	VI
7	Low production due to inadequate marketing facilities	56.11	15834	VII
8	Lack of access to wholesale markets	50.22	14144	VIII
9	Absence of regulated markets	49.85	14040	IX
10	Impact of natural calamities and irregular rainfall	47.92	13539	X
11	Underdeveloped village markets	38.50	10851	XI
12	Absence of proper local market yard infrastructure	35.99	10157	XII
13	Limited knowledge about available markets	31.55	8878	XIII
14	Forced distress sales due to social pressures	24.88	6997	XIV
15	Less media coverage	19.23	5461	XV

*Multiresponse

The data depicts that the 'High Perishability of Produce' received the highest average Garrett score of 84.37, highlighting it as the most critical challenge faced by the farmers. Vegetables, with a moisture content of 80-90 per cent, are highly perishable commodities. Even after harvest, they remain biologically active, continuing essential processes like respiration and transpiration. This inherent perishability accelerates spoilage, leading to significant post-harvest losses if not managed effectively. (Kaur & Kaur, 2024). The 'Lack of Market-Related Information,' with an average Garrett score of 72.71, highlights a significant challenge. In India, the absence of a robust market information system leaves farmers uninformed about current market trends and prevailing prices in larger markets. This knowledge gap places them at a disadvantage, forcing them to rely on traders or middlemen for pricing decisions. As a result, farmers often have no choice but to accept lower, non-remunerative prices for their produce, which undermines their earnings and bargaining power(Kumar, 2018).The lack of timely and accurate market data limits their ability to make informed decisions regarding production, marketing and pricing strategies, further exacerbating their financial vulnerabilities.

The hurdle 'Insufficient Marketing Skills,' with an average Garrett score of 67.98, highlights the difficulties faced by farmers and small-scale agribusiness owners in effectively navigating the agricultural market. Limited access to proper education leaves many farmers without the necessary expertise in crucial marketing activities. This deficiency prevents them from optimizing the value of their produce, reducing their ability to negotiate better prices or present their products attractively to buyers. Consequently, they fail to capitalize on the full potential of agricultural ventures(Jeyaramya, 2022).'Less Media Coverage,' with an average Garrett score of 19.23, is ranked as the least significant hurdle. This implies that farmers perceive the lack of media attention to their agricultural activities as a relatively minor concern as farmers may not directly associate media coverage with immediate economic benefits or solutions to their day-to-day challenges.

Recommendation offered by Farmers to Overcome Marketing Hurdles

Recommendations aimed at improving the overall performance of the agricultural marketing process, which are meant to overcome marketing hurdles of the farmers, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Recommendationto Overcome Marketing Hurdles

Sl. No.	Suggestions	n= 300	
		F	%
1	Establishing local marketplaces (Mandis) in nearby areas	300	100
2	Conducting training sessions and workshops on marketing strategies	291	97
3	Promoting the direct e-marketing of vegetables to consumers	280	93.3
4	Introducing weekly government transportation services, such as mobile van systems, for efficient distribution.	271	90.3
5	Setting up marketing information centres	255	85
6	Developing cold storage facilities for vegetables to reduce post-harvest losses.	243	81
7	Ensuring the availability of high-quality inputs to support the production of superior goods.	233	77.6
8	Development of infrastructure for marketing vegetables	230	76.6
9	Encouraging crop diversification by cultivating a variety of vegetables to cater to different market demands and reduce risks.	222	74
10	Forming Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) within panchayats	219	73
11	Promoting contract farming and direct marketing models to establish stable market linkages.	218	72.6
12	Fostering networks among farmers, marketers and industry experts for knowledge and resource sharing.	201	67
13	Facilitating access to financial assistance from banks and other institutions for vegetable cultivation.	198	66
14	Providing export facilities to expand market opportunities for vegetable producers.	143	47.6
15	Distributing electronic weighing machines for precise and reliable weight measurement.	121	40.3

*Multiresponse

Cent percent of the farmers proposed the establishment of local marketplaces (Mandis) in nearby areas. This highlights the need for easily accessible venues where farmers can directly sell their produce. Local Mandis would reduce transportation costs and time, minimize reliance on intermediaries and enable farmers to have more control over pricing. These factors could enhance profitability for farmers and ensure consumers receive fresher produce. 97 per cent of the farmers recommended conducting training sessions and workshops focused on marketing strategies. These initiatives would equip farmers with essential knowledge about market demands, pricing strategies and consumer preferences. Such workshops could also foster connections between farmers, buyers and suppliers, broadening their market reach and improving decision-making regarding crop selection and timing for sales.

93.3 per cent of the farmers recommended promoting the direct e-marketing of vegetables to consumers as by promoting e-marketing, farmers could potentially reduce their dependency on intermediaries, leading to more equitable pricing and improving overall market access. Lastly, only 43.3 per cent of farmers recommended the distribution of electronic weighing machines for precise and reliable weight measurement. This implies that many farmers continue to rely on traditional weighing methods due to their long-standing familiarity and practicality, as these methods currently meet their operational needs effectively.

CONCLUSION

Agricultural marketing in India is plagued by hurdles that limit its growth. Small scale farmers are mostly isolated from the benefit of agricultural produce, therefore it is important for collective action involving various stakeholders in the

agricultural sector to develop innovative strategies that can address the hurdles faced by farmers in marketing their produce. The key hurdles identified include the lack of timely access to quality inputs, unremunerative prices, difficulty in obtaining market-related information from distributors, retailers, suppliers, or input dealers, inadequate transportation facilities and the high perishability of produce. Thus, navigating regulatory hurdles is crucial for addressing market inefficiencies in agricultural marketing. Adopting innovative strategies and solutions is vital to strengthen the system and help farmers benefit from their hard work. Several measures are necessary to reform agricultural marketing for a fair deal for the farming community which are recommended as follows:

- To improve the physical structures and systems supporting agricultural activities, such as enhancing roads, irrigation systems and other essential facilities crucial for farming.
- Formation of mandi at nearby place to facilitates farmers' access to a local market for their produce.
- Training and workshop on marketing aspects focused on enhancing farmers understanding in marketing strategies, enabling them to better promote and sell their agricultural products in the market.
- Provision of cold storage ensure the preservation of their perishable produce for extended periods, thereby reducing post-harvest losses.
- Provides farmers with essential and up-to-date information regarding market trends and conditions.
- Making available convenient and reliable means of transportation for farmers to transport their produce to various markets or storage facilities

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