

Food Systems Symposium

Innovations in agri-food value chain

India's food production increased nearly five folds in 50 years between 1970 and 2020; this resulted in an increase in per capita daily food production from 0.91 Kg in early 1970s to 1.82 Kg around 2020. India has largely achieved self-sufficiency and has transformed itself from a 'ship-to-mouth' status to an exporter. This is a laudable achievement, however, many other goals remained unfulfilled, and the success also brought many challenges and problems. Despite progress in recent decades from a low-income to a middle-income country, India faces challenges in ensuring equitable livelihoods and environmental sustainability, particularly with respect to its food system. Malnutrition challenges persist, including co-existing triple burden of undernutrition, overweight/obesity, and micronutrient deficiencies.

Achieving food and nutrition security is a key priority in India. One of the key routes to achieve a resilient and improved food system requires a reorientation of relevant policies. While India has separate policies on agriculture, food security, and nutrition, a food systems approach requires a more integrated attention to implement planned strategies. The need to systematically tackle food issues is increasingly recognised. Synergies and trade-offs across sectors such as livelihoods, environment, and health are not trivial, and working in silos risks progress in one area, driving setbacks in others. For India, food systems transformation is needed to help overcome these longstanding problems. The agenda for food systems transformation in India is understandably large and complex, with many diverse stakeholders involved. Not only is sustained progress at state and local levels warranted but also consensus on the way forward is critically important.

The world has witnessed the transformative power of modern large-scale high-tech innovations, such as mobile technology and the widespread adoption of the internet, with billions of individuals reached. Rapid increases in connectivity (mobile network and Internet of Things) have led to exponential growth in data and information. Increasing availability, access, and use of data will help to level the playing field among food system actors. Harnessing information and technology would go a long way to advance nutritional outcomes.

For the past 20 years Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) programmes have delivered impact locally and inspired policy for national and global action. The focus of all our programmes is on transforming food systems so that they deliver better diets for everyone. In India, GAIN has over the years conjoined governments, policymakers, and the industry to make nutritious food more accessible, available, and affordable via implementing programmes across the country at scale.

The food systems symposium would be an opportunity to have profound deliberations on rising nutrition insecurity and environmental challenges and a call for collective action on food system approach towards improving our nutrition indicators, with perspectives from government and industry. It would bring together personnel from diverse organisations in the health, nutrition, agriculture, climate action, gender, and sustainability sectors to deliberate a holistic approach to the future.

The discussions will draw sharp focus on three pillars for accelerating food system change in the South Asia region i.e., **inclusivity** supported by technology and innovation; **one vision** of the public and private sector partners spelling success for partnerships; and our long-term **commitment** for ensuring a holistic transformation of food systems for all.

Date and time: 22 February 2023; 0930 - 1600

Venue: FICCI Auditorium