

Sustainable agricultural export in India : An emerging challenge

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on emerging challenges in sustainable agricultural export in India. The past accomplishments of this sector are a great strength to face the current problems and future challenges in the areas of greater efficiency (competitiveness), sustainability, poverty alleviation and continued food self-sufficiency. With trade liberalisation, agricultural exports have also become an important national goal. The new economic regime, initiated since early nineties, has led to resetting of the goals of Indian agriculture towards global competitiveness and export orientation without compromising the basic premise of self-reliance. The emergence of the concept of sustainability of agricultural production has made the task more difficult for all those who are associated with agricultural production systems in the country. The present goals of Indian agriculture warrant reformation of strategies and action plans. During post economic reforms period, the value of agricultural exports has nearly doubled. The share of agri-exports in total exports, however, has remained more or less stable around 20 per cent, though the share of exports in agricultural GDP has been rising. Commodities such as marine products, oils, rice, coffee, tea, spices, cashew, tobacco, castor oil, groundnut, sesame, fresh fruits, vegetables, pulses etc., are important export earners and are being exported to more than 110 countries. In order that agriculture sector contributes to full potential of India's exports, a long-term policy leading to export orientation by differentiating the exportable items keeping in view the domestic needs, food security, price elasticity, responsiveness to R and D efforts and export competitiveness, assumes great significance.

Key words : Sustainable agriculture, Export, Import, Challenge

Agriculture, a core sector of the Indian economy, accounts for 30 per cent of the country's GDP, 20 per cent of total export earnings, two thirds of country's workforce and livelihood for 70 per cent of the total population. The past accomplishments of this sector are a great strength to face the current problems and future challenges in the areas of greater efficiency (competitiveness), sustainability, poverty alleviation and continued food self-sufficiency. With trade liberalisation, agricultural exports have also become an important national goal. The new economic regime, initiated since early nineties, has led to resetting of the goals of Indian agriculture towards global competitiveness and export orientation without compromising the basic premise of self-reliance. The emergence of the concept of sustainability of agricultural production has made the task more difficult for all those who are associated with agricultural production systems in the country. The present goals of Indian agriculture warrant reformation of strategies and action plans. Agricultural exports increased from about 600 million US dollars in 1960-61 to 3520

million US dollars in 1990- 91. During post economic reforms period, the value of agricultural exports has nearly doubled. The share of agri-exports in total exports, however, has remained more or less stable around 20 per cent, though the share of exports in agricultural GDP has been rising. Commodities such as marine products, oil meals, rice, coffee, tea, spices, cashew, tobacco, castor oil, groundnut, sesame, fresh fruits, vegetables, pulses etc., are important export earners and are being exported to more than 110 countries.

The encouraging results of goal-oriented Green Revolution, White Revolution, Yellow Revolution etc. enthuse the agricultural fraternity of the country to set a new goal for 'Agri-Export Revolution' which is not only the need of the hour but also a compulsion to strengthen and revitalise the economy of the country. While India holds an important position in the export market for a set of traditional agricultural commodities, new areas and new commodities are likely to emerge such as live animals and animal products, fruits, vegetables, floriculture, medicinal plants and processed agricultural products. In order to understand the emerging challenges and to identify ways and means of placing our country as a major player in the global export market for agricultural products, the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS) in collaboration with the Rajasthan Agricultural University, Bikaner and the State Government of Rajasthan deliberated on the theme "Sustainable Agricultural Export"

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