



'INDIA'S FOOD SECTOR IS A GOLD MINE'

National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management (NIFTEM), which is the brainchild of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI), Government of India, is a world-class institution to cater to the various stakeholders such as entrepreneurs, food processing industry professionals, exporters, policy makers, government and existing institutions. Working actively for assisting in setting up food standards and business incubation, which includes knowledge sharing.

Dr. Ajit Kumar, Vice-Chancellor, NIFTEM, explains to **Puja Banerjee** how NIFTEM, being an apex institution in the field of food technology and management, is networking and coordinating with other institutions in the same field in India and Abroad

What are the latest projects NIFTEM has taken ?
How has the journey been?

I am glad to share that NIFTEM, which is only about four years old was ranked 50th in National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), according to the recent ranking announced by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), among all the universities in India who participated in the ranking. Since we are working on traditional Indian food, we have



established a centre of excellence which will collaborate with different types of institutions, the Government, private sector and the food Industry to make India the food factory of the world. We have also started a major initiative of Greening of the Food processing Industry, for improving productivity and making the environment green. We have projects like Khushhali Initiative (Scheme for Empowerment of Farmers & Rural Youth). There is a considerable potential for enhancement of income of farmers & rural youth through value addition of commodities produced in the villages. This is sought to be realized through large-scale training & entrepreneurship development programmes in the villages for farmers & rural youth, followed by establishment of a “Rural Development Hub” for Value Addition/ Food Processing & Storage and Pilot Plant cum Incubation and Training Centre. One such proposal is with the Government of Punjab for implementation. The Institute has established a ‘Research Cell’ and a food tasting laboratory for starting research activities in the relevant areas of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship & Management. We have also initiated development of a low cost cold chamber for keeping Meat Carcasses sold by small roadside vendors. A study on Bio traceability of paneer was done, which gave valuable insight as to how MBRT test could be used as a simple, economical and comparatively reliable analytical method for bio traceability, which can also be employed for ascertaining the shelf life of paneer for a given period of time. The food processing sector plays a vital role in its economic development, but its rapid growth seems to go hand-in-hand with environmental deterioration. NIFTEM has taken an initiative in this regard as ‘Greening of food sector.’

THEME CENTRES:

SECTORAL

- Dairy
- Cereal based products
- Animal protein
- Fruits and vegetable-based foods
- Beverages
- Confectionery

CROSS SECTORAL

- Trade / Knowledge

- Management studies / business incubation
- Management /Networking
- Packaging and Engineering
- Food standards, Testing and Safety
- Biotech
- Nutrition
- Culinary Science
- Food Microbiology

What is the current status of the food processing sector in India?

Fifteen years ago, India did not have access to advanced technology for the farming sector. There were technical as well as managerial problems. Industry was not trained and there was no skilled manpower, due to which the nation suffered losses. There was lack of research work and the industry did not have place to train people. Therefore, the idea of NIFTEM was coined by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) in 2006 and it was approved by the Cabinet. India is the largest producer and consumer of food products. Food processing industry is one of the largest industries in India and has been ranked fifth in terms of production, consumption and export in past. Therefore, India’s Food Sector is a Gold Mine. In such a scenario, food processing can be considered as the ‘sunrise sector’, which is evolving as a driver of the Indian economy. In spite of the global meltdown,

the food processing sector kept growing at 8 to 10 % during past few years.

As the buying

capacity of the young generation continues to improve, the demand for good quality food is also on the rise.

How has NIFTEM fared globally?

Till now, no serious work has been done to address the challenges faced in preserving perishable goods such as fruits, vegetables, fish, meat, etc. For example, in India we don’t have organized slaughter houses due to which consumers are mostly unable to get hygienic meat and at the right weight. NIFTEM has tied up with major Universities like Wageningen University in the Netherlands; Kansas State University, USA; University of Nebraska, Lincoln, USA; University of Saskatchewan, Canada; Mc Gill University, Canada; IFSH, Chicago for training and joint research in critical areas of food processing.

What are the career opportunities that students from NIFTEM can look forward to?

Career opportunities in the food & catering industry will never go down, so the sector is bound to grow manifold in future. The objectives of NIFTEM include working as a one-stop solution provider for developing products, product invention, providing consultancy, working for skill development and entrepreneurship development, to



facilitate business incubation services, to train people who will work on the shop floor and to upgrade small and micro enterprises. To meet these objectives, NIFTEM is spreading awareness and creating innovative ideas. The institute has introduced B.Tech, M.Tech courses. It has also launched village adoption programmes where small groups of students are formed under a teacher. NIFTEM will give technical knowhow from cutting the meat to preserving it and from developing products out of meat to transporting them. The course curriculum of the NIFTEM is very innovative and modern. We impart degree courses such as B.Tech in Food Technology and Management, and M.Tech in Food Technology and Management. These courses help students become Techno Managers of tomorrow. NIFTEM has even launched a 'Student Innovation Fund,' through which, if any student comes up with an innovative idea then he/she can write to NIFTEM and present a project report. If the institute finds it promising and path breaking, then it will fund the whole research project.

What is the contribution of NIFTEM to the 'Make In India' Campaign?

NIFTEM has initiated the Make in India Project, where selected Traditional Indian foods, based on the information on traditional foods collected by the students during their visits during the Village Adoption Programme (VAP), are being targeted so as to be strategically positioned for global businesses. As a part of the Make in India Initiative, NIFTEM has established the National Center



FUTURE PLANS

- Development of Pilot Plants Make in India
- Frontline Demonstration-cum-Primary Processing Centers
- Food Testing Laboratory
- Micro Enterprises Development
- Auditorium
- Students Sports Complex
- Students Welfare Block
- Staff Welfare Centre
- Technology Incubation Centre
- Efforts towards Industry Collaborative Research
- Industry Collaboration in Make in India
- Industry Collaborative Status papers
- Students' Scholarship Fund with Industry Collaboration
- Solar Energy for electricity

for Indian Traditional Foods at our campus, so that studies on Indian traditional foods could be conducted for global promotion of these foods & capture the world food market. The recipes selected for the Project are:

- Sattu fortified (Bihar, Eastern Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal)
- Khakhra (Gujarat)
- Puran Poli (Maharashtra)
- Khandvi (Gujarat)
- Boondi Laddoo (Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar)
- Kabab (Punjab, Himachal Pradesh)
- Prawn Curry (West Bengal, Odisha, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh)
- Chilla (North India)
- Gustava (Kashmir)
- Kaju Katli (Pan India)
- Vada (Karnataka, Tamil Nadu)
- Ghewar (Rajasthan, Haryana)
- Khaja (Bihar)

What is the latest infrastructure on campus?

We have developed various Centres such as International Grain Processing Research and Training Centre (IGPRTC), International Bakery Research and Training Centre (IBRTC), International Centre of Excellence for Food Safety and Quality (ICEFSQ), Pilot Plants cum Incubation Centre – five of which are under process, Referral Level Food Testing Laboratories under process, and Trainings organized by the International Grain Processing Research & Training Centre (IGPRTC) in the last 2 years. Four Week (30 days) Training under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushan Vikash Yojna has been launched as has training organized by International Bakery Research & Training Centre (IBRTC). ■



