Accelerating India’s Agriculture Exports
Bharat Ratna Sir M. Visvesvaraya
(15 September, 1860 - 14 April, 1962)

MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai is the realization of the vision of one man - Sir M. Visvesvaraya - engineer, scientist, and a great son of India. Named after him, M. Visvesvaraya Industrial Research & Development Centre (MVIRDC) is a company registered and licensed under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 (currently Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013). MVIRDC is the promoter of World Trade Center Mumbai, which stands tall as a symbol of excellence in industry and trade services.
I am pleased that the MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai has completed this comprehensive study to map the challenges to India’s agricultural exports, and identify solutions to address these problems. The study comes at an opportune moment and is in sync with the reforms enacted by the Government of India to make the policy environment more conducive for Indian agriculture. In particular, this study is extremely useful to organizations such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which are interested in supporting governments to develop smallholder and marginal farmers’ participation in remunerative value chains. This study also offers a roadmap to the future of agriculture in India and has taken a long term and welcome view to develop agricultural exports while being mindful of the food and nutrition security needs of Indian consumers and the growing domestic demand.

The study reaffirms the resilience of the agriculture sector and its growth potential amid the new and unforeseen shocks arising from the spread of COVID-19. However, there is an opportunity in every crisis, and the Indian government has seized the chance to implement game-changing reforms to the country’s agri-marketing policy. The government’s decision to amend the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 (ECA), announced in May 2020 and enacted into law through an ordinance issued in June 2020, should boost agricultural exports. Together with amending the ECA, the government also introduced ordinances to boost contract farming and remove rules requiring farmers to only sell their crops to licenced middlemen in state-notified markets. These reforms present an opportunity to move from fragmented value chains to shorter and more integrated ones for both the domestic and export markets. It is also an opportunity to mainstream hygiene and safety measures that are critical for producer’s and consumer’s health as well as prevention of spread of Covid or other diseases through the agri-logistics. The study rightly underlines the importance of environmental and social governance standards, SPS and TBT.

I also appreciate that the study has taken into account the smallholder and marginal farmers and looked at successful institutional models, such as cooperatives, to integrate them in the export oriented value chains. This is also well aligned with the government’s promotion of farmer producer organizations in a cluster approach, as well as developing new financing instruments to meet the investment and working capital requirements of these organizations. Building strong business relations between producer organizations and market players, supported by effective agri-logistics are a key feature of IFAD support to governments across the world and successful examples exist in the development of inclusive export value chains for commodities as diverse as coffee, cocoa, tea, high quality wool in Africa, Asia and Latin America. As smallholders go into higher value commodities, the risks also increase for them and well thought out risk mitigation measures, diversified financial products and market intelligence are required to help smallholders anticipate where possible these risks and adapt to evolving consumers’ preferences, trade regimes and fluctuating prices.

I am confident that this study will stimulate debate among stakeholders and encourage further research on all aspects of the proposed value chains as well as galvanize stakeholder consultation to develop an investment plan for boosting India’s agri-exports.

Rasha Omar
Country Director, India
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
## Contents

Preface 6  
Executive Summary 7  
Key Findings and Recommendations 8  
Introduction 9  
SWOT analysis 10  
India’s position in world market 14  
Exports composition – Key trends 19  
Trade balance analysis 26  
Untapped Export Potential 29  
Result of Primary Survey 31  
Key Recommendations 32  
Literature for Further Reading 52  
Acknowledgement 69  
Appendix I 70  
Appendix II 72

### Box Items

- Box 1: Promoting exports is a key tool to enhance farmers’ income 9  
- Box 2: Key suggestions of Ashok Dalwai Committee 10  
- Box 3: Required Growth in food production 13  
- Box 4: Market shares in cereals and marine products 15  
- Box 5: Market share in vegetable extracts, lacs and gums 16  
- Box 6: Market share in vegetable plaiting materials 16  
- Box 7: Shares in food waste and fodder 16  
- Box 8: Share in fruits, vegetables and pulses 16  
- Box 9: Share of processed fruits and other items 17  
- Box 10: Boosting exports of fruits and vegetable seeds 18  
- Box 11: Encouraging crab farming in mangroves 21  
- Box 12: Products with growing share in exports: 22  
- Box 13: Share of wheat flour and starch of maize 22  
- Box 14: Export of tamarind, maize flour 25  
- Box 15: Emerging contributors to agriculture trade surplus 26  
- Box 16: Processed meat exports 26  
- Box 17: Volatile balance from wheat 27  
- Box 18: Commodities causing trade deficit 27
Contents

Box 19: Trade deficit in pulses 27
Box 20: Problems and prospects in cotton exports 34
Box 21: Serbia donates apple saplings 38
Box 22: Challenges faced by agro exporters 38
Box 23: Quality Assurance, Ease of doing business 38
Box 24: Steps to boost export of fruits 41
Box 25: Diversifying seafood exports 43
Box 26: Reforms in pricing and finance 46
Box 27: Perspectives on Transforming Agriculture into an Export-Oriented Sector 49
Box 28: Sunkist: An American Agriculture Marketing Cooperative 61
Box 29: Addressing SPS Measures through FTAs 64
Box 30: Case Study on agriculture infrastructure 66
Box 31: Contract farming 67

Tables

Table 1: Ban on India’s food exports 12
Table 2: Addressing weaknesses/Threats in the system 14
Table 3: Share of India in world exports 15
Table 4: Top 11 exporters of fruit and vegetable seeds 18
Table 5: Top 10 agro exports - 2007 and 2019 19
Table 6: Share of processed goods in overall agriculture exports 20
Table 7: Share of crabs in overall agriculture exports 20
Table 8: Share of pet food and animal feed 21
Table 9: Exports of major tobacco products 23
Table 10: Share of oil cake in overall agriculture exports 24
Table 11: Share of mango pulp, instant coffee, walnuts 24
Table 12: Share of seeds in exports 25
Table 13: Trade balance of principal agro commodities 28
Table 14: Trade balance in fruits and vegetables 29
Table 15: Untapped export opportunity 30
Table 16: Production and yield of key fruits 33
Table 17: Export of honey, beeswax 36
Table 18: Implementation of Water Harvesting and Management 39
Table 19: Trade in Bamboo products 40
Table 20: Major importers of fruits 40
Contents

Table 21: Export of fruit juices 42
Table 22: Top 10 importers and exporters 53
Table 23: Top destinations of exports 57

Charts

Chart 1: FAO Food Price Index 53
Chart 2: Production of cereals 54
Chart 3: Production in MT: pulses 54
Chart 4: Production in MT: oilseeds 55
Chart 5: Production in MT: foodgrains 55
Chart 6: Rural Consumer Price Index (Base: 2012 = 100) 55
Chart 7: Share of top 10 items in total exports 18 - 19 56
Chart 8: Share of top 10 items in total exports 2009 - 10 56
Chart 9: Commodities with least diversified market 58
Chart 10: Commodities with highly diversified market 58
Chart 11: Average size of operational holding 60
Chart 12: Sectoral Share of Top 300 Cooperatives by Turnover 60
Chart 13: Cooperative Societies in India 62
Chart 14: Average bound tariff of partner countries 63
Chart 15: Logistics Performance Index 64
Chart 16: Logistics Performance Index of India 65
Chart 17: Share of food processing sector in economy 66
Chart 18: Export of processed fruits and vegetables 67

Diagrams

Diagram 1: SWOT Analysis for Agriculture Exports 10
Diagram 2: Export-oriented Extension Services 11
Diagram 3: Accelerating India’s Agriculture Exports: Key Drivers 59
Diagram 4: Vicious cycle in agriculture 65
Preface

“Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous and they are tied to their country,” said Mr. Thomas Jefferson, the Founding Father of United States of America. While farmers are tied to their country, we can facilitate them to trade across borders and benefit from favourable price condition in foreign market. Accessing global market helps farmers benefit from better price and expand their scale of operation.

Thanks to Green Revolution, India has evolved from a food deficit country to a major exporter of food commodities in the global market. Agriculture is a key contributor to India’s foreign trade as it accounts for 12% of the country’s goods exports and India is the eighth largest agriculture exporter in the world (WTO, 2018). Still, there is tremendous scope to enhance agriculture exports from the country by leveraging its diverse agro-ecological zones and dynamic farming community. The time has come to strengthen India’s position in the world agriculture export market and improve the lot of more than 12 crore farming households and 14 crore agricultural workers in the country.

On May 15, 2020, Government of India announced path breaking reforms in transforming farming into a market oriented sector by removing the strangulating regulations under APMC and Essential Commodities Act. We need to see this policy intention materialise on ground with the effective implementation of this reform by state governments.

Today, India exports USD 38 billion worth agriculture goods (including cotton) and the Committee on Doubling Farmers’ Income has set the target of raising this to USD 100 billion by 2022-23. Such an ambitious target is possible with the concerted efforts of policymakers, agriculture research institutions, financial institutions, export promotion agencies and the enterprising farmers.

I am happy to note that MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai has prepared this research study to identify challenges hindering India’s farm exports and laying out strategies to address these challenges and diversifying agricultural export basket. The study identified USD 97.02 billion worth export opportunity in 19 agro-commodities, based on data from FAO. Except for coir and onion, India does not have substantial share in the global market for these agro-commodities. The study has also identified top five export markets for 21 principal commodities exported by India. The report contains actionable policy recommendations based on the views of exporters, agro-technologists, academicians and policy analysts to tap this export opportunity.

This report is prepared at a time when Government of India is providing renewed thrust to the agriculture sector with an objective to double farmers’ income by 2022. India’s farm sector is witnessing massive transformation with path-breaking initiatives such as establishment of farmer producer organizations, food parks, unification of agriculture markets, institutionalizing contract farming and reforming APMC acts, to name a few.

The announcement of a comprehensive Agriculture Export Policy in December, 2018 is a watershed development in India’s evolving policy framework to transform agriculture into an export-oriented industry. The policy has laid down roadmap for a stable export regulatory framework by striking the right balance among competing policy objectives, viz. domestic price stability, consumers’ welfare and increasing farmers’ income. The policy has given rise to progressive initiatives such as state-specific action plans and the establishment of nodal agencies to promote agricultural exports across many states. The 15th Finance Commission has also set up an expert committee to suggest policy measures to promote export of agriculture commodities.

This study has been conducted at this time of remarkable progress in India’s policy environment governing agriculture exports. I am confident that the findings of this study will generate further public debate among policymakers, agriculture finance institutions, agriculture research institutions, export promotion agencies and other stakeholders and contribute to the evolving ecosystem for agriculture exports.

Y.R. Warerkar
Director General
Executive Summary

India’s agriculture sector is at the crossroads of historic reforms that will change farming into a market-oriented activity, with freedom to sell the produce to any buyer and stock commodities without restriction. May 15, 2020 is a historic day that marks the announcement of path breaking reforms in India’s agriculture sector. On that day, Union Finance Minister announced historic policy changes such as amendment to the Essential Commodities Act, which dates back to 1955, allowing farmers to sell their produce to entities outside their states and a legal framework for farmers to get assured returns while engaging with processors, aggregators, retailers and exporters.

These reforms have been recommended several times by economists, trade policy experts and even government committees set up in the past. The Government used the COVID crisis as an opportunity to announce these bold reforms that will address some of the structural issues plaguing India’s agriculture sector. The country’s agriculture sector has not seen much private investment in post-harvest infrastructure, market development, processing and exports because of the monopoly of the APMC traders, stock limits prescribed under the Essential Commodities Act, arbitrary restrictions imposed on export and import of farm commodities and other restrictive regulations.

The reforms announced on May 15, 2020, if effectively implemented, will address some of these restrictions and promote private investment in post-harvest infrastructure in the farm sector. The government has also announced Rs. 1 lakh crore for upgrading post-harvest infrastructure, Rs. 10,000 crore for formalising 2 lakh micro food enterprises, Rs. 20,000 crore for fisheries development, Rs. 15,000 crore for animal husbandry and others.

These measures will provide a major boost to India’s agriculture exports. The country’s agriculture exports have remained stagnant around USD 38 billion since 2011-12, despite India being the leading producer of foodgrains, fruits and vegetables, pulses and other crops.

This report is prepared on the background of these landmark policy changes and the analysis in this report puts spotlight on the export potential for various agriculture commodities in India. The report also features views of agriculture scientists, policy observers and academicians on enhancing India’s agriculture exports.

Objective of the Study

1. To assess India’s position in world agriculture exports
2. To understand issues affecting exports of agriculture goods
3. To propose policy suggestions to overcome these issues
4. To identify export potential for horticulture crops
5. To identify export potential for dairy products
6. To identify export potential for fruits and beverages

To Download Full Report Contact us: bhupendra@wtcmumbai.org