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Jai Kisan

ನಕಲಿ ರಸಗೊಬ್ಬರ ತನಿಖೆ ಸಿಐಡಿಗೆ

ದಂಧೆಕೋರರಿಗೆ ಅಂತಾರಾಜ್ಯ ನಂಟು | ಗಡಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿದ ಹಾವಳಿ

■ ರುದ್ರಣ್ಣ ಹರ್ತಿಕೋಟೆ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು

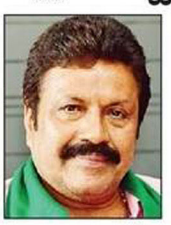
ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ನಕಲಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಕಾಳಸಂತೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ರಸಗೊಬ್ಬರ, ಕೀಟನಾಶಕ, ಬಿತ್ತನೆ ಬೀಜಗಳ ಮಾರಾಟ ಮಾಡುವ ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು ಹೆಚ್ಚುತ್ತ ಸರ್ಕಾರಕ್ಕೆ ಮತ್ತು ರೈತರಿಗೆ ನಷ್ಟವನ್ನುಂಟು ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದು, ತನಿಖೆಯನ್ನು ಸಿಐಡಿಗೆ ವಹಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಕಾಳಸಂತೆ ಹಾಗೂ ನಕಲಿ ಮಾರಾಟಕ್ಕೆ ಕಡಿವಾಣ ಹಾಕುವ ಉದ್ದೇಶದಿಂದ ಸರ್ಕಾರ ಕೃಷಿ ಇಲಾಖೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಜಾಗೃತ ದಳವನ್ನು ಬಲಪಡಿಸಿದೆ. ಆದರೆ, ಇದರಲ್ಲಿ ಅಂತಾರಾಜ್ಯ ಜಾಲ ಇರುವುದರಿಂದ ಅದನ್ನು ಬುಡಸಮೇತ ಕಿತ್ತು ಹಾಕಬೇಕೆಂದೇ ಸಿಐಡಿಗೆ ನೀಡಲಾಗಿದೆ. ರಸಗೊಬ್ಬರ, ಕೀಟನಾಶಕ, ಬಿತ್ತನೆ ಬೀಜ ನಕಲಿಯಾದರೆ ಅದು ರೈತರ ಪಾಲಿಗೆ ದೊಡ್ಡ ಹೊರೆಯಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಇವುಗಳನ್ನು ಬಳಸಿದರೆ ಕೃಷಿ ಉತ್ಪಾದನೆ ಶೇ.40ರಷ್ಟು ಕುಸಿತವಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಪ್ರತಿವರ್ಷ ರಸಗೊಬ್ಬರ ಹಾಗೂ ಕೀಟನಾಶಕದ ಸಾವಿರಾರು ಕೋಟಿ ರೂ. ಗಳ ವಹಿವಾಟು ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ನಡೆಯುತ್ತದೆ. ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಸರ್ಕಾರ ಸಾಕಷ್ಟು ಸಬ್ಸಿಡಿ ನೀಡುತ್ತದೆ. ಇಡೀ ದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿ ರೈತರು ಬಳಸುವ ರಸಗೊಬ್ಬರಕ್ಕೆ ವಾರ್ಷಿಕ ಅಂದಾಜು 2.89 ಲಕ್ಷ ಕೋಟಿ ರೂ. ಸಬ್ಸಿಡಿ ನೀಡಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ.

» ಈ ವರ್ಷ 103 ಪ್ರಕರಣ ಪತ್ತೆ
» ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು ಶಾಮೀಲು ಶಂಕೆ
» ನಕಲಿ ಗೊಬ್ಬರ, ಬೀಜ ಬಳಕೆಯಾದರೆ ಉತ್ಪಾದನೆ ಕುಸಿತ

ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಕೇಳಿದ ಸಿಐಡಿ: ಈ ವರ್ಷವೇ ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ 103 ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು ಪತ್ತೆಯಾಗಿವೆ. ಅದರಲ್ಲಿ ನಕಲಿ ರಸಗೊಬ್ಬರದ 11 ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಅಂತಾರಾಜ್ಯ ನಂಟು ಇರುವುದನ್ನು ಮನಗಂಡು ಸಿಐಡಿಗೆ ವಹಿಸುವ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಪೊಲೀಸ್ ಮಹಾ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರಿಗೆ ಕೃಷಿ ಸಚಿವ ಬಿ.ಸಿ. ಪಾಟೀಲ್ ಪತ್ರ ಬರೆದಿದ್ದರು. ಪುಟ 3A





ಜಾಗೃತದಳದವನ್ನು ಬಲಗೊಳಿಸಿದ ನಂತರ ದಾಳಿ ನಡೆಸಿ ಮೊಕದ್ದಮೆ ದಾಖಲಿಸಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಆದರೆ ಪೂರ್ಣ ಪ್ರಮಾಣದಲ್ಲಿ ನಕಲಿ ವಸ್ತುಗಳ ಮಾರಾಟ ಮಟ್ಟ ಹಾಕಲೇಬೇಕಾಗಿದೆ. ಅಂತಾರಾಜ್ಯ ಜಾಲ ಇರುವುದರಿಂದ ಸಿಐಡಿಗೆ ಒಪ್ಪಿಸಿದ್ದೇವೆ. ಆದಷ್ಟು ಬೇಗ ಮೂಲ ಪತ್ತೆಯಾಗಿ ಸಂಪೂರ್ಣ ನಿಯಂತ್ರಣಕ್ಕೆ ಬರುವ ವಿಶ್ವಾಸವಿದೆ.

| ಬಿ.ಸಿ. ಪಾಟೀಲ್ ಕೃಷಿ ಸಚಿವ

ಯಾವ ಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚು?

ನಕಲಿ ರಸಗೊಬ್ಬರ ಮಾರಾಟ ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳು ಕೋಲಾರ, ಯಾದಗಿರಿ, ಕೊಪ್ಪಳ, ಗದಗ, ಬೀದರ್, ವಿಜಯನಗರ, ಚಿತ್ರದುರ್ಗ, ಕೊಡಗು, ಮೈಸೂರು ಹಾಗೂ ಮಂಡ್ಯ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗಿ ಕಂಡು ಬರುತ್ತಿವೆ.

ನೆರೆ ರಾಜ್ಯಗಳಿಂದ ಸಾಗಣೆ

ನಕಲಿ ರಸಗೊಬ್ಬರ ಹಾಗೂ ಕೀಟನಾಶಕ ನೆರೆಯ ಆಂಧ್ರಪ್ರದೇಶ ಹಾಗೂ ತಮಿಳುನಾಡಿನ ಭಾಗದಿಂದ ರಾಜ್ಯಕ್ಕೆ ಬರುತ್ತಿದೆ; ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಗಡಿ ಭಾಗದ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗಿ ಮಾರಾಟವಾಗುತ್ತದೆ ಎಂಬ ಆರೋಪಗಳಿವೆ.

ಸಿಐಡಿಗೆ ಸೂಚನೆಗಳು

- ಆದಷ್ಟು ಬೇಗ ತನಿಖೆ ಪೂರ್ಣಗೊಳಿಸಬೇಕು
- ತಪ್ಪಿತಸ್ಥರನ್ನು ಹೆಡೆಮುರಿ ಕಟ್ಟಬೇಕು
- ರಾಜ್ಯಕ್ಕೆ ನಕಲಿ ರಸಗೊಬ್ಬರ, ಕೀಟನಾಶಕ ಸರಬರಾಜಾಗದಂತೆ ಬಿಗಿ ಮಾಡಬೇಕು

ಸಿಐಡಿ ತನಿಖೆಯೇ ಏಕೆ?

- ಅಂತಾರಾಜ್ಯ ಜಾಲ ಇರುವ ಶಂಕೆ
- ಜಾಗೃತ ದಳದಿಂದ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ತನಿಖೆ ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾಗದು
- ಸರ್ಕಾರ ಹಾಗೂ ರೈತರಿಗೆ ಆಗುವ ನಷ್ಟ ತಪ್ಪಿಸುವುದು

ಸಬ್ಸಿಡಿ ಎಷ್ಟು?

ಡಿಎಪಿ ಮೇಲೆ 2500.65 ರೂ., ಎಂಒಪಿ ಮೇಲೆ 759.30 ರೂ., ಕಾಂಪ್ಲೆಕ್ಸ್- 1734.45 ರೂ. ಹಾಗೂ ಯೂರಿಯಾಗೆ 1400 ರೂ. ಸಬ್ಸಿಡಿ ನೀಡಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಮಾರ್ಚ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಸರ್ಕಾರ ಸಬ್ಸಿಡಿಯನ್ನು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿಸಿದೆ.

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V-karnataka Pg 03

ಕರಾವಳಿ ಭತ್ತ ಕೃಷಿಕರು ಕಂಗಾಲು | ಖರೀದಿ ಕೇಂದ್ರ ತೆರೆಯಲು ಆಗ್ರಹ

ಕಟಾವಿಗೆ ಸಿದ್ಧಗೊಂಡರೂ ಭತ್ತಕ್ಕೆ ಬೆಂಬಲವಿಲ್ಲ!

■ ವಿಜಯ್ ಕೋಟ್ಯಾನ್ ಮಂಗಳೂರು
vijya.poojary@timesgroup.com

ಕರಾವಳಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಮುಖ್ಯ ಬೆಳೆ ಭತ್ತ ಕಟಾವಿಗೆ ಸಿದ್ಧಗೊಂಡಿದೆ. ಕಳೆದ ಒಂದು ವರ್ಷದಿಂದ ಅಕ್ಕಿ ದರ ಮೇಲೆ ಗಗನಕ್ಕೆ ಮುಖ ಮಾಡಿದೆ. ಆದರೆ ಸರಕಾರದಿಂದ ಇನ್ನೂ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ ಘೋಷಣೆಯಾಗದ ಕಾರಣ ಭತ್ತ ಕೃಷಿಕರು ಕಂಗಾಲಾಗಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಈ ಮಧ್ಯೆ ಕಾಳಸಂತೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಭತ್ತ ಖರೀದಿಗೆ ವ್ಯಾಪಾರಿಗಳು ಒಂಟಿ ಕಾಲಲ್ಲಿ ನಿಂತಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಕರಾವಳಿ ಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಾಕೃತಿಕ ವಿಕೋಪದಿಂದ ಜೂನ್ ಆರಂಭ ಹಾಗೂ ಮಧ್ಯ ಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ನಾಟಿ ಮಾಡಲಾದ ಭತ್ತದ ಕೃಷಿ ಬಹುತೇಕ ಹಾನಿಯಾಗಿದೆ. ಈ ಬಾರಿ ಮಳೆ ತುಸು ವಿಳಂಬವಾದ ಕಾರಣ ದೀಪಾವಳಿ ಮುಗಿದ ಕೂಡಲೇ ಎಲ್ಲೆಡೆ ಭತ್ತ ಕಟಾವು ಆರಂಭವಾಗಲಿದೆ. ಆದರೆ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸರಕಾರದಿಂದ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆಗೆ ರೈತರು ಕಾಯುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ (ಎಂಎಸ್‌ಪಿ) ಯೋಜನೆ ಪ್ರಕಾರ ಗ್ರೇಡ್ ಎ ಭತ್ತಕ್ಕೆ ಕ್ವಿಂಟಾಲ್ 2060 ರೂ., ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ 2040 ರೂ. ಇದೆ. ಎಂಎಸ್‌ಪಿಗಿಂತಲೂ ಕಡಿಮೆ ಬೆಲೆಗೆ ಭತ್ತ ಖರೀದಿ ಮಾಡಿದರೆ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸರಕಾರ ಕೂಡಲೇ ಮಧ್ಯಪ್ರವೇಶ ಮಾಡಬೇಕು. ಆದರೆ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸರಕಾರ ಮಾತ್ರ ಇನ್ನೂ ಭತ್ತದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಉತ್ಸಾಹ ತೋರಿದಂತಿಲ್ಲ. ಇದರಿಂದ ಕಾಳಸಂತೆಯಲ್ಲಿ 1800 ರೂ.ನಿಂದ 1900 ರೂ. ಭತ್ತ ಖರೀದಿಗೆ ಭತ್ತ ಮಿಲ್‌ಗಳ ಪ್ರತಿನಿಧಿಗಳು ಕಾದು ಕುಳಿತಿದ್ದಾರೆ.



ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಸರಕಾರ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಿ, ಖರೀದಿ ಕೇಂದ್ರಗಳ ಮೂಲಕ ಖರೀದಿಸುವಂತೆ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸರಕಾರ ಆದೇಶ ಮಾಡಿದ್ದರೂ, ಇನ್ನೂ ಖರೀದಿ ಕೇಂದ್ರಗಳು ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಆರಂಭವಾಗಿಲ್ಲ.

ಕಾರ್ಮಿಕರ ಕೊರತೆ

ಕರಾವಳಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಭತ್ತ ಕೃಷಿಯ ನಾಟಿ ಮತ್ತು ಕಟಾವಿಗೆ ಕಾರ್ಮಿಕರ ಕೊರತೆ ದೊಡ್ಡ ಮಟ್ಟದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾಡುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಇದರಿಂದ ಕರಾವಳಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಈ ಬಾರಿ ಶೇ.30ಕ್ಕೂ ಅಧಿಕ ಮಂದಿ ನಾಟಿ ಬದಲು ಬಿತ್ತನೆಗೆ ಮೊರೆ ಹೋಗಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಇದರಿಂದ ಬಹುತೇಕ ಭತ್ತದ ಕೊಯ್ಲು ಯಂತ್ರಗಳನ್ನು ಬಳಸಿಯೇ ನಡೆಯಲಿದೆ.

ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸರಕಾರದಿಂದ ವಿಳಂಬ

ಡಿಸೆಂಬರ್-ಜನವರಿ ತಿಂಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಭತ್ತಕ್ಕೆ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ ಘೋಷಿಸುವುದರಿಂದ ಕರಾವಳಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ಭತ್ತ ಕೃಷಿಕರಿಗೆ ಯಾವುದೇ ಪ್ರಯೋಜನ ಸಿಗುತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ. ಭತ್ತವನ್ನು ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಕಾಲ ಮನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ದಾಸ್ತಾನು ಇಡುವುದು ಅಸಾಧ್ಯವಾದ ಕಾರಣ ಸಿಕ್ಕ ಬೆಲೆ ಭತ್ತವನ್ನು ಮಾರಾಟ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಾರೆ ಎನ್ನುತ್ತಾರೆ ಪ್ರಗತಿಪರ ಕೃಷಿಕ ಗೋಪಾಲಕೃಷ್ಣ ಭಂಡಾರಿ.

ಭತ್ತದ ಬೆಲೆ ಪ್ರಮಾಣ

ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಸಕ್ತ ವರ್ಷ 3,07,033 ಹೆಕ್ಟೇರ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ ಭತ್ತ ಕೃಷಿ ಮಾಡಲಾಗಿದ್ದು, 13.49 ಲಕ್ಷ ಟನ್ ಭತ್ತ ಉತ್ಪಾದನೆ ಅಂದಾಜಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ರಾಯಚೂರು, ಕೊಪ್ಪಳ, ಬಳ್ಳಾರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಗರಿಷ್ಠ ಹಾಗೂ ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ಕನ್ನಡ, ಉಡುಪಿ, ಉತ್ತರ ಕನ್ನಡ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ, ಮಂಡ್ಯ, ಶಿವಮೊಗ್ಗ, ಮೈಸೂರು, ಯಾದಗಿರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಭತ್ತ ಬೆಳೆಯಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಆದರೆ ಹಿಂದಿನ ಪ್ರಮಾಣಕ್ಕೆ ಹೋಲಿಸಿದರೆ ಕರಾವಳಿ ಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಭತ್ತ ಬೆಳೆ ಶೇ. 20ರಷ್ಟು ಇಳಿಕೆಯಾಗಿದೆ.

ಭತ್ತಕ್ಕೆ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದಂತೆ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸರಕಾರದಿಂದ ಈ ವರ್ಷ ಯಾವುದೇ ಆದೇಶ ಬಂದಿಲ್ಲ. ಕರಾವಳಿ ಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಆಕ್ಟೋಬರ್ ತಿಂಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಭತ್ತದ ಕಟಾವು ನಡೆಯುತ್ತಿದ್ದು, ಶೀಘ್ರ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ ಘೋಷಿಸಿ, ಖರೀದಿ ಕೇಂದ್ರ ತೆರೆಯಲು ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸರಕಾರಕ್ಕೆ ಪ್ರಸ್ತಾವನೆ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

-ಡಾ. ಕೆ.ವಿ. ರಾಜೇಂದ್ರ
ದ.ಕ. ಜಿಲ್ಲಾಧಿಕಾರಿ

A crisis is brewing in the coffee industry

Coffee cultivation is becoming an increasingly loss-making proposition in India. Already weighed down by the high cost of inputs and production as well as labour shortage, the industry is now also affected by changes in climate patterns, reports **Mini Tejaswi** from Karnataka's coffee heartland

Bose Mandanna was devastated when torrential rains in September thrashed the coffee plants in his plantation and left tender berries and leaves strewn everywhere. The plants stood partially submerged in water for weeks at Subramanya Estate in Suntikoppa in Kodagu district of south Karnataka. Soon, the plants began to rot. Mandanna was among the hundreds of coffee growers in the region to suffer this plight.

In the coffee heartland of Karnataka, comprising the Kodagu, Chikkamagaluru and Hassan districts, big and small planters narrate stories of destruction caused by heavy rains between July and September. The impact of the rains continues, with diseases affecting plants, and estate infrastructure suffering long-term damage. Plantations in Wayanad in Kerala and Palani in Tamil Nadu have also suffered similar losses. "Erratic weather conditions are helping pests to breed and new diseases to emerge," says H.T. Pramod, former Chairman of Karnataka Planters' Association (KPA) and owner of Hulikere Estate in Chikkamagaluru.



Drastic changes in climate patterns over the last few years have adversely impacted India's coffee production and the quality of the crop. There were dry spells between 2015 and 2017 and unseasonal heavy rains, floods and landslides between 2018 and 2022. According to the Coffee Board of India's post-blossom estimate, production for the 2022 crop year was estimated at 3,93,400 metric tonnes. But given the extreme climatic conditions, it is anticipated to be some 30% lower.

The KPA reported fruit rot, stalk rot, root rot and other irreparable damage due to heavy rainfall and landslides. "Affected by stalk rot and root rot, berries turned black and dropped," says KPA Chairman N. Ramanathan. "Coffee growers are facing a severe financial crisis due to the vagaries of nature." The KPA expects this year's production to be down by 35%. "Coffee, which is supposed to be harvested by December, is largely damaged," says Mandanna, who is also a former member of the Coffee Board.

Most growers fear that the frequently occurring pattern of droughts and floods could wipe out plantations. "Sturdy and weather-resistant varieties of coffee may help, but sadly the government is not providing adequate funds to coffee research stations to develop these," says Pramod.

Cost of financing and existing debts

Climate change has only compounded the financial issues of growers that have been in the making for long. The volatility in market prices and the reduced influence of producers in the value chain render coffee cultivation an increasingly loss-making proposition. "Producers are getting marginalised. This is rapidly turning out to be a buyer-driven commodity market," says Ajoy Thipaiah, Coffee Committee Chairman of the United Planters' Association of Southern India (UPASI).

> Erratic weather conditions are helping pests to breed and new diseases to emerge.
>
> **H.T. PRAMOD**
> Former Chairman, Karnataka Planters' Association

More than 75% of Indian coffee production is exported. This has an impact on the cost competitiveness of Indian coffee vis-à-vis the coffee that is exported from other producer regions, especially since those growers get their finances at very low interest rates, explains Mr. Thipaiah.

According to Jeffry Rebello, President, UPASI, the cost of financing is one of the biggest challenges of the coffee sector. Most private banks insist that growers provide collateral for financing. Since small and medium-size growers are invariably not in a position to provide collateral, the interest rates are high, at around 12%. International interest rates, on the other hand, are negligible, mostly in single digits. This is an advantage for competing coffee-producing regions.

Although the latest position of the industry's debt outstanding is not available, as per the information compiled by UPASI at the end of 2019, there were around 1,98,000 short-term loan accounts and 5,05,000 long-term loan accounts outstanding, amounting to ₹395.54 crore and ₹40.4 crore, respectively. UPASI and other producer associations have already requested the Coffee Board to recommend the implementation of a special package in line with the Special Coffee Term Loan, expected to be announced later this year, to rescue coffee growers.

"Also, due to the rise in the cost of inputs year on year and the increase in the cost of labour and benefits, which constitute 60% to 70% of total plantation expenditure, coffee growers are left with very little money in hand. This is not adequate to repay loans," says Ramanathan.

In spite of requests from coffee associations and circulars from the Reserve Bank of India and the State Level Bankers' Committee, banks have not restructured the loans. The accounts of many coffee growers have turned to non-performing assets (NPAs). These growers are now facing recovery proceedings under the SARFAESI Act (Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act), which gives banks the right to possess the security provided by the defaulting borrower against the loan and sell it to recover losses, without any intervention by any court of law. The KPA had also made a representation to the Union government requesting it to exclude plantations from the provisions of the SARFAESI Act and from the purview of CIBIL (Credit Information Bureau India Limited). "Banks are only worried about controlling their NPAs. Home loans and vehicle loans are now cheaper than agriculture loans, and interests are on the rise in general," says Rohith Halase Rajagopal of Hoowinahuckloo and Kerehuckloo Estates in Balehonnur, Chikkamagaluru.



Workers plant new saplings in Chikkamagaluru district. MURALI KUMAR K.

Low productivity, high cost of production

In India, production of coffee is low while the cost of production is on the rise compared to other coffee countries such as Vietnam and Brazil. In Brazil, labour charges account for 25% of the entire production cost, but in India, planters say they account for about 65%. It is possible to bring down the cost of production to some extent through mechanisation, but India's coffee terrains and topography limit this possibility. At the same time, Indian coffee has a unique positioning as it is shade-grown and grown at elevations, while other major producing countries grow coffee in flat lands.

"We need to take advantage of this by aggressively promoting our shade-grown coffee in the global markets," says a UPASI representative. However, Shirish Vijayendra, former chairman of the KPA, says, "There is no official price setting mechanism even in the domestic market. So, traders and curers are calling the shots and fixing prices, and growers are at their mercy."

> Producers are getting marginalised. This is rapidly turning out to be a buyer-driven commodity market.
>
> **AJOY THIPAIAH**
> Coffee Committee Chairman, United Planters' Association of Southern India

The cost of production per acre has gone up substantially to ₹80,000-85,000 from ₹50,000 five years ago. The cost of inputs around coffee such as fertilizers and agrochemicals has increased by almost 20% in a year, says Ramesh Rajah, President, Coffee Exporters' Association.

According to Ashok Kurien Kandathil, Managing Director of Balanoor Plantations and Industry at Jayapura, Chikkamagaluru, plantations face power cuts during the summer months. This makes irrigation expensive as the cost of diesel is high. "The high cost of inputs leads to the high cost of production which is the main problem for coffee growers. It makes coffee cultivation unviable," Kandathil says. Earlier, the cost of production would go up by 4% to 5% annually, but now it goes up at least 20% annually, notes Anil Kumar Bhandari, President of India Coffee Trust and a large planter from Suntikoppa in Kodagu.

There is increasingly a shortage of labour while the cost of labour is on the rise in the coffee sector. The children of workers in all the three coffee-growing States – Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala – prefer to move to urban areas. This means plantations are forced to depend heavily on migrant labours who are unskilled. "A lot of effort, time and energy has to be invested in training migrant labours. As wage costs are not linked to productivity, growers are mandated to pay the usual wage along with other social costs such as housing and medicines, which adds up some 30% more to the wages," says Rajah.

Most plantations simply don't find skilled labour, especially for tasks such as shade-lopping, pruning, and borer tracing, says Vijayendra.

The way forward

The way forward, many feel, is finding alternative sources of revenue and increasing domestic consumption on the one hand and branding and promoting Indian coffee better in the global market on the other.

Coffee Board CEO K.G. Jagadeesha says growers should create additional revenue streams through inter-cropping or through innovative measures. According to the board, in addition to traditional inter-cropping of pepper and cardamom, coffee growers could try planting exotic fruit-bearing trees, food crops, or getting into fish farming, dairy farming, apiary or green tourism to increase incomes from their coffee gardens.

In fact, some like Arasu, a progressive farmer from Thandikudi in Dindigul district in Tamil Nadu, and B.H Mohankumar, from Sakleshpur in Chikkamagaluru district, are growing avocados, mangosteens, oranges, guavas and other fruit-bearing trees, amid their coffee plants. In some seasons they say they have even earned more money from these than from coffee and pepper.

"Considering the change in land use, the government could permit growers to plant alternate crops in a land not suitable for coffee cultivation. Timely conversion will prevent growers from going financially sick," says Kandathil.

Identity crisis in global markets

On the brand front, Indian coffee is still facing an identity crisis in global markets, although the country started exporting coffee actively before the 19th century.

Indian coffee is highly rated and commands premium prices in the global coffee markets. But a global buyer of Indian coffee may not know about the brew's India connection as they would have bought it from a coffee roaster. The fact that India sells Robusta and Arabic at a price higher than the hugely advertised Colombia is an indication of the brand building done by the Indian exporter and the quality of Indian coffee. Yet, Indian coffee does not have an individual brand identity in the international markets, say growers and exporters. "Indian coffee was never considered a separate origin coffee. It was always used as filler," says Mandanna.

This is despite Indian coffee offering innumerable flavours, aromas and blends. The commodity, for several decades, enjoyed a special position in India's export lists. According to Mandanna, coffee was an important export item for the Union government, when the commodity's exports were in the range of ₹4,000-₹5,000 crore annually. But around 20 years ago, with the IT and services sector dominating the exports industry, coffee lost its prominence in the power corridors, especially in the Ministry of Commerce.

Coffee has high value and high imagery potential at home and overseas markets, says Harish Bijoor, branding expert and CEO of Harish Bijoor Consults Inc. Over the years the humble berry has been able to value-add. From being handled and sold as a berry, a green bean, a processed bean, a roasted bean and now a roasted and ground offering, coffee has climbed the hierarchy of value-addition, he says.

"India has several speciality coffees and over three dozen estate brands for the global markets. Many more are in the making. The cuppers, graders and tasters are trying to tell a unique story about the origin of a particular coffee. Indian green coffee on its own is capable of fetching premium prices in the global markets," says Sunalini Menon, founder of Bangalore-based Coffeelab.

Even after getting out of the shackles of the pooling system in 1996, in which the Coffee Board and the government controlled the trade of coffee, the bean maintained a special status as a valuable export commodity for a long time. It earned recognition across the agriculture, commerce, finance and environment ministries as a serious forex earner for the exchequer.

India's share in the global coffee market may be less than 5%, but the coffee sector is hopeful that the Coffee Act and the new Coffee (Promotion and Development Bill), 2022, will do away the 80-year-old coffee regulation and usher in change. As a precursor, the Coffee Board has embarked on a series of initiatives to unleash the full potential of the cuppa in the domestic and global markets. It is working on a separate India brand and certification system for coffee growers.

The coffee community in India, comprising close to 4 lakh coffee growers, hundreds of large planters, associations that represent growers, planters, curers and exporters, and over a dozen Fair Trade Organisations, hopes to boost coffee in the domestic and international markets and counter the problems the industry faces.

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ಅ.29ರಿಂದ ಕಾಫಿ ಸಂತೆ



ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು: ಮಹಿಳೆ ಕಾಫಿ ಅಲೈಯನ್ಸ್ -ಇಂಡಿಯಾ ಚಾಪ್ಟರ್ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಕಾಫಿ ಸಂತೆಯ 6 ನೇ ಆವೃತ್ತಿಯನ್ನು ಅ.29,30 ರಂದು ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನ ಜಯಮಹಲ್ ಪ್ಯಾಲೇಸ್ ಹೋಟೆಲ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ ನಡೆಯಲಿದೆ.

ಈ ಕುರಿತು ಮಾತನಾಡಿದ ಮಹಿಳೆ ಕಾಫಿ ಅಲೈಯನ್ಸ್ -ಇಂಡಿಯಾ ಚಾಪ್ಟರ್ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷೆ ಸುನಾಲಿನಿ ಮೆನನ್, ಭಾರತದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಪ್ರದಾಯಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಾಂಪ್ರದಾಯಕವಲ್ಲದ ಕಾಫಿ ಬೆಳೆಯುವ ಪ್ರದೇಶಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಮಹಿಳಾ -ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಹೆಣ್ಣು ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣಕ್ಕೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದ ಯೋಜನೆಗಳನ್ನು ಬೆಂಬಲಿಸಲು ನಿಧಿ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಣೆ ಪ್ರಮುಖ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮವಾಗಿದೆ.ಕಾಫಿ ತೋಟಗಳ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಕಾರ್ಮಿಕರು ಮತ್ತು ಅವರ ಹೆಣ್ಣು ಮಕ್ಕಳನ್ನು ಸಬಲೀಕರಣ ಗೊಳಿಸುವುದು ಮೂಲಕ ಉದ್ದೇಶವಾಗಿದೆ. ಕಾ ಸಂತೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನಿವಾಸಿಗಳ ನಿರೀಕ್ಷಿತ ವಿವಿಧ ಬಗ್ಗೆಯ ಕಾಫಿ ಬೀಗಗಳು ಮತ್ತುಬ್ರೂಗಳು , ಹೊಸ ಕಾಫಿ ಉತ್ಪನ್ನಗಳನ್ನು ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಬಂಧಿತ ಆಹಾರಗಳ ಬಿಡುಗಡೆ ಮಾಡಲಾಗುವುದು. ವುಮೆನ್ ಸ್ಟಾರ್ಟ್‌ಬ್ರೂಯಿಂಗ್ ಸ್ಕಿಲ್ಸ್ ಚಾಂಪಿಯನ್ ಶಿಪ್ ಸ್ಪರ್ಧೆ, ವುಮನ್ ಸ್ಟಾರ್ಟ್ ಬ್ರೂವರ್ ಸ್ಕಿಲ್ ಚಾಂಪಿಯನ್ ಶಿಪ್, ಕಾಫಿ ನಕ್ಷತ್ರ ಸ್ಪರ್ಧೆ ನಡೆಯಲಿದ್ದು, ಭಾನುವಾರ ವಿಜೇತರಿಗೆ ಪ್ರಶಸ್ತಿ ಪ್ರದಾನ ಮಾಡಲಾಗುವುದು. 65 ಮಳಿಗೆಗಳು ಇರಲಿದ್ದು 35 ಕಾಫಿ ಮಳಿಗೆಗಳು ಇರಲಿವೆ. ಈ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮವನ್ನು ಕಾಫಿ ಮಿಶೀನ್ಸ್ ಇಂಡಿಯಾ ಪ್ರೈವೆಟ್ ಲಿಮಿಟೆಡ್, ಸಿಸಿಎಲ್ ಸಿಎಲ್ ಪ್ರಾಡಕ್ಟ್ ಇಂಡಿಯಾ ಪ್ರೈವೇಟ್ ಲಿಮಿಟೆಡ್, ಸೈಪಾಲಿ ಕಾ ಅಸೋಸಿಯೇಷನ್ ಆಫ್ ಇಂಡಿಯಾ ಪ್ರಯೋಜಕತೆಯನ್ನು ವಹಿಸಿದೆ ಎಂದರು.

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Export restrictions affect global food security. Export taxes or tariff rate quotas can be alternatives

A Healthier Menu Needed



Pradeep S Mehta

There are multiple issues vying for urgent global attention today. But the matter of food insecurity is a critical one. From vaccines, migrants, climate finance to food and hunger, the invocation of national interests in transboundary issues often pits sovereignty against international cooperation. Sometimes a balance is maintained. Often, a solution is found that is of detriment to both. Food export restrictions are the perfect example of the counterproductivity brought by the latter.

When governments impose export restrictions on agricultural products (for legitimate reasons), they have a domino effect on similar inward measures. This ultimately reduces global supply and adds to food inflation, thereby harming the poorest consumers worldwide, directly and indirectly. Multiple studies have time and again demonstrated that export restrictions do not necessarily improve food security in countries imposing them, especially in the medium-to-long run. Worst of all, when restrictions are taken without regard to net food-importing countries, it undermines international trade by incentivising self-sufficiency over specialisation.

Get the Export of Things

Even when these restrictions are successful in shielding the domestic market from international volatility, net economic welfare losses pile up due to distortion of prices. According to a 2011 CUTS (Consumer Unity & Trust Society) International study, the 2008 export restrictions on rice by India resulted in a net decline in global economic welfare amounting to $6.38 billion. Beyond this, in the long run, export restrictions also disincentivise farmers from increasing productive capacity — the ultimate tool for increasing supply and bringing down prices, locally as well as globally.

Yet, such restrictions have their own utility. For example, India's export ban on wheat this May tried to balance various domestic and international priorities. It brought down local wheat prices slightly, giving some relief to consumers. Further, by exempting select vulnerable countries in the immediate and extended neighbourhood, it allowed India to play an important role in mitigating the food crisis while strengthening its geopolitical ties.

Wheat was not the last commodity to be banned. Just last month, India imposed an export ban on broken rice and a 20% export tax on select rice varieties. Noticeably, unlike the wheat ban, this measure does not come with similar relaxations.

However, despite various negative outcomes, it is very difficult to have a bar on restrictions on food exports. This was recognised in the latest World Trade Organisation (WTO) ministerial decision on the exemption of World Food Programme food purchases from export prohibitions. Even as members tried to address the humanitarian issues emanating from such prohibitions, they emphasised on the member's right to adopt measures to ensure domestic food security. Other international rules under the WTO also exist to govern such measures.

For more balanced and transparent policymaking, one must first aim for a better understanding and application of the rules that already exist. For instance, apart from stricter implementation of existing notification requirements, we need greater clarity and objectivity about the scope of terms such as 'essential' and 'critical shortages'. What does it really mean to take into account the interests of the importing countries?

Apart from stricter implementation of notification requirements, we need greater clarity and objectivity about the scope of 'essential' and 'critical shortages'



Crack down on cereal killers

Beyond such definitional clarity, we also need practical guidance on issues involving the timing and purpose of such restrictions. Should members impose export restrictions as preventive measures? Should export restrictions on agricultural produce be imposed for reasons other than safeguarding food security? This is crucial, especially in respect to the ban on broken rice that has ostensibly been imposed to prevent the disruption of ethanol production meant for blending with fuel.

Let Policy Grow on Us

Various regional trading agreements (RTAs) have advanced disciplines on the treatment of essential goods and turned export restrictions into measures of last resort. RTAs such as the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement and the EU-Vietnam free trade agreement contain various provisions, including mandatory explanations, overall time limits on export restrictions and time-bound reviews for enhanced accountability and transparency.

Even with the external pressure of regional commitments, food restrictions can only be eliminated if governments have alternative measures. Export taxes or tariff rate quotas provide sufficient flexibility to balance domestic imperatives with global ones.

India should look at such alternatives to mitigate the adverse effects of its export prohibitions. Precise instantiation of triggers for such taxes and their calibration to domestic production will also reduce the overall ad hocism in India's agricultural export policy, which holds its farmers hostage to uncertainty.

Beyond trade, other structural issues impacting agriculture globally and locally must be resolved for improving agricultural productivity and sustainability. International policy coherence between norms and initiatives relating to trade, developmental assistance and climate change could prevent and mitigate the disruptions in agricultural trade brought by domestic as well as international crises. Notably, both bans on wheat and broken rice have been exacerbated by climate-related stress — heatwaves and reduced rainfall respectively.

Further, the desirability of equal international attention and cooperation on agricultural inputs cannot be overstated. India's ambition to feed the world must start with the realisation of the importance of such a synchronised approach to global food security. The first step, however, involves a deeper introspection and correction of policies that are detracting from these noble objectives.

The writer is secretary general, CUTS (Consumer Unity & Trust Society) International. Inputs by Sneha Singh

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