

Secretary's Message

Human life on earth has a very close association with spices since ancient days. Spices influenced the socio-economical, medicinal, cultural, and religious discourses and have played a pivotal role in the development of modern civilization. India, with its favourable agro-climatic conditions, produces 75 out of the 109 spices listed by the International Organization for Standardisation (ISO). With a production of over 10.5 million tonnes of spices annually and being the pioneers of processing and value addition, the Indian spice industry is moving forward to strengthen its position as the premier supplier of clean, safe, and value-added spices and spice products to industrial and retail segments of the global spices market. Indian spices conform to the quality and food safety standards of the importing countries and adhere to the good practices in production, processing, and value-addition.

Owing to the strong domestic demand, only 15 per cent of the total spice production is exported and it caters to the requirements of more than 180 countries. Value-added spice products enjoy a share of 51 per cent in the total export volume, affirming our capability and infrastructural facilities for processing and value addition. Over the last three and a half decades, value of Indian spices export has grown from Rs 300 crores (1987-1988) to Rs 30,000 crores (2020-2021).

Mitigating the challenges on account of COVID-19 pandemic, for the first time in the history, spices export from India crossed 4 billion \$ mark in 2020-2021. As per DGCI&S, the export of spices and spice products during 2020-21 has been 17,58,985 tonnes valued Rs 30,973.32 crores (US \$4178.81 million).

Spices Board, the flagship organization under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for worldwide promotion of Indian spices, is committed to support and assist the Indian spice industry in all its endeavours for further excellence. Export development and promotion, value addition and quality improvement continue to be the major thrust areas for the activities of Spices Board. The Board has been implementing a host of collaborative projects to augment quality of spice production and carry out regulatory measures to ensure quality of spices for exports so as to enable the Indian spice industry to be on par with the international standards. The Board promotes the globally accepted practices of production, post-harvest management, processing and value – addition.

The project 'Strengthening spice value chain in India and improving market access through capacity building and innovative interventions' in collaboration with Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) under WTO and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), aims to increase export of safe and high-quality spices from India to overseas markets. To ensure food safety, bring in traceability and achieve sustainability with due concern for biodiversity in the spice sector 'National sustainable spice networking programme' is being implemented in collaboration with World Spice Organisation (WSO), All India Spice Exporters Forum (AISEF), etc. The Board has also joined hands with UNDP India's Accelerator Lab to build a blockchain based traceability interface for Indian spices to enhance transparency in trading.

Spices Board has been supporting the stakeholders of Indian spice industry to keep up with the fast-evolving global market trends. Considering the stiff competition from low cost producers and the need to meet the increasingly stringent quality & food safety standards set by major importing countries, the Board has revised its schemes and programmes to suit the market trends and requirements in the new normal, with more emphasis on export oriented production in compliance with food safety and quality requirements of importing countries.

Despite being the largest producer, consumer and exporter of spices in the world, India still holds immense scope and potential for further growth and expansion in production, value-addition and export fronts. Focusing on investment on infrastructure, capacity building for quality production, ensuring food safety and demonstration of traceability can take the Indian spice industry to new heights. Coordinated and collaborative efforts are needed to enhance the productivity and competence of Indian spices in global markets. My appeal to the stakeholders of Indian spice industry is to work together with Spices Board not just to sustain India's leadership in production and export of spices, but also to excel and lead the global spice industry in introducing scientifically validated novel applications of spices, suitable for the F&B segment, wellness, nutrition, health, etc.

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Secretary