



Employment News

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Cold Chain: Transforming Seasonal Labour into Sustainable Jobs



millions of rural workers remain confined to seasonal, low-productivity jobs.

In this context, the cold chain ecosystem assumes strategic importance. Modern cold chains go beyond storage to form integrated systems linking farms to markets through scientific handling, transport, processing, and preservation. At scale, they address two core challenges at once—reducing food losses and creating stable, year-round employment across the agri-food value chain.

Recognising this dual role, the Government of India has positioned cold chains as both an economic and employment intervention under the Integrated Cold Chain and Value Addition Infrastructure (ICCVAI) component of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY). By developing end-to-end infrastructure—from farm level facilities to processing units, irradiation centres, and refrigerated logistics—cold chains generate diverse jobs across regions and skill levels, while also catalysing indirect employment in allied industries.

Expanding Scale of the Cold Chain Ecosystem

Over the past decade, India's cold chain has evolved from fragmented storage facilities into an integrated, policy-driven infrastructure network, enabling it to emerge as a meaningful source of employment. Since its integration into PMKSY in 2016–17, public investment has accelerated expansion. As of June 2025, 395 projects have been approved, with 291 operational,

creating 25.52 LMT of preservation capacity and 114.66 LMT of processing capacity annually.

Unlike standalone cold storages, ICCVAI-supported projects link farm-level infrastructure with processing units, distribution hubs, and refrigerated transport, dispersing jobs across the value chain and regions. The scale-up has been reinforced by increased funding, with PMKSY's allocation rising to Rs. 6,520 crore in July 2025, ensuring project continuity and employment stability.

Direct Employment Creation

One of the most tangible outcomes of India's cold chain expansion is the scale of direct employment generated across multiple stages of the agri-food value chain. Unlike conventional agricultural infrastructure, cold chain projects require continuous human intervention to operate, monitor, and manage temperature-controlled systems, logistics, and processing activities. This operational intensity

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Subject Yadav

India's agricultural economy faces a paradox: despite being a global leader in producing fruits, vegetables, milk, meat, and fish, it continues to suffer high post-harvest losses and widespread rural underemployment. Weak storage, fragmented logistics, and limited processing lead to wastage of perishables, while



Dual Degree: Building Skills and Career Flexibility

Ranjana Singh

At some point in your academic journey, you are bound to hit a big question: which subject should you choose? Many students are interested in more than one area but end up picking just one because that's how the system has always worked. The good news is, that's changing. You no longer have to drop one interest to follow another. With the UGC allowing students to pursue two academic programmes at the same time, dual degrees give you a chance to learn more, build extra skills, and keep your career options open in a competitive job market.

Employers today are not just looking for subject knowledge. They want people who can think across disciplines, adapt quickly, and bring multiple skills to the table. A single degree may not always give you that edge. A dual degree can.

That's why:

- Engineers are learning management and finance
- Commerce students are picking up data analytics
- Arts students are adding digital skills to their profile

UGC Rules for Dual Degree

A dual degree simply means pursuing two academic programmes at the same time. As per UGC rules, you can choose from:

- Two full-time on-campus programmes (as long as class timings do not clash)
- One on-campus programme + one online/ODL programme
- Two online or ODL programmes from UGC-recognised institutions

Therefore, pursuing a dual degree is legally permitted, duly recognised, and increasingly being adopted by students.

Why Dual Degrees Make Sense for Your Career

Pursuing a dual degree is no longer merely an academic experiment; it is a strategic career decision. In an employment environment that increasingly values adaptability and multidisciplinary competence, dual degrees offer several tangible advantages.

Expanded Career Opportunities: A dual degree allows you to explore and apply for roles across multiple sectors rather than being confined to a single domain. When your qualifications span more than one discipline, you gain access to a wider range of job profiles. One degree complements and strengthens the other, enabling you to move between industries or roles with greater ease.

A Stronger and More Diverse Skill Set: Employers today seek candidates who bring a combination of skills to the workplace. Dual degrees allow you to integrate technical expertise with analytical, creative, or managerial capabilities. This blend of competencies enhances your problem-solving abilities and prepares you to handle complex, real-world challenges that cut across traditional subject boundaries.

Improved Employability and Visibility: In competitive placement processes and job interviews, candidates with multidisciplinary qualifications often stand out. A thoughtfully chosen combination of degrees reflects initiative, intellectual curiosity, and the ability to manage demanding academic commitments. Such attributes are highly valued by recruiters, particularly in sectors that require cross-functional thinking.

Career Security and Flexibility: A dual degree also acts as a practical safeguard. If employment opportunities in one field are limited or your interests

evolve over time, you have the option to shift direction without starting from scratch. This built-in flexibility provides greater career security in an unpredictable and rapidly changing job market.

Efficient Use of Academic Time: By pursuing two programmes simultaneously, students make effective use of their academic years. Rather than completing degrees sequentially, a dual degree allows for parallel learning, resulting in broader qualifications within the same time frame. This approach maximises educational investment while accelerating readiness for the workforce or further studies.

Choosing the Right Dual-Degree Combination

Pursuing a dual degree can be highly beneficial, provided the combination of programmes is chosen thoughtfully. The effectiveness of a dual degree depends not only on the number of qualifications earned but on how well the two programmes complement each other and align with a student's career goals.

Pick the Best Dual-Degree Combinations Based on Your Stream: Your current academic stream should serve as the foundation for selecting a second programme. Effective dual-degree combinations typically build on existing strengths while adding new, relevant skills.

- **Science Students:** Pairing core science subjects with data science, computer applications, statistics, or environmental studies can open pathways in

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