

LOGISTICS FOR KHARIF TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION ESSENTIAL TO MINIMISE LOSSES

In 2020, India's area under kharif crops hit an all-time high of 108 million hectares. This is an increase acreage of 1.5 percent beyond the average growth of last five years.

The future of our country with respect to agriculture seems booming, with many discoveries and innovations constantly enriching us.

Let us start off by understanding what are Kharif crops.

* They are harvested in during the month September and October.

* They require warm conditions to grow.

* Their growth depends on the rainfall pattern.

* They need shorter day lengths for flowering.

It is important for us to grow a quality crop. It is equally important to ensure the logistics of these crops.

Reports have found that every year, on India level, when we take the average of vegetables and fruits, farmers are unable to sell around 42 percent of their produce, which equals about Rs 63,000 crore. The primary cause for this loss is poor storage and transportation. In this era of globalization and modernization, it would be not less than a sin to underutilize the existing technologies and advancements to minimize the loss.

Till very recently, we had a lot of regulatory barriers constraining our



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mr Gubba Kiran, CEO of Gubba Cold Storage, is regarded as the face of Gubba for the Indian seed industry. He has led the company into efficient service in cold storage preservation. He has been instrumental in creating the Gubba brand from 0.7 million cubic feet to one of India's biggest cold storage companies with presence on 11 million cubic feet. He has played a key role in educating pharmaceutical companies in preserving critical products at Gubba



Effective solutions like reefer logistics keep agri produce safe and fresh. It is slightly expensive but incurring the expense here is more feasible than bearing the loss

development and growth. The following measures taken by the government have helped immensely.

- * Agri-warehousing by RBI
- * Subsidies
- * Tax Incentives etc.

Our Challenges: We are open to more opportunities to bring sustainable and impactful changes. We first need to be aware of our challenges.

In the 2019-2020 Kharif season in India, the total produce recorded was around 143.38 million tonnes. According to a report by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASSOCHAM), only 11 per cent of the perishable yield is preserved. Here, we clearly understand the seriousness of the losses looking at the figures. Nearly ninety percent of the produce didn't even have the opportunity to be preserved...resulting as a downfall in the quality and shelf life of the produce.

Emerging solution: The government shall encourage and support the youth to invest their talent and money in providing warehouse facilities, from a community angle as well as a business angle. Our country must expand its cold-chain and warehouse units. Establishing and managing a warehouse is very heavy on the pocket. Monetary support, directly or indirectly from the government is needed and desired especially in the following areas:

- * Power supply
- * Interest rates

Seeking support in these two major areas would enable many to enter into the field of storing and preservation to serve the farmers and in turn the country!

Inadequate Infrastructure: The gap between agri-warehousing demand and supply has been reported to be close to 35 million tons. The industry is still more on the unorganised sector side. There are so many technologies existing in the world and not yet in India, for reasons like cost and skills which has to be updated and addressed. Rightly-suited infrastructure will enable us to make the operations cost effective and reliable with regards to timelines ensuring higher level of accuracy.

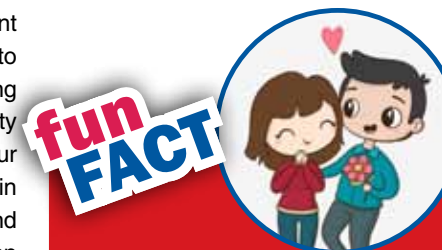
Emerging solution: We must invest our potential resource in research and development in such a way that the domain experts in agriculture are

supported in brining latest trends and innovations, experimenting with machineries in such a way that we are equipped to minimise wastage.

Transportation: The losses incurred by poor transportation facilities accumulate to a loss of 24 percent approximately. The produces are mostly transported by road. Due to seasonally blocked roads, weather etc, heavy loss is incurred. To improve roads, especially in the rural, isolated areas is a must for the produces to be safe. When the mode of transport gets uninterrupted, we will see a hike in the figure of goods being preserved.

Emerging solution: We can think of effective solutions like reefer logistics to keep the produces safe and fresh. It is a little on the expensive side but we have to look at the bigger picture. Incurring the expense here is more feasible than bearing the loss. The government has to strictly regulate and prioritise maintenance and construction and roads as and where needed.

India is a developing country. The next 10 years shall be crucial for our nation's growth. Agriculture has and will always continue to be one of the most essential components to India's growth economy, employment etc. The government and private sector must join hands together in favour of the farmers and ensure everything needed is done at the right time.



fun FACT

My stress buster is spending quality time with my wife and chatting with her. Sitting in my garden and chatting with my family. Watching TV and speaking to friends and relatives