

## MBA topper's pushcart is full of vegetables - and a dream

It may come as a shock to many that after topping the elite Indian Institute of Management (IIM), he opted to sell vegetables on the rough streets of this city. But then Kaushalendra is a man on a mission.

He is not moving around with his loaded pushcart to earn a livelihood but to make his home state, Bihar, the vegetable hub of India.

Kaushalendra, who is in his late 20s, is an IIM-Ahmedabad graduate of the 2007 batch. He could, like his peers, have chosen to sit in the plush air-conditioned premises of a top MNC like his peers. But he is roughing it out instead.

'I am here to do something. It was my childhood dream to contribute to the development of rural Bihar,' he told IANS.

'I have opted to make vegetables the new brand of Bihar,' Kaushalendra, the native of a village in Nalanda, which happens to be the home district of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, told IANS.

Clad in a simple shirt and trousers, the bespectacled youth is popularly known as the 'MBA sabziwalla' among his loyal customers, particularly women in the Kankarbagh colony, a middle class locality.

Hailing from a farmer family himself, he started his venture about 10 days ago.

After passing out of IIM-A, he did extensive fieldwork, meeting farmers, studying cultivation techniques and finally taking a bank loan of Rs.4 million to start the project.

'Till date the response has been better than expected,' Kaushalendra said, well aware of the attention he attracts.

Unlike other vegetable vendors, he is minutely studying consumer behaviour as he goes along. 'It is important for me to study consumer behaviour when they purchase vegetables from my pushcart to help prepare a blueprint of expansion,' he said.

Kaushalendra recalled that after doing his MBA, he along with some of his friends and teachers from IIM-A developed a pushcart to make it easy for vendors to carry a vegetable load of up to 200 kg.

His pushcart is made of fibre with an attached weighing machine, is ice cooled to keep vegetables fresh for up to five days, and sold under the brand name of 'Samridhi'.

'Initially, there was only one pushcart for trial but now I have already ordered 50 more. It will go up in the next phase,' he said.

He plans to take Samridhi, launched by his NGO Kaushalya Foundation, across the country and abroad within five years. His vegetables are priced slightly lower than those sold by other vendors.

'I am confident that all major players in the vegetable market, including Reliance Fresh, will

purchase from us in the next five years,' Kaushalendra said.

In a bid to establish direct links with vegetable growers or farmers, Kaushalendra has tied up with over 250 vegetable growers in different villages in Nalanda and [Patna](#) districts.

He has also tied up with the Agriculture Training and Management Agency (ATMA) to take his dream to vegetable producers in different parts of state.

Kaushalendra said Bihar has an enormous untapped potential for vegetables. The vegetables produced in fertile land near the Ganges river can mark a turnaround for the state if marketed properly.

'It will assure better returns to growers,' believes Kaushalendra.

It was not east for him to take to his pushcart selling vegetables as his family members initially opposed the idea and wanted him to go for a job with a fat salary and perks.

But here he is today, dreaming big and chasing his dream too.

*Imran Khan* ( © IANS / India eNews)