

## Executive Summary of Webinar

### “The Impact of COVID 19 on Irrigated Agriculture and Road ahead”

The webinar organized by the Agrovision Foundation at 10.30 am on May 15, 2020, was well attended by senior representatives of both the public and the private sectors. Setting the tone for the discussion, Moderator **Ms. Vibha Bhatia of MM Activ SciTech Communications** explained idea of the webinar on ‘**The impact of COVID 19 on Irrigated Agriculture**’

The webinar has been organized to provide a perspective on the situation, understand current issues of Irrigation Sector and the way forward.

Ms. Bhatia gave a brief introduction of all the eminent participants invited for the webinar

Er A B Pandya, Secretary General, The International Commission on irrigation and Drainage (ICID),

Mr Avinash Surve Exe. Dir., Vidarbha Irrigation Development Corporation, VIDC

Mr Gajendra Verma, Director-General Irrigation Association of India

Mr Kaushal Jaiswal, Managing Director, Rivulis Irrigation India

Mr B P Chavan, CEO, Business Development, Kothari Agri tech Pvt Ltd

Ms Vibha Bhatia introduced

Dr C D Mayee, Chairman, Agrovision Advisory Council

Mr Ravi Boratkar, President Agrovision Foundation,  
Publisher, Agro Spectrum and NuFFoodDs Spectrum

Dr C D Mayee in his brief opening speech welcomes the experts and the attendees. Dr Mayee said that the irrigation is the most important pillar of ‘Green Revolution’ Since Dr Mayee has closely worked with the sector in different capacity e.g. VC, VNMAU, Parbhani, Director, CICR, Nagpur, Chairman ASRB, New Delhi has been aware about developments and requirements in irrigation sector. He also brought to the notice of the experts that there is a huge agriculture land under rain fed area and that need to bring under irrigation. Govt of India knowing the importance of irrigation sector has announcing many schemes. Dr Mayee also mentioned that Micro Irrigation is more beneficial for farmers as it irrigates more area in less water.

Dr Mayee at the end of his speech, appealed the experts to make recommendation to the Govt.

**The impact of COVID 19 on Irrigated Agriculture** was discussed in the webinar. The experts' advices and points were noted

1. Irrigated agriculture is the only eminent solution for the agriculture, however the network needs to upgrade
2. Harvesting season affected due to non-availability of manpower/labour and other restrictions due to COVID
3. Kharif sowing also affected due to late Rabi harvest
4. We need to design Sops for the sudden crises like Corona
5. Entire agri operations need to manage in a systematic way
6. Migrating labours are skilled workers, can be used to improve irrigation network systems. Using them to create water storage systems to utilise water later through drip irrigation
7. Micro Irrigation is the only answer for meeting food requirements up to 2050
8. Only 22% land out of 63 M L Ha is under Micro Irrigation in last 30-35 years
9. Govt. is taking efforts to promote Micro Irrigation and bring max agri land under the same. However instead of 100% dependency on Govt, industry should also put a foot forward.
10. Power is a major hurdle in adapting Micro Irrigation
11. Giving free farm pumps and solar pumps free and farm ponds with a condition to adapt Micro Irrigation for entire farm, could help to promote Micro Irrigation
12. To increase production and farmers' income Govt. has to convince farmers for Crop diversification.
13. Rice requires more labour for transportation and also requires more water, Corn and soybean will be good alternatives as it requires less water and less labours.
14. Make loan systems simple and affordable. Loan with subsidy should be available on demand
15. Hydroponics can be used in urban areas. Not useful for staple food, Good for leafy veg. and high end crops.
16. Water Resource Deptt is working on integration of rivers and canal to make powerful irrigation for farmers. They are also working on the policies for the same.
17. In COVID situation remote monitoring mechanisation will work
18. Shift of labours will bring more technologies in the farm. Remote Technologies like drone will be brought by the farmers, however there would be good potential for local technologies in response to Hon'ble PM's announcement Local to Global
19. To stop or minimise wastage of water in irrigation, we need to have proper planning on how much to irrigate, when to irrigate. A technology has been developed focussing remote sensing, Hyper local weather forecast and KC table. The app is available on mobile
20. Piped irrigation Network (PIN) is better alternative with the advantages like Improvement in conveyance efficiency and Timely delivery of water is possible

21. Advantages of PIN are not possible unless Agri Universities, /Dept. and water resource will work jointly on the field.
22. MSP is the reason why farmers are not interested in farming and do not want their next generation in farming
23. Migrating people even work in farms will not get the income from farm job as compared to his city income.
24. Focus on making farming beneficial/affordable to farmer is a must
25. Young generation of farmers if form a water reserve organisation, can produce well graded produce, supply chain of these produce.
26. Monitoring market price by bringing required quantity (not entire production) produce will help to keep rates/prices remain stable. In Teleangana Govt. has instructed farmers to produce as per selected area, farmers from the region get accepted min prices for the particular produce. Even in Israel to maintain prices only required quantity is brought to the market. Removal of middle man will help getting proper price for the produce.

Er. A B Pandya, in his sum up speech said that we should rather look at agriculture as economic/ industrial activity and not as welfare activity; our thought towards Agriculture has to be changed. When you start value your inputs, you get better value for your outputs. Then the ideas for better farming like bringing in new technologies, Micro Irrigation, Coop Farming will come in COVID should be treated as an opportunity to start thinking this way and improve agriculture, water management for future

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