



## Agri Supply Chain

Roundtable conducted on Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 04:15 p.m-06:15 p.m. IST

**Host:** Krushak Mitra **Country:** India

**No of Attendees:** 67

**No of Countries:** 4

### Moderators :

1. Dev Bhattacharya - CEO ( New Ventures) Aditya Birla Group & Director, Krushak Mitra Agro Ltd,Nashik
2. Karon Shaiva - Chief Impact Officer & MD, Idobro Impact Solutions

### Experts:

1. Dr. Sudhir Kumar Goel - Retd Additional Chief Secretary, Govt of Maharashtra, Mumbai,
2. Dr. V.Tagat - Retd CGM, NABARD, Bangalore
3. Mr. Yogesh Thorat - Founder & CEO Maharashtra Federation of FPOs (Maha FPC)
4. Mr. Ved Arya - Ashoka Fellow & Founder and Emeritus Chairman NGO SRIJAN, New Delhi
5. Mr. Sachin Sharma - ITC
6. Dr. Sapna Poti - Director, Office of Principal Scientific Advisor to GoI
7. Suhas Joshi - Head CSR, Bayer, India
8. Dr. D.V.Deshpande - Professor of Agribusiness Management at Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management (VAMNICOM).
9. Prashanth Patil - Co-Founder & MD, MeraKisan
10. Ravish Chavan - CEO of Farm Link

### Summary:

The Roundtables at RISE World Summit are the core activity to encourage collaboration around the challenges the world faces. Subject matter experts enable breakthrough interactions to identify outcomes for post-event joint efforts and alliances, knowledge assets, and more for collective impact. More information on RISE Summit can be found at <https://risesummit.in/>

India is a world leader in the production of many agricultural commodities from milk to rice and wheat, besides fruits and vegetables. Agriculture and its allied activities could be sought after as business opportunities for a diverse set of actors, from subsistence farmers to high technology agro - holdings, and from biotech boutiques and small and medium-sized enterprises to multinational corporations.

According to studies, it is also evident that most of the problems in the agricultural sector can be solved by small-ticket investments and business models. Financial services, warehousing facilities, transportation, technology, IT, online retail, home deliveries, and supply and distribution business are some of the partnerships to be explored to strengthen the Agri-Supply Chain and for entrants to start a viable business for the welfare of farmers and development of the agriculture sector.

### Introduction:

**Ms. Karon** started the session by presenting the topic followed by the introduction of all the experts, and invited Mr. Dev Bhattacharya Director, Kushal Mitra Agro Ltd, Nashik & CEO ( New Ventures) Aditya Birla Group.

**Mr. Dev Bhattacharya** initiated the talk by sharing some great insights on how farmers can achieve great income by minimizing production costs and enabling maximum profits. He was interested in farmer distress, breakage in the supply chain affecting the quality of vegetables/ fruit reaching the dining table, variability, and uncertainty of income of the farming community, leading to 80% of farmers being marginal farmers in the country. He then requested the experts at the Round Table to share their perspective and efforts, challenges, and opportunities they see with areas they need to focus on.

### Challenges:

**Dr. Sudhir Kumar Goel** joined the talk by explaining how complex the agricultural scenario is in India He said that although agriculture is a major occupation in India as a sector it is unorganized and not institutionalized to its full potential. He talked of the main challenge which is to bring in farmers and consumers together in a value chain that would be possible by way of suggestions made.



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Dr.Sudhir Kumar. Goel -Retd Additional Chief Secretary,  
Govt of Maharashtra  
Agri Supply Chain  
at RISE World Summit 2021

**Mr. Ved Arya** mentioned perishability, price discovery, and cost of capital issues and linked them to a huge gap between FPO & market or NGOs/ government & marketing. He mentioned the lack of entrepreneurs at the last mile at the village level, affecting quality problems when produce reaches our dinner table. **Prashanth Patil** from Mera Kisan, shared that the four major challenges in the supply chain for organic produce faced are quality, fulfillment, price, and traceability.

**Mr. Yogesh Thorat** founder of MAHAFPC mentioned two issues: lack of post-harvest infrastructure and service providers for vendor

audit and evaluation. He emphasized the need to have market integration of the players from a technological perspective, both horizontal and vertical integration, of all the value chain

stakeholders, with backward linkages through artificial intelligence, blockchain technologies to process the user database.

**Mr. Ashok Methil** stated that farmers knew how to produce; the challenge was how to market the produce. Marginal farmers need support and nurturing to be able to grow well and so need dedicated incubation agencies, and corporate - NGO partnership.

**Mr. Sanjay Joshi**, working at Krushak Pvt Ltd spoke of a lack of framework or strong promoters and the need for equity capital as well as intellectual capital integration with FPOs to sustain themselves.

**Dr. Sapna Poti** from the principal scientific advisor's office, informed about the difficulty in reaching out to the farmers to provide them with agriculture technologies as demos and a proof of concept, so that youth involved are motivated to engage in the social development space.

**Mr. Sachin Sharma** talked about the focus that needed to be on demand-driven agriculture.

### Capabilities & Solutions:

**Mr. Dev Bhattacharya** said work needs to be done in stabilizing the whole value chain to make it more predictable, remunerative, and meaningful through collaborations, and provide linkages to the market.

**Dr. Sudhir Kumar Goel** thought that the agricultural sector needs to be revolutionized to sustain the gaps, for this he gave Amul as an example in the dairy sector. He said we have seen good outcomes of Amul in decades down the lane. So, the agricultural sector will take time to reform. He suggested that it was necessary to create institutional structures for every horizontal to integrate all verticals into a value chain. He felt it done by connecting every horizontally active farmer at the national/ local/ regional or state level, citing Mr. Yogesh's work and some digital Public-Private Partnership platforms in Maharashtra, like Ecozone. He mentioned there was a need for some kind of investment promotion board, when all stakeholders together work around a community like in other countries, and a need for service providers giving inputs for any one of these verticals.

**Mr. Ved Arya** also spoke as a member of the Technical Group on the social stock exchange about social venture funds and zero-interest loans available to small and marginal farmers during convert time to bring in capital. He stressed the need for incubators and one district one product (ODOP) concept to support marketing, branding, and finance, etc. He mentioned his Buddha fellowship program for graduates and the requirement of a policy to support and finance incubators so developers can pursue entrepreneurship to develop a proof of concept, grow with low cost of capital, and assistance in



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Mr. Ashok Methil - MIT WPU - Adjunct Professor  
Agri Supply Chain  
at RISE World Summit 2021

the agricultural sector. He emphasized the need to build an ecosystem that involves women in the villages who were producers/ farmers and the collectors, and entrepreneurs to take the produce to the market to discover better prices.

**Mr. Prashanth Patil** elaborated on a global concept, ICS, an integrated control system, where the farmer can take the individual certification or companies like corporations, form an ICS with minimum 25 farmers and maximum 500 farmers to make it easier to control the system as well as help traceability. Hand holding to all these farmers in terms of training organic practices and helping in terms of engaging with the organic inputs, and majorly solving pre & post-harvest challenges through regular monitoring by ICS's field officers was necessary. He quoted an example of more than 1000 plus millets organic farmers who received help for the setting of a processing unit from the government of Canada and major buyers that were buying directly from them. He spoke of their digital platform; where all the stakeholders of the entire supply chain from farmers, processors, traders, government agencies, institutions laboratories, as well as farm equipment manufacturers, are brought on a single platform as a market place too, where the farmers can sell. He said to solve the supply chain issues ICS has been a very good concept

to roll out. Simplifying things is important in understanding building strong clarity in the supply chain.

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Mr. Yogesh Thorat - Founder & CEO Maharashtra Federation of FPOs Agri Supply Chain at RISE World Summit 2021

**Mr. Yogesh Thorat** emphasized two solutions: one to have collection aggregation with a very robust institutional framework of farmers with small landholding and second, to create more institutional setups including private players. Farmers should be given ownership and the development of the business ecosystem, so farmers and consumers can be linked. Thirdly, he mentioned the responsibility of all the stakeholders to make the partnerships and be positive for bringing the reforms. Apart from that, he said there was a dire need for investment from corporates, and

the government to lead the sector, and bring prosperity for the farmers.

**Dr. Dilip V Deshpande** from Pune spoke of Mr Bodke who, under the Nabard scheme, created the Abhinav farmers club as a technology platform for bringing farmers together and has 1.5 lakh farmers linked up in the entire supply chain. He said farmers are generally production-oriented and not customer-oriented, so we need to go fork to farm. A consumer has to register through their app, place an order, pay in advance, and the product will be delivered at a point near home as scheduled. He quoted the NCDS platform in agricultural marketing where agriculture is combined with warehouse development and regulatory authority, where there are accredited good quality godowns, which are very crucial in the entire supply chain. On quality inspection, institutional networks should be lined up and connected with banks who can lend against stock so farmers are not under stress to sell at a low price, which is what generally happens at the time of harvest. 8000 such institutions are operational yet need more support.

**Mr. Ravish Chavan**, Chairman CEO of farm link talked about his tech-enabled supply chain solutions company who works with farmers on the ground and creates market linkages at the front end. Three characters at the firm level, the farmers, the consumers, and intermediaries. He shared that the aim of the farmer is ultimate to make more money so the company analyzes four ways to help 1. cut the cost 2. implement the yield on the farm 3. improve quality 4. sell at a higher price; while the consumer wants more value. Apart from streamlining the supply chain and creating a market, his company helps farmers with capacity building, including better sorting and grading, soil testing, advice on nutrients, the spacing between the plants, post-harvesting, right vendor sales, market linkage, focus future trends in the market via extension team working with farmers. He said it's important for farmers to understand what consumers want in terms of value addition or pricing. He has a learning center, a small library which has agri books that the farmers can go through. He shared the experience that his honest work with farmers and vice versa was spread by word of mouth and brought results.

**Mr. Suhas Joshi** then made two points,

1. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for the future of agriculture - a mix of biological controls and some chemicals used for crop production without compromising quality as a preferred option rather than pure organic/chemical control agriculture and
2. To make farmer producer organizations sustainable by adopting integrated cropping and marketing i.e. crop production, according to the market demand.

**Dr. Sapna Poti** spoke about the agriculture service by the Ministry of Agriculture's open-source digital platform.

**Mr. Sachin Sharma** spoke about designing programs around it like changing cropping patterns in the production of a new variety aligned to the market requirements, the point being that a revolution approach would make a difference. He also elaborated on connecting to the right value chains approach by creating farmer collectives groups and strengthening the institution rather than finding what & where to grow. He said trust and transparency were key to a successful organization. He also spoke of the use of digital technology in agriculture such as for quality assessment, cropping patterns, crop diagnostics that were using satellite imagery.

### **Collaborations and Way forward:**

In closing remarks, **Mr. Dev Bhattacharya** made the following points:

1. Collective format for marginal farmers is the only way
2. Issue of horizontal integration.
3. To work backward from the market linkages - demand-driven agriculture
4. Entrepreneurship and incubation
5. Post-harvest processing

**Mr. Dev Bhattacharya** concluded the session by a remark on providing a platform of solutions rather than point solutions to the farmers.



**Note:**

*For a more detailed understanding of the session outcomes, kindly access a complete recording at <https://youtube.com/channel/UC2UI5Nf1yN0E5hifaSVQpEw>*

*A LinkedIn group has been created by RISE World Summit Team to foster collaboration between participants. <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12494977>*

*More information on RISE Summit can be found at <https://risesummit.in>*