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Food distribution requires attention not FS bill: Dr Balasubramanian

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Q What is your opinion on food security bill that is said to critical for reaching out to deprived sections and ensuring food for all? ? What will be its impact on agriculture system?

The very idea of this populist measure looks gloomy. One can figure out well that the government is desperately trying to treat for the superficial symptoms while conveniently forgetting to stem the rot lying within. The food is plenty in this country and only its distribution is afflicted by bureaucracy. The government cannot find fault with the bureaucracy (as the bureaucracy is government by itself) and hence has decided to cover up the symptoms. The lack of coordination between the state and the federal governments on this score adds insult to the injury.

As far as impact on the agricultural system is concerned, a Pakistani woman economist has aptly said that the agricultural prices are kept low by the successive governments only to provide a cheap labour force to the industry. Without the right price, why farmers should go in for producing more and more of it.

Q How do you think Indian biotechnology company will play a part in implementation of FSB? How many food crops which came to fruition through biotech research have been permitted by this government?

As long as our food policy is going to be decided only by the external forces and not by the pressing needs of the masses, the Indian biotech industry whose hands remain tied cannot deliver the goods.

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Q Can Indian agriculture biotechnology companies/industry play a part in making its implementation a success?

I repeat the quote by the Pakistani scientist as an answer for this query. Agriculture has never received its due share from the successive governments. Bioscientific methods have a lot to contribute in terms of yield and quality (The best example is Bt cotton) only when the vested interests like Green Forces are going to be kept away.