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More emphasis on digitisation, automation needed in logistics policy: Jaideep Ghosh

Mumbai: The government is working on a National **Logistics Policy** even as the sector has undergone rapid changes, due to the Covid19 pandemic. The pandemic brought forth new challenges and opportunities for the

sector and brought forth new standards and requirements.

The law will be replacing the existing multimodal transportation of goods act and aims to reduce high logistics costs with an emphasis on digitization and streamlining of processes.

The government is also working on creating digital platforms and mobiles apps for logistics such as warehouse information tracking and trading yard (WITTY) for mapping of warehouses.

Jaideep Ghosh, Chief Operating Officer of law

firm Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co, spoke to ET about the policy.

Does the national logistics policy need to be reworked in the new post-COVID normal?

Restrictions imposed, especially duringN lockdown, revealed certain gaps in India's

supply chain that may need refinements in the proposed policy. Production and consumption zones are connected through an intricate multi state, multi modal network; lockdown and containment zones in any segment impacts the entire supply chain.

If so, what should be the new/changed stress areas in the policy?

The proposed policy includes **automation** and **digitisation** among priorities. These need to be further strengthened given accelerated technology adoption trends. Further, cold storage policy needs to be modified in view of the vaccine supply chain which will be needed soon. Warehousing policy may need to be tweaked due to various anticipated developments from increase in agro-produce to heightened online shopping. Green logistics will need to be prioritised.

While the proposed policy has all these ingredients, the implementation direction and adoption by industry participants is critical to meet the desired benefits.

Do the aims of reducing logistics costs, doubling employment and promoting MSMEs seem feasible in these times of an economic recession?

This economic slowdown needs to be viewed differently, given its worldwide. Certain industries, such as ecommerce, have done exceedingly well. Further, the growth trajectory is encouraging. The policy objectives look achievable. Implementation is important, as always.

What is the outlook for India's supply chain and logistics industry?

There will be a slowdown in the near term

with many industries on a path of recovery.

But sector such as e-commerce, cold storage are shining. Overall prospects are bright over a three-year period.