

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS**New Agricultural Export Policy**

*16. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is working on a new Agricultural Export Policy in order to contribute to doubling farmers' income by 2022;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether India's agricultural goods exports have remained trapped in the US dollars 35-40 billion range while the share of exports too has been almost rigid, at 12.5-13 per cent; and

(d) if so, what steps Government is taking to improve in terms of its export promotion efforts?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SURESH PRABHU):

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Agriculture Export Policy has been approved by the Cabinet on 6th December 2018. The Agriculture Export Policy has the following vision:—

"Harness export potential of Indian agriculture, through suitable policy instruments, to make India a global power in agriculture, and raise farmers' income."

Inter-alia, the objectives of the Agriculture Export policy are as under:—

- (i) To diversify our export basket, destinations and boost high value and value added agricultural exports, including focus on perishables.
- (ii) To promote novel, indigenous, organic, ethnic, traditional and non-traditional Agri products exports.
- (iii) To provide an institutional mechanism for pursuing market access, tackling barriers and dealing with sanitary and phytosanitary issues.
- (iv) To strive to double India's share in world agri exports by integrating with global value chains.
- (v) Enable farmers to get benefit of export opportunities in overseas market.

The envisaged initiatives in the Agriculture Export Policy have been organised in two categories - Strategic and Operational - as detailed below:—

Strategic	Policy measures
	Infrastructure and logistics support
	Holistic approach to boost exports
	Greater involvement of State Governments in agri exports
Operational	Focus on Clusters
	Promoting value added exports
	Marketing and promotion of "Brand India"
	Attract private investments into production and processing
	Establishment of strong quality regimen
	Research & Development
	Miscellaneous

(c) and (d) Agricultural exports during the past few years have been as follows:—

Year	Agriculture exports (in USD million)	Total exports (in USD million)	Share of Agriculture exports in total exports
2013-14	42867.14	314415.73	13.63
2014-15	38706.20	310352.01	12.47
2015-16	32426.63	262291.09	12.36
2016-17	33283.41	275852.43	12.07
2017-18	38425.52	303526.16	12.66

Source: DGCIS

These exports have been impacted by factors like stagnant and falling global prices, the global economic slowdown, low crude oil prices impacting sugar, vegetable oils and other bio-fuels, subdued global demand, poor domestic crops (reduced acreage/poor yield/poor quality), lower international prices compared to domestic prices, currency movements in competing countries, international developments with respect to sanctions against Russia & Iran etc."

The Government has taken steps like removing ban on export of pulses and edible oils, removing export duty and minimum export price on export of certain commodities to boost agriculture exports. However, promotion of exports of agricultural products is an ongoing process. The Department of Commerce has several schemes to promote exports, including exports of agricultural products, viz. Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES), Market Access Initiatives (MAI) Scheme, Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) etc. In addition, assistance to the exporters of agricultural products is also available under the Export Promotion Schemes of Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), Tobacco Board, Tea Board, Coffee Board, Rubber Board and Spices Board. These organisations also seek to promote exports through participation in international fairs & exhibitions, taking initiatives to gain market access for different products in different markets, dissemination Of market intelligence, taking steps to ensure quality of exported products etc.

To further consolidate their efforts, Government has now introduced the Agriculture Export Policy to increase agriculture exports from the country.

Unemployment Rate

*17. SHRI JOSE K. MANI: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the country's unemployment rate is now at 6.9 per cent, the highest in two years;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) whether it is a fact that the informal sector of labour is yet to recover from demonetisation effect and employment has fallen since demonetisation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (c) As per the results of available labour force surveys on Employment-Unemployment conducted by Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour and Employment, the estimated unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years and above on usual status basis in the country in 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2015-16 was 4.0%, 3.4% and 3.7% respectively. There is no data available on unemployment subsequent to the period of demonetisation.

With a view to measure changes in the labour market on more frequent basis, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has launched (during 2017 18)