**WELCOME SPEECH**

**Online Seminar - IMPACT OF COVID ON FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN**

Thursday, July 2, 2020 from 4.00 p.m. to 5.30pm.

It is my pleasure to extend a hearty welcome to each one of you.

COVID 19 pandemic forced a national lockdown in a country since March 24, 2020 as a result there was massive disruption to the food supply chain. Food factories were closed, crops did not move from farms to factories to food outlets. Retail prices of essential commodities spiked in April, but from May lockdown has been eased for agriculture and food processing. Food Supplies are now normalising, however there is massive destruction of demand because of lockdown.

While the pan India lockdown continues to create challenges in the availability of labour and transport in the agricultural sector, the Central and the State governments have taken various measures to fight the pandemic. But the food supply chain for vegetables, fruits and other daily essentials is facing one of the worst setbacks. Industries calibrated to supply consumers with necessities are finding it difficult to cope with the sudden surge in demand.

In this background, IMC and Business Standard are jointly organising on Online Seminar on Impact of Covid on Indian Food Supply Chain.

In my opinion reforms recently initiated by the government will provide an impetus for the agriculture sector while in the long run it will ensure India’s food security and supply chain in a self-sufficient manner. It will lead us to the Prime Minister’s vision of Aatmnirbhar Bharat or ‘self-reliant’ country.

A panel of experts will discuss different aspects of the food supply chain challenges including post-harvest logistics, marketing, retailing, technology infusion, innovation, and business promotion.

I would like to thank all the speakers for consenting to be part of the event. A special thanks to Business Standard for associating for the event.

**ABOUT IMC**

A word about IMC.

Set up in 1907, the IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chamber (formerly Indian Merchants’ Chamber -IMC) is a premier Chamber of commerce, trade and Industry in the western region with its membership base of 2500 members and 220 trade associations affiliated to it. Together, it represents and advocates interests of over 400000 business and industry establishments from diverse sectors of industry. Through its various industry-specific committees, the IMC provides policy inputs and recommendations at various levels of government authorities and organizes interactive dialogues, workshops, seminars, business conferences and other activities for sustainable economic development. IMC is the first Chamber in India to get ISO 9002-2000 certification which has since been upgraded to ISO 9001: 2015 and the only one of its kind with which the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, was ever associated. We have an ADR Center with Arbitration & Mediation facilitates, Education and Training services, IMC Library, a dynamic Ladies’ Wing and so on. I invite you to join IMC as a member and enjoy the facilities.

To provide quality service to members and the society at large enabling them to grow qualitatively & quantitatively, to make India a strong economic nation. IMC has selected “INNOVATE, MOTIVATE, and CONSOLIDATE “as its theme for the year 2019-20.

Once again, I welcome you all to this interesting event. I am sure you would go back enriched.

Thank you for participating in large numbers.