

Foreword

The Indian Institute of Science is one of India's oldest research institutions. In commemorating a century of existence a program of Centenary Lectures was initiated in 2008. These lectures were intended to bring scientists of the highest accomplishment to the Institute to inform and inspire a new generation of researchers. For Indians who have lived through the decades of the 1960s and 1970s two images are etched in memory. The first is the spectre of food shortages and rationing, which impacted almost all sections of the population. The second is the remarkable transformation that took place in the 1970s, when the Green Revolution took root, quickly consigning the era of large scale food imports to the realm of history. Prof. M.S. Swaminathan is one of the acknowledged architects of this agricultural revolution; a transformation that required the happy confluence of political will, administrative efficiency, scientific input and the enthusiastic acceptance by farmers of new crop varieties. Over three decades later India stands on the threshold of a new and looming crisis in agriculture which Prof. Swaminathan articulates so clearly: "We should look upon agriculture not just as a food-producing machine for the urban population, but as the major source of skilled and remunerative employment and the backbone of the rural livelihood system". This volume is intended to focus attention on these important issues, conveying a sense of urgency on the need to catalyze a second transformation in Indian agriculture in this new century.

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