

Skill gap in the sector

There are around 13550 registered food processing units in micro and small scale sector which in turn generate direct employment for around 1.00 lakh. Out of 13550 units, 6667 units have been found registered during 2007-2012. These newly registered units have generated employment opportunity for 54460 number of people.

Trend in employment

Sector wise distribution of 54460 people is as follows:

Sector	2007-08		2008-09		2009-10		2010-11		2011-12		Total	
	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem
Cereals & Pulses Processing	1546	21	1428	8	822	105	1157	23	894	40	5847	197
Confectionery/Biscuit	740	19	846	10	172	8	442	1	333	4	2533	42
Diary & Milk	220	5	114	4	174	45	140	1	178	31	826	86
Fish Processing	599	91	1224	104	464	81	545	57	673	30	3505	363
Fruits & vegetable processing	763	28	349	25	408	59	320	45	326	43	2166	200
Edible Oil	806	24	396	10	487	5	346	37	464	21	2499	97
Others	447	37	667	27	435	50	289	30	696	108	2534	252
Packaged Drinking Water	49	0	43	0	83	0	113	0	152	8	440	8
Paddy Processing	3205	196	1673	79	1228	277	2550	40	3800	243	12456	835
Poultry, Meat Processing	226	49	356	51	411	258	482	24	358	26	1833	408
Snacks/Pasta	1365	69	571	25	617	344	404	224	612	419	3569	1081
Soft Drinks	2154	149	1569	105	1998	981	2662	146	2044	207	10427	1588
Spices	180	11	157	10	81	15	81	0	118	14	617	50
Total	12300	699	9393	458	7380	2228	9531	628	10648	1194	49252	5207

Major activities

In typical unit under micro & small scale it is found that on an average 50% of manpower requirement is supplied from unskilled pool, 30% from semi skilled workers and the balance 20% from specialized skilled pools. Broad activities can be categorized in the following heads

- Raw materials unloading & storage
- Mixing of raw materials and make it ready for processing machine
- Machine operators
- Helper to main machine operator
- Drying/ bottling/ packaging (if necessary) of semi finished/ finished goods
- Storing/ loading of finished goods
- Marketing
- Accountings

Unskilled workers contribute in the areas of:

- Loading / unloading of goods
- Drying/ bottling/ packaging
- Storing
- Marketing

Semi skilled workers are required in the fields of:

- Operation assistance of machine
- Preparation of mixture before it is processed

Skilled workers are required in the field of:

- Operating machines
- Laboratory in charge
- Accounts

Skilled vs unskilled labour

In case of micro and small scale units, industry yet to recognize the role of specialized skilled persons. Generally machine suppliers impart free training to two/ three persons during the installation of machines who works as a master/ skilled workers in the unit.

To meet the excess manpower requirement the units hire fresh low educated persons. Some of them become skilled workers under guidance of their seniors over the period.

Advantage of this process:

- Lower wage bill
- Low attrition rate

Disadvantage of this process:

- Business remains limited within a certain geographical area.
- No changes in items and quality for long period.
- Ultimately stagnation in business

With more customers' awareness these types of units are facing stiff completion from the medium and large units.

Skilled gaps

In the present scenario role of skilled workers in the micro and small units is limited in the area of machine operations. However new items development and quality maintenance can be major focused area for skilled manpower. Hence with the introduction of Food Safety and Standard norms demand for skilled workers in the micro & small units will be increased by leaps & bounds.

In the medium and large scale industry demand for specialized skilled workers (like food technologist) is very prominent.

Present infrastructure

Presently courses on food processing sector are offered by the following institutions of the state:

Name of Institution	Courses	Intake Capacity
Jadavpur University, Kolkata	Food Technology	20
Guru Nanak Institute of Technology, Panihati, Sodpur	Food Technology	60
Haldia Institute of Technology, Haldia, East Medinipur	Food Technology	60
Bidhan Chandra Krishi Vishwavidyalaya	Food Technology	10
Techno India, Salt Lake	Food Technology	60
West Bengal University of Animal & Fisheries Science, Belgachia, Dumdum	Dairy Technology	30
	Fisheries Technology	20
Raninagar Polytechnic, Murshidabad	Fish processing Technology	30
Indian Institutes of Packaging, Kolkata	Packaging Technology	-

Measures to bridge the gap

With growth of the industry requirement of skilled man power is going up. Following measure can be taken to bridge the gaps:

- Introduction of Diploma/ certificate courses in food technology in different Polytechnics/ it is of the state. This courses may help micro and small units to afford more technical persons
- Introduction of part time courses in ITI s to attract interested workers who aspire to up in the industry.
- Workshops, Seminars needs to be organized to generate awareness about the benefit of specialized skilled workers in the context of Food Safety and Standard Act.