14 ENLARGING AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS

MESSAGE OF HOPE

MAHAGRAPES - Sweetening the returns through exports...

Maharashtra is one of the leading states in Grape production and exports. MAHAGRAPES is a partnership firm of various cooperative societies spread all over the state. It comprises of 16 Cooperative societies having strength of 2500 grape growers with 6000 ha. of land under grapes. It has introduced new concepts of post harvest technology first time in India which has extended the storage shelf life of grapes from 6 days to 65 days. The cold storage facilities involve setting up of pre cooling chambers (4 tonnes /6 hrs. capacity) and 2 cold stores (25 tonnes each) at the site of member societies. All these units became operative from the year 1991 and the annual export from these units increased thereafter. The annual export ranges from 299 MT to 1800 MT. Initially the grape growers were receiving Rs. 10 to 15 /kg which has increased up to Rs. 40 to 65/Kg due to export promotional activities of MAHAGRAPES. Similarly 'MAHAGRAPES' brand is now established in the European Markets and is presently enjoying the status of Class-II exporter from the subcontinent.

14.1 The State's agricultural export policy should be declared by increased emphasis given to technology transfer to farmers for globally competitive production in terms of quality and cost of the production. The post harvest handling, value addition, processing, scientific storage, modern marketing system and export promotion should be the main features of the policy. The State should be extra sensitive towards the need of techno-infrastructure and market intelligence, product development and product promotion.

14.2 As a short-term policy, state should undertake studies to scientifically define the constraint and identify the alternative solutions for encouraging exports by making gap analysis in infrastructure, technology and trained manpower and it should identify areas requiring policy and institutional reforms. Organizing awareness campaign for the farmers of the State for the new regime of WTO, removing the structural barriers in tackling the issues of production, PHM, processing and marketing, diversification of agriculture towards horticulture, medicinal and aromatic plants, spices etc., application of IT in agriculture for addressing mass of farming community for transfer of technology, capacity building for extension workers and giving due importance to frontier technology as R & D policy should be the ingredients of this agri-exports revolution in the state.
14.3 Long term policy for agri-exports should be based upon setting quality parameters for various agricultural produce on scientific lines, standardization of production technology for export quality production at globally competitive prices to serve dual purpose of protecting domestic market from imported farm produce and getting increased access to export market, mapping of PHM infrastructure such as cold chain, sorting and grading / pack houses, packaging, transport and storage and marking gap analysis, identifying the need for varietal changes in crops from point of view of requirement of end user, identification of technology gap in production, plant protection, PHM, processing etc., market sector reforms for domestic marketing system, setting a system for market survey, market intelligence, market information, product development, product promotion in place - especially with respect to transit markets and export destinations, application of IT in agriculture extension and information dissemination, assessment of HRD needs in changed scenario and increased participation of private sector and women.

14.4 Infrastructures required to be developed as a long term strategy has been identified as - cold chain as per requirement identified after proper mapping, minor port at in Sindhudurg and Ratnagiri districts to facilitate direct exports cutting down transport cost, Cashew processing units in Konkan, Food parks for processing of major fruits which requires expensive and hi-tech common facilities for fruits such as oranges, sweat lime, pomegranate, mangoes, Bio-technology park to facilitate availability of expensive infrastructure to industries, fully developed agri-export zones for grapes, mangoes, cashew, onion, pomegranate, oranges, banana etc.; modern flower auction house, air cargo terminal with cold chain at Mumbai and Nagpur, rural godowns for storage of non perishable farm produce, farmer level onion storage system and market level hi-tech treatment system for enhancing shelf
life through irradiation, advanced and developed markets - on concept of NDDB markets for F & V, web based Market Information System and information Kiosks and video conferencing facilities for farmers- researchers-extension workers interface.

![Value of Exports from Maharashtra](image)

**Value of Exports from Maharashtra**

(Value : Rs. in crores)

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<th>Grapes</th>
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Value of exports from the state still have tremendous scope for expansion

14.5 Techno-infrastructure required for maintaining quality of inputs and quality of production in the context of the State has been identified as - Leaf and Tissue Analysis labs, Residue testing labs at Nashik, Thane, Aurangabad and Sangli, facilities for testing of planting material under new (draft) Seed Act, creation of facilities for testing as per National Guidelines under Plant Variety Protection Act 2001, phytosanitary labs at the level of phytosanitary certification agency, modernizing of quarantine testing facilities, short term and medium term Weather Forecasting Facilities, Pest and Disease Forecasting Centres, Bio-technology park to facilitate availability of common facilities, Bio-agent labs, Advance Fertilizer, Pesticide and Seed Testing Labs, Food Testing labs- to check quality standards of food material targeted for exports, upgraded Virology labs and advanced Soil & Water Testing labs. State should undertake establishment of such facilities in public / private partnership in a phased manner within a period of three years.
14.6 Technology and R & D needs as identified for agri exports are - varietal changes in F & V to meet the requirements of end users, scanning of planting material from various sources all over the world in F & V for selective imports for multiplication in public sector till public sector R & D has yielded desired results, advanced Technology for food processing including fruit processing for citrus, banana, pomegranate, sapota etc. for making RTS drinks etc., technology for advance packaging, technology for CA storage of tropical fruits, application of bio-technology in food processing and plant genetics, INM and management of micro nutrients to crops with special reference to horticulture crops, complete IPM package in horticulture crops, maize etc., further R & D for varietal development of hybrid seeds in paddy for Vidarbha region, tur, pulses and oilseeds including need base Breeder seeds, improving efficacy of bio fertilizers, short term and medium term weather forecasting system, pest and disease forecasting, crop health monitoring and area survey by satellite imageries for kharif and horticulture crops and technology for leaf and tissue analysis for making recommendations for INM.

14.7 Human Resource Development for Agri-exports is another area of concern for the state. Though the state is having basic infrastructure and facilities for human resource development, there is a need for expertise in many fields such as Micro irrigation services, IPM, INM, Green house technologies, controlled atmosphere for storage of fruits and vegetables, Agro information centres, certification of the produce as agricultural organic produce and export promotion.

14.8 State needs to take up an HRD programme for enabling / undertaking research in the field of identified frontier technologies, for other Priority Research and Adoption of Imported Technology, for Capacity Building for Technology Transfer to User Groups, for Capacity Building for Undertaking Self-employment in this Sector, for Application of IT in Agriculture and for Managerial Capacity Building-Review, Evaluation and Monitoring. For undertaking HRD program for such a magnitude and dimension, a multi-agency approach needs to be followed. For undertaking HRD in hi-tech agriculture, SAUs should be provided with model training centres dedicated to F & V, mushroom cultivation and floriculture.

14.9 Policy and structural reforms are needed with the introduction of New Seed Act. This would require setting up support system for testing with the finalization of subordinate legislation for PVP Act 2001. Market reforms, reforms for private sector investment in nonprofit making key infrastructure, reorganization of departments on farming system approach, tax policy reforms for food processing industries, tariff policy reforms for Hi-tech agriculture, import policy reforms for planting material in F & V in public sector for making new hybrids available to common farmers, SSI related policy reforms and Labour laws reforms are some of the areas needing urgent attention. Amendments to APMC Act to allow private investment in marketing, removal of certain food processing sector from SSI to attract investment, reduction in tariff on goods used for high-tech agriculture are few such examples, needing speedy reforms.
14.10 Suitable quality norms for horticulture produce should be evolved to make them applicable in the domestic market – an effort which will require coordination with center as well as other states- so that international standards could be achieved in phased manner even for domestic consumption. These quality norms or standards – national as well as international- should be made known to the growers.

14.11 With market access initiatives and new role of Indian consulates abroad and for greater synergy of agriculture and marketing departments, synergy of ICAR and CSIR institutions and for greater interface between MoC and MoA, a forum for coordination among all these institutions and airport authority, customs, airlines and exporters, railway etc. needs to be developed. A beginning could be made by merging departments of agriculture, horticulture and agricultural marketing.

14.12 A cabinet committee on agricultural trade may be constituted to bring together all the concerned departments and stakeholders for speedy decision on policy issues relating to agricultural exports.