e-NAM: Empowering Farmers Through Digital Markets

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ABSTRACT

The electronic National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) is a pioneering initiative aimed at integrating agricultural markets across India through a digital platform. Despite its potential to enhance price realization and market access for farmers, the platform faces challenges in terms of infrastructure, farmer participation, and digital literacy. This article provides an overview of e-NAM's implementation status, key benefits to stakeholders, and strategies to overcome adoption barriers. By addressing these challenges, e-NAM can become a powerful tool for improving farmer incomes and creating a more efficient agricultural marketing system.

INTRODUCTION

India's journey from food scarcity to self-sufficiency is remarkable, with food grain production rising from 51 million tonnes in 1950–51 to 329.69 million tonnes in 2022–23 (PIB, 2023). However, this growth has not always translated into better incomes for farmers, who continue to receive only a small share of the consumer's rupee due to inefficiencies in agricultural marketing. Issues such as fragmented markets, inadequate infrastructure, limited storage, and restricted access to competitive buyers have long

hindered price realization (Kumar and Pant, 2020).

To address these challenges, the Model Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) Act, 2003 encouraged states to liberalize markets and promote private participation. Karnataka led the way by introducing e-tendering and launching the Unified Market Platform (UMP) in 2014 through Rashtriya e-Market Services (ReMS), a joint venture with National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX). Building on this success, the Government of India launched the **electronic National Agriculture Market (e-NAM)** on April 14, 2016 to promote uniformity and real time price discovery in agriculture marketing.

What is e-NAM?

The **electronic National Agriculture Market (e-NAM)** is a pan-India online trading platform designed to connect farmers, traders, and buyers across the country. Inspired by Karnataka's successful UMP, e-NAM brings together APMC-regulated mandis, sub-market yards, private markets, and even unregulated marketplaces into one integrated digital network. It allows farmers to sell their produce beyond their local markets and access better prices through transparent, competitive online bidding. The initiative is implemented by the Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

Process flow in e-NAM Utility system

Figure 1. e-NAM at a glance (*Source:* www.enam.gov.in)

Status of e-NAM Implementation (as of 30th June, 2025)

✓ *APMC Coverage*

The number of APMCs integrated with the e-NAM platform increased from 1,260 in June 2022 to 1,522 in June 2025, marking a 20.79% growth. Despite this progress, only about 22% of the total regulated markets across India have been linked with e-NAM so far.

✓ *Trader Registration and Licensing*

The number of registered traders rose from 2.35 lakh in 2022 to 2.67 lakh in 2025, showing a 13.62% increase. The issuance of unified licenses which allow traders to operate across mandis, jumped significantly from 1.18 lakh to 1.75 lakh during the same period, registering a 48.31% growth. Notably, around 70% of traders on the platform hold unified licenses, improving ease of participation in multiple markets.

✓ *Farmer Participation*

Till June 2025, around 17.9 million farmers were registered on the e-NAM platform, compared to17.7 million in 2022, reflecting a marginal growth of 1.13%. Only 15% of India's total cultivators have actively participated in e-NAM transactions, indicating a significant scope for expansion and outreach.

Benefits of e-NAM for Different Stakeholders

Table 1. Key Benefits of the e-NAM Platform for Farmers and Traders Across Functional Features

Feature	*Benefits to Farmers*	*Benefits to Traders*
Online trading platform	Wider access to markets beyond local mandis	Access to multiple mandis from a single location
Real-time price discovery	Transparent prices and better bargaining power	Competitive bidding helps procure quality produce at market-driven rates
Unified trading license	_	Enables trading in multiple APMCs across states

Quality assaying system	Ensures fair pricing based on grade	Builds trust in quality, helps in accurate pricing
Digital payments	Quick and secure payments directly to bank accounts	Reduced cash handling and improved financial transparency
Logistics and warehouse integration	Facilitates storage and inter-mandi movement	Eases bulk procurement and smooth delivery
Mobile app and SMS alerts	Market information at fingertips, improves decision-making	Updates on bids, prices, and logistics in real time

Quality Control Laboratory at Mandis under e-NAM

A vital element of e-NAM is the implementation of quality assessment systems, which ensure the quality of goods and facilitate informed bidding by purchasers. The evaluation of agricultural products—including food grains, oilseeds, fruits, vegetables, spices, and allied items—at the market level is crucial for improving marketability and allowing farmers to obtain prices that reflect the quality of their produce. To support this, the Directorate of Marketing and Inspection (DMI) has established tradable criteria for agricultural commodities, which serve as the basis for trading under e-NAM. DMI continues to provide technical assistance to enable quality assessment of approved commodities on the platform (Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, 2025).

As of mid-2025, over 1,400 APMCs integrated with e-NAM have been equipped or are being equipped with Quality Control Laboratories, following DMI's model guidelines. These labs conduct assaying, grading, and testing, which play a crucial role in building buyer confidence and ensuring transparent, quality-based price discovery across e-NAM mandis.

Challenges in e-NAM Implementation

Implementation of e-NAM throughout the nation is very much crucial for different stakeholders of agriculture as it may lead to better income for the farmers, reduced market charges transparency in marketing process etc. However, e-NAM Implementation faces various challenges like:

- Although 17.9 million farmers are registered, only around 15% actively trade on the platform.
- Limited digital literacy prevents many farmers from using smartphones and navigating the e-NAM app.
- Lack of awareness and trust leads farmers to prefer traditional mandi systems over online trading.
- Some commission agents and local traders resist e-NAM due to fear of losing commissions and influence.
- Many mandis still lack essential infrastructure like assaying labs, grading units, and reliable internet.
- Uneven integration across states means only about 21% of regulated markets are linked to e-NAM, reducing its reach.

To fully realize the potential of e-NAM, key implementation gaps must be addressed. Strengthening mandi infrastructure such as internet access, quality assaying labs, and auction platforms is vital for smooth digital operations. Equally important is enhancing farmer awareness and digital literacy through training and outreach. Promoting inter-state trading by harmonizing APMC rules and quality standards can widen market access. Targeted incentives like subsidized logistics and free assaying services can boost participation, especially among smallholders. Integrating advanced tools like AI-based price forecasts and multilingual app support can further improve usability.

e-NAM has laid a strong foundation for a transparent and unified agricultural marketplace, reducing reliance on middlemen

and enabling better price discovery. However, scaling its impact requires inclusive policies, stronger infrastructure, and a focus on farmer trust and capacity-building. With continued efforts, e-NAM can evolve into a transformative tool for boosting farmer incomes and ensuring sustainable growth in Indian agriculture.

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