



Strengthening India's Spice Industry

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Why in News?

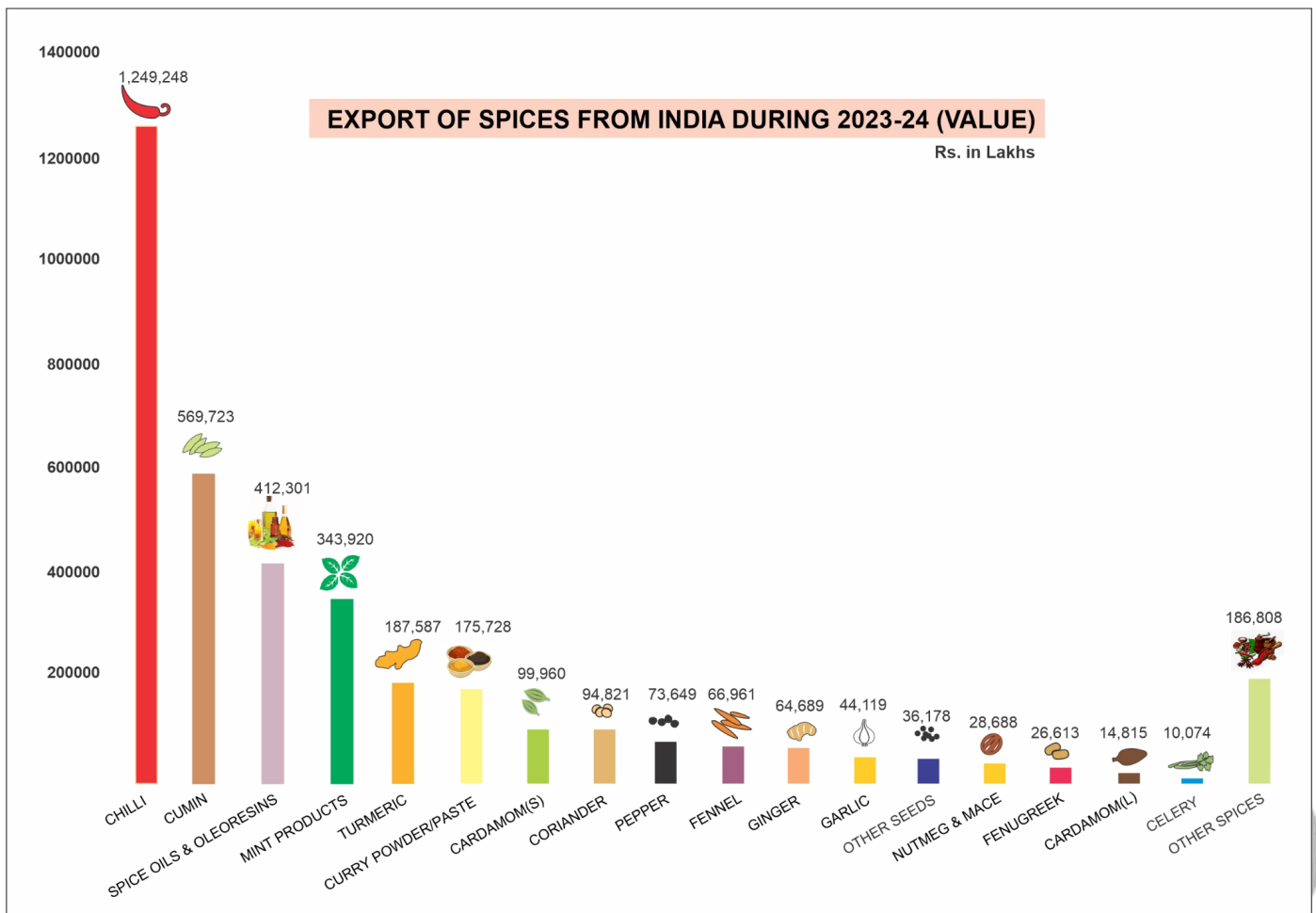
The **World Spice Organisation (WSO)** highlights that despite being the **largest spice producer**, India holds just **0.7% of the global seasoning market**, and calls for higher production, value addition, to achieve the USD 10 billion export target by 2030.

Note: The WSO, headquartered in Kochi, Kerala, is a **not-for-profit organisation** focused on food safety, sustainability, and biodiversity in the spice industry.

What is the Status of Spice in India?

- **Production:** In 2022-23, India produced **11.14 million tonnes of spices**, a slight increase from 11.12 million tonnes in 2021-22.
 - India produces **75 of 109 [International Organization for Standardization \(ISO\)](#)-listed spice varieties**, with **chilli, cumin, turmeric, ginger, and coriander** accounting for **76% of total production**.
 - In terms of production, garlic, ginger and chilli were the top three spices produced in FY23.
- **Largest Spices-Producing States:** Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Assam, etc.
- **Exports:** Major exports include **pepper, cardamom, celery, fennel, fenugreek, garlic, nutmeg, curry powder, and spice oils**.
 - In 2023-2024, India exported spices worth **USD 4.4 billion (nearly 14 lakh tonnes)**. **Chilli is India's top exported spice**, accounting for 31% of total spice exports.
 - India exports spices to 200 destinations worldwide, with **China, Bangladesh, West Asian countries, and the US** being key markets.

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- **Concerns:** Despite being a leader in raw spice exports, India holds only **0.7% of the global seasoning market**, far behind China (12%) and the US (11%).
 - This is due to **low value addition**, with only 48% of exports being processed products.
 - Instances of **Adulteration and pesticide residues** have led to export rejections, tarnishing India's reputation in international markets.
 - Growing competition from **Vietnam, Indonesia, Brazil, China**, and countries like Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Madagascar further challenges India's dominance.
 - Heavy reliance on **traditional crop varieties**, poor processing, and inadequate post-harvest handling reduce quality and shelf life. Additionally, limited mechanization increases production costs and lowers efficiency.
- **Measures to Expand Market:** Country's share in value-added spices should rise up to 70%.
 - India's 15 agro-climatic zones support diverse spice cultivation. Developing **high-yielding and climate-resistant varieties** can boost production and enhance exports.

Government Initiatives to Boost Spice Production & Exports

- **Spices Board of India (SBI):** Established under the **Spices Board Act 1986**, functions under the **Ministry of Commerce & Industry**.
 - **SBI**, headquartered in Kochi, Kerala, promotes cardamom and 52 spices, regulates quality, supports research, and links Indian exporters to global markets.
 - **National Sustainable Spice Program (NSSP)** under SBI and WSO unites stakeholders to address sustainability in India's spice industry.
- **Spices Parks:** SBI established **eight crop specific Spices Parks** across the country, to assist farmers in post-harvest handling, value addition, and better pricing.
- **Spice Complex in Sikkim:** Aimed at improving **spice processing and value addition** in the Northeastern region.

Drishti Mains Question:

What are the major challenges faced by India's spice industry in terms of competition, quality control, and processing? Suggest measures to address these issues

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. The staple commodities of export by the English East India Company from Bengal in the middle of the 18th century were: (2018)

- (a) Raw cotton, oil-seeds and opium
- (b) Sugar, salt, zinc and lead
- (c) Copper, silver, gold, spices and tea
- (d) Cotton, silk, saltpetre and opium

Ans: (d)

Q. In making the saffron spice, which one of the following parts of the plant is used? (2009)

- (a) Leaf
- (b) Petal
- (c) Sepal
- (d) Stigma

Ans: (d)

- Saffron is one of the most expensive spices in the world. It is made from the stigma of the flower Saffron crocus.
- Female reproductive part of a flower, pistil, consists of ovary, style, and stigma. Stigma is the part that gets pollen from the pollinating agents.
- **Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer**