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A case study of identifying issues, constraints and opportunities of COVID-19 pandemic on vegetable supply chains in Sri Lanka

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The recent COVID-19 pandemic resulted from the emergence of a disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome Corona Virus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The Vegetable Supply Chains (VSC) have been exposed to unpredicted risks which are followed by the COVID-19 pandemic. On 22nd, March, 2020 the Government of Sri Lanka imposed complete lockdown throughout the island as a measure to control the disease by restricting human mobility. This created a significant impact on VSC by interrupting country-wide distribution of vegetables. During the 52 day-long period with curfew and travel restrictions, closure of markets and hindrances to regional and international food trade and distribution increased vulnerability of fragile VSCs. Due to rising issues of the traditional vegetable supply chain, an immediate alternative strategy was required to be put in place. Objective of this study is to collate relevant information from stakeholders to identify the issues cropped up under pandemic situation and to suggest alternative strategies to overcome the impact on VSCs. Snowball technique was adopted to collect necessary information. Semi structured interviews were conducted with the selected samples. In addition, information was gathered through a literature survey. This study was conducted from 22nd March 2020 to 14th May 2020 and the results indicate the need to adopt novel strategies to reduce the COVID-19 impact on VSCs in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Agricultural Supply Chain, Logistics, Policy, Vegetable Supply Chain