

Ex-IAS officer's start-up uses existing retailers to sell veggies

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New Delhi, Aug 11: In a unique model that could bridge the huge gap between farm-gate and consumer prices, an agri-marketing start-up, Sabziwala, has started selling pre-packed, pre-weighed and pre-priced vegetables in west Delhi through street vendors, kirana shops and milk stores.

The vegetables procured directly from the farmers are processed, packed and then delivered to those small retail shops which were earlier reluctant to sell vegetables due to lack of infrastructure.

“The unique feature of this venture is that we are not investing in any infrastructure but rely on existing retail infrastructure operated by channel partners,” Pravesh Sharma, co-founder and CEO of the start-up, told *FE*.

He said that the company



has studied the existing vegetable supply chains in major metros and realized that there are significant savings to be done through direct sourcing from the farmers and supplying through existing vendors and other outlets.

The venture was launched in June by Sharma, an ex-IAS officer who took voluntary retirement earlier this year. The venture at present supplies

more than six tonnes of fresh vegetables via 30 outlets located in Dwaraka and Janakpuri in Delhi.

Sharma said that the start-up aims to reach 100 outlets and sell 20 tonnes of vegetables by the end of next month. Besides, the start-up also plans to roll out similar model of selling vegetables through small retailers in other cities including Hyderabad and Bengaluru.

The company claims that vegetable prices at Sabziwala outlets are about 10% less than the benchmark Safal (largest organised retailers for fruits and vegetables promoted by National Dairy Development Board) outlet prices. “The idea is to ensure uniform quality and price throughout the city and buying from the Sabziwala brand of vegetables should be as reliable as ordering preferred brand of milk or bread, no more haggling with the vendor or worrying about quality,” Sharma said.

The company buys back unsold vegetables from retailers at the end of the day and then these vegetables are supplied to hotels and eateries. For commencing its operations, the start-up has raised seed capital from two angel investors.

The start-up is targeting break-even in its very first year with a turnover of around ₹50 crore.