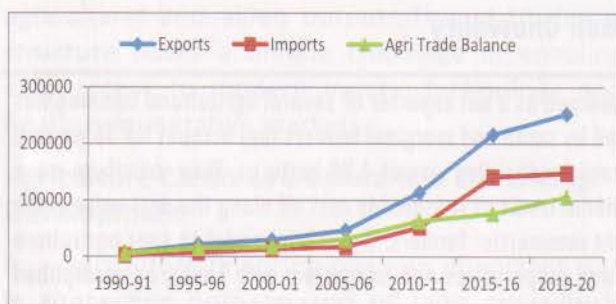


Figure 4: Trends in Agricultural Exports and Imports (Amt. in Rs. Crore)



Sources: (i) *Agricultural Statistics at a Glance, (Various Issues)*
(ii) *Economic Survey (Various Issues)*.

exports through focused interventions. In this direction Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH)-a centrally sponsored scheme was launched from 1st April, 2014 for the holistic growth of the horticulture sector. The MIDH provides financial, technical and administrative support to State Governments for the development of the horticulture sector covering fruits, vegetables, root and tuber crops, mushroom, spices, flowers, aromatic plants, coconut, cashew, cocoa, bamboo and saffron. Apart from this, in order to promote horticultural exports, several centers for perishable cargoes and for post harvest handling facilities have been set up with the assistance of APEDA in the country.

Conclusion

Agriculture continues to be the most crucial sector of Indian economy. Despite a steady decline in its share in gross value added, it continues to remain the largest employment providing sector and a major source of foreign exchange earnings. In the course of seven decades of planned economic development, Indian agriculture has made great strides. The country has been able to attain not only food security to its increasing population but also emerged as the net exporter of agricultural products, occupying seventh position in the world. The foodgrain production in the country has gone up at a higher rate as compared to total population during the last seven decades; as a result, per capita availability of foodgrains has gone up significantly. India has made a remarkable progress in the production of horticultural and live stock products also. There has been steady transformation of the

farming sector from traditional food crops to commercial and horticultural crops based on modern scientific production techniques. The foreign trade of agricultural goods has expanded multi-fold witnessing a significant structural shift in the composition and direction of trade. India's agricultural export basket is now diversified with more value added and non-traditional items such as processed and canned fruits, juices, vegetables, meat, fish and other marine products. After the introduction of modern agricultural technique along with the adoption of HYV seeds, extended irrigation facilities and intensive method of cultivation; yield per hectare of all crops has recorded a rising trend in the country. But, India lags far behind the developed countries of the world in the yield per hectare of field as well as plantation crops. In order to improve productivity of agriculture, adoption of modern farm practices along with the rational and efficient use of quality inputs including HYV seeds, water, fertilisers and pesticides is essential. Easy access to institutional credit at affordable rate of interest is also needed to be promoted for the purchase of modern agriculture machinery, tools, equipments and other expensive inputs. Above all, the role of timely Government intervention in agriculture marketing can also not be denied.

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