

## Event Brief: New Challenges in Food Supply & Farm Procurement

The panel discussion themed, “New Challenges in Food Supply & Farm Procurement” forayed into the current agricultural policies, regulations, price trends and the conditions of the farmers. The discussion provided an insight into the plight of farmers and the impact of government-controlled or market-dependent agricultural policies and practices. The following were the major issues drawn out in the discussion:

- (a) The route to market from the farm should be outlined as majority of the losses seep through the supply chain. Emphasis on shorter value chains would help farmers reduce logistics cost and post-harvest losses. This would also ensure flow of income uninterruptedly.
- (b) The government should have an inclusive farm advisory board that ensures an integrated and collaborative approach to easing the pressure points at the farms. This will help in reducing the gap between the price of the products and the price realisation of the produce by the farmers.
- (c) The recent development with regards to policy changes in agriculture by the government of Telangana has been focused on making agriculture market-driven and incentivising farmers through “RythuBandhu”. The state of the farmers might be affected owing to the current situation of financial unrest among the farming community, created by the prices of the rabi crops this year. The crop sowing calendar should be planned according to trends that national and international markets would follow post the pandemic.
- (d) The government may not have done a great job trying to address food security for those in need. The channels of distribution for food stored in the FCI go-downs could have been strategically used in feeding the migrant labourers.
- (e) The issues need to be addressed in a more farmer-centric approach, and it should be a joint effort between private players, government and scientists.
- (f) The models should envisage an enhanced supply-demand feature that ensures continuous flow of income to the farming families along with a plan including assistance on the methods of cropping, advice on the types of the crops to be grown, nutritional benefits, market linkages and reduced expenses.
- (g) The government needs to bring about inclusive farming and accommodate migrants with better opportunities in the rural areas itself.
- (h) Major challenges the government should focus on addressing immediately are:
  - a. Building infrastructure for a market-oriented approach.
  - b. Revising the APMC (Agricultural Produce Market Committee) Act.
  - c. Strengthening the current value chains.
  - d. Improving the market linkages at the ground level.
  - e. Devising better buying processes at the farm level.
  - f. Maximising gains to the stakeholders at both ends of the supply chain.

To conclude, it is very important to put the farmer at the centre stage to bring about any policy change for farming. It is equally empowering to have their voices heard and shared during meetings. This will ensure that farming policies look at all factors influencing farm income.