

How the logistics sector managed to create ample employment options

Sandeep Sharma

letters@hindustantimes.com

Moving in the direction to fulfill its promise of creating a healthy and well-educated workforce, Modi government was seen pretty interested in improving the country's infrastructure at interim budget 2019 announcement. From giving relaxation to small businesses in logistics sector to file GST once in three months to allocating INR 64,587 crores for improvement of rail transport, government is working in favour of the industry. This is to support the ease of doing business in India, alongside creating job opportunities for youths, in which logistics industry is important.

The ongoing significant public and private investments in the transport and warehousing facilities have opened ways for MSMEs to reduce the overhead expenses and focus on improving the supply chain efficiency. Rightly pointed out in Team-lease's report 'Indian Logistics Revolution- Big Bets, Big Jobs', public investments and steady evolution of the sector, spurred by snowballing demands, will continue to drive the growth of INR 14,19,000 crore logistics sector at CAGR of 10.5%. The major impact can be seen in road freight, rail freight, air freight, warehousing, packaging, and courier services and the creation of nearly 3 million new jobs is anticipated. With this, employment numbers in the logistics sector may increase up to 13.9 million by 2022, which are 10.9 presently.

THE INCREASING LINKAGES OF LOGISTICS WITH OTHER SECTORS SUGGEST GROWTH IN AVENUES FOR ALL

THE EVOLVING INDUSTRY

Logistics is backbone of the nation's economy but used to be considered low-skilled industry earlier. And, therefore it remained the last career choice for many. The consequences of which were the lack of well-trained talent and innovation. The business had to face endless struggles to source and retain the right talent for the right job. Thanks to the latest digital technologies and MSMEs who have joined the forces to streamline and organise the underdeveloped industry that logistics has today become an attractive career path.

The outdated pen and paper processes for documentation are replaced by new modes like e-way bills, the traditional word-of-mouth promotion and marketing is now supported by digital marketing and is catering to the varied demands through systematic sales and operations planning and others. The logistics and supply chain has come a long way contributing 13% to India's GDP. And, it is slowly getting digitalised spearheading the emergence of new jobs and transformation of the traditional ones.

A NEW ERA

In coming few years, there will be an enormous shift in demand management between transportation modes—the overburdened road network is set to share significant oncoming demand with dedicated railway freight corridors that have superior freight handling capacity.

New national waterways being built, a plethora of sophisticated 3PL and 4PL players revolutionizing the warehousing sub-sector, increasing consumption and consumer maturity is providing a big fillip to the packaging sub-sector, leading to more job creation. But, World Bank's Logistics Performance Index observed that the logistics and

supply chain sector in emerging economies such as India has a considerable skill gap, especially at the managerial level. As Indian logistics industry is now adopting the digital technologies and harnessing its potential, clearly evident from the digitalisation of export and import transactions and popular use of electronic tagging technology, there is a recurrent demand of skilled talents.

Every business today is in need of well-trained and qualified professionals who can manage their inventory and warehouses, keep tracks of accounts, and handle the customs and regulatory compliance, and other processes depending on the skills availability. The professionals in this sphere continually strive to ensure that goods and services are delivered to consumers on time and in proper condition under minimum costs to achieve the high levels of customer satisfaction. The focus is on providing the best service to customers and increases the supply of goods in the market. For this, the market players require a large number of trained manpower. Looking at the current employment status, over a lakh of incremental jobs are expected in warehousing alone whereas around four lakhs in packaging and transportation for the next four years. As logistics is linked with sub-sectors like transportation, movers and packers, the transporters who are willing to work, therefore, are given the opportunities.

THE RISE OF NEW JOB ROLES

The job roles such as consignment booking assistant, e-documentation assistant, courier delivery executive, warehouse packer, inventory clerk, logistics and distribution manager, supply chain analyst, supply chain coordinator, supply chain manager are born out of the need to stay attuned to the evolving

industry scenario and tech adoption on a large scale. As integrated logistics is the new trend, talents working in the sector bag high compensation packages that vary from skills, experience, and knowledge. In order to retain them and encourage adding value and innovation in the business, companies also ensure the stress-free working conditions and complete safety to achieve higher employee productivity and efficiency.

RE-ENGINEERING SKILLS AND TALENT

With tech-oriented logistics gaining momentum, various universities and private educational institutions offer degree, diploma, and certificate programmes in logistics and management. To get jobs, a bachelor or master degree or any professional diploma course in Logistics and Supply Chain Management that credit them with the essential knowledge and skills of the field or responsibility. Even the government is keen to equip the youths with the optimal skill-set and empower the existing employees in the logistics and supply chain management sector through the specialised training centers. NITI Ayog, the policy think tank of Government of India, has established skill development and training centres all across the country to up-skill the job candidates.

Interestingly, the number of women employees in the logistics industry is also increasing at a rapid rate as the statistics account for 21%, rising from 5% recorded a decade ago. The logistics companies are embracing and encouraging gender diversity, providing women with equal career opportunities. And, therefore women are taking up the charge of responsibilities in other promising spheres of the sector.

The author is CEO & Founder, Cogent Transware Solutions