RNI NO: MAHENG/2007/23118

December 16-31, 2016 | ₹60

All Your Ingredients In One Magazine

Ingredients SOUTH ASIA

A Saffron Media Publication

Vol. 10, Issue 6, Pages-84

26.3 kg fish consumed in Far East each year

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Introduction

Fish and fish products play a highly important role in the food and nutritional security of rural, urban and coastal populations throughout Asia and the Pacific. The world average per capita fish consumption increased from an average of 9.9kg in the 1960s to 20kg in 2015, according to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). The fishery products accounted for one per cent of the total global merchandise trade in value terms with a worldwide export amounted to $148 billion in 2014, from $8 billion in 1976. The noticeable average per capita fish consumption in industrialised countries is found out to be 26.8kg, and it is important to note that the growth has be catapulted across the globe too in a similar fashion. Along with the increase in production, many other contributive factors such as urbanisation, income rise, increase in choice due to international trade, population growth, better utilisation, etc. are responsible for the steady growth in fish consumption.

The Far East collectively refers to the countries that are farthest from the Near East and the Middle East, and encompasses East Asia, otherwise known as Northeast Asia. The major countries in the Far East include China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Taiwan, the Philippines and Indonesia. These countries contribute to more than 60 per cent of the production and around 40 per cent of the merchandise. These countries contribute to more than 25 per cent of the global economy in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) and harbours around 25 per cent of the world's population. Fish consumption is high, with an average of 26.3kg/year, and the countries of the sub-region are very active international traders. The major inland fish species consumed included tilapia, catfish, carp, perch and snakehead and the marine species commonly eaten include tuna, anchovy, sardines, mackerel, scad, shad and milkfish. The sub-region as a whole, however, is now a net importer of fish and fishery products due to high importation of fish and fishery products by Japan and China. The fish consumption, except in Mongolia and North Korea, is almost double or more of the world's per capita fish consumption, offering immense scope for trade for the future *(Table-1)*.

Sustainable contribution of fisheries

The demand and supply prospects studies carried out by FAO on the sustainable contribution of fisheries to food security in the region indicated that, by the year 2030, substantially more fish will be required to sustain the demand from the expanding population. In the East Asian sub-region, the demand for fish will increase in both volume and per capita terms in some areas. Considering the expanding populations of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People Republic of Korea (DPRK), the requirement for food fish could be five million tonnes (MT) by 2030, and by including non-food items and export of fish and fishery products, the total supply requirement may be approximately 10 MT, or five MT above the current level.

Table 1. Economy, demography and fish consumption in the Far Eastern countries

Country	GDP ($ billion)	Population (million)	Per capita fish consumption(kg/year)
Indonesia	861.93	259	27.2
Japan	4123.26	125	53.o0
Malaysia	296.22	31	58.8
Mongolia	11.76	3	0.4
North Korea	17.4	25	10.8
Phillipines	291.97	103	34.7
South Korea	1377.87	51	59.4
Taiwan	523.58	24	34
China	10866.44	1378	32.8

Indian seafood exports

After a sustained increase in the last few years, the seafood exports from India showed a decline in 2015-16 with the exports dropping 10 per cent in quantity and nine per cent in value from 2015 at 0.94 million tonnes, valued at at Rs 30,420.83 crore. The average unit value of frozen shrimp, which accounts for 66 per cent of the total value of Indian seafood exports, fell to $8.28 per kg from $10.38 in 2014-15. The revival of the shrimp aquaculture production, the depreciation of the euro, the weaker economic condition in China and the devaluation of the yen contributed to the decline in exports. Indian seafood exports touched an all-time high of Rs 33,442 with a volume of 10, 51,243 tonnes in 2014-15 with a continued average growth of 11 per cent in monetary terms and seven per cent in volume over the past five years.

The government of India has resorted to numerous policy shifts over the years in order to support the trade sector in the country. India's Look East policy in 1991 refers to the efforts to create extensive economic and strategic relations with the nations of Southeast Asia in order to strengthen itself as a regional power and a counterweight to the strategic influence of the People's Republic of China. The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries was significant as a major step in India's Look East policy in reducing its dependence on trade with the United States and the European Union and turning towards Southeast Asia, which will strengthen its regional dynamics. The Act East Policy (AEP), launched at the East Asia Summit in Myanmar in November 2014 and replaced the two-decade-old Look East policy, emphasising a more proactive role for India in this region. These policies offers new vistas for partnership on the Asia-Pacific region and are meant to create an enabling policy atmosphere in augmenting trade with the Far Eastern countries in terms of trade in goods as well as investment and services and in ensuring the continued leadership of Indian polity in the Far East.

CONTINUED ON P 48 ▶

Need to diversify exports across more countries

CONTINUED FROM P 46 ▶

Prospects of trade across Far East

China ranks first in the world for fish production and exports. As it has the largest population (1.34 billion) in 2011, the seafood consumption trends in the country have great effects on the global fishery market. It is expected that an increase in personal incomes will generate enough purchasing power to satisfy any domestic demand-supply gap with a further growth in imports. There are very distinct patterns in the consumption of aquatic products between the different regions in China. Major consumers are in China's coastal southern and southeastern provinces. This trend is generally reflected in both urban and rural consumption patterns. Aquatic product consumption is typically concentrated in China's coastal south-east provinces, which are also the bases of most aquacultural production. It has increased significantly in the past 10 years.

Second-largest seafood importer

Japan is the second-largest seafood importer in the world with an import market valued at C$16.2 billion in 2013, with the top supplier being China (whose share is 17.9 per cent). Japan's seafood exports in 2013 were valued at C$2.1 billion, with China being the third top export destination with a share of 12.8 per cent. The seafood consumption is Japan is showing a declining trend due to rise in meat and dairy consumption. Japan is a possible exception as fish consumption is already high and population growth close to zero, although preferences may change from lower-value to higher-value products because of increasing personal incomes. Japan will continue to rely on imports to satisfy its high demand for fish and fishery products.

Fish and fish product consumption in Indonesia was 12.8kg per capita per year (in 2011), representing 16.4 per cent of the total protein consumed. Consumption levels ranged from 26.4kg per capita per year in Maluku in the eastern part of the country to 4kg per capita per year in Yokyakarta. The high population density and relatively low fish consumption level in central Java brings the national average figure for consumption down, but it is clear that in most other parts of the country consumption levels are much higher. Marine fish accounted for over 70 per cent of consumption and inland species for some 25 per cent. Inland fish were a much higher percentage of the fish consumed in Central and South Kalimantan and West Java (33-36 per cent). Skipjack tuna was reported to be the most commonly consumed marine fish, followed by anchovy and Indian mackerel. For inland species, tilapia ranked first followed by catfish and common carp, these are principally aquaculture species. On a nationwide level, the majority of fish products (70 per cent by weight) are consumed fresh while 30 per cent are eaten as preserved or processed products. There were neither large observable differences between the types of fish consumed in urban and rural areas, nor in the quantity of fish consumed.

Fish and fish products

Consumption of fish and fish products in Mongolia, based on the household consumption survey was 0.18kg per capita per year (in 2008) and accounts for just 0.13 per cent of the total protein consumption in the country. The highest levels of consumption are recorded in the capital, Ulan Bator (0.28kg per capita per year). In both the eastern and western areas of the country, the figure falls to 0.07kg per capita per year. Urban dwellers consume just over twice as much fish as rural dwellers (0.23kg per capita per year and 0.10kg per capita per year respectively). Fresh fish makes up the majority of that consumed (67 per cent), followed by imported canned fish (28 per cent). Dried, salted or smoked fish, meanwhile, accounts for four per cent.

Fish consumption based on the household consumption survey in the Philippines was 40.2kg per capita per year (in 2008). Nationwide, there is a variation of about 3-5kg per capita per year from the national average. The highest fish consumption levels were recorded in Western Visayas and Caraga, which both stood at 46.7kg per capita per year. Canned fish and sardines, mackerel scad and milkfish were the three most commonly consumed products/species, followed by tilapia. Amongst consumer age ranges, those over 60 ate the most fish (15.6 per cent of total food consumption), followed by those aged between 20 and 59 (14.7 per cent).

The total fisheries of Taiwan were valued at $3.5 billion with a quantity of 1.4 million tonnes in 2015, and the total seafood exports of Taiwan were valued at $1.8 billion with a quantity of 0.79 million metric tons, whereas the total seafood imports were valued at $1.35 billion with a quantity of 0.48 million MT in 2015. The seafood imports to Taiwan are expected to grow due to higher incomes and new dietary trends prevailing in Taiwan.

The seafood exports are expected to decline, both in volume and value, due to the European Union tariff issues. The Malaysian export volume for 2015 is 0.15 million metric tonnes valued $0.511 billion. However, there is a consistent increase in demand, which might require imports for the future.

South Korea is the third-largest economy in the Asia-Pacific region, after Japan and China. The total seafood import of South Korea was valued at C$3.8 billion, with the top supplier being China (with a share of 26.5 per cent), whereas the export was valued at C$2 billion, with Japan (with a share of 39.5 per cent) being the leading destination, followed by China (with a share of 17.5 per cent) in 2013. With an increasing trend of domestic seafood consumption, it offers scope for Indian exports in the future.

Conclusion

The projected Indian seafood export earnings by 2020 is expected to be at $10 billion. This is mostly envisaged due to the increased production of Vannamei shrimp, diversification of aquaculture species, quality control measures and increase in infrastructure facilities for production of value-added items are expected to help in achieving this target. With a paradigm shift in the economic policies, India needs to diversify its exports across more countries and more products. The increasing fish production from the aquaculture and marine sector provides innate opportunities for the same. The various trade measures has created an enabling environment for the trade. Now India is in a position to produce value-added products. ○

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