



# **SPICES & TRADITION: THE STORY OF ACHAR**



## **ACHAR CLUSTERS: BIHAR'S HIDDEN GEMS**

**Abhivyakti Mishra  
Internship Report 2024**

**Directorate General of Foreign Trade,  
Ministry of Commerce and Industry,  
Government of India**



विदेश व्यापार महानिदेशालय  
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF  
**FOREIGN TRADE**

सत्यमेव जयते

**Districts**  
as Export Hubs

# Critically Evaluating Ways to Increase Achar Exports from India

**Research Question:** How can achar exports increase from India and how can we make geographical clusters in the country to streamline the process.

**Submitted to:**

**Mr. Nitish Suri**  
**Joint DGFT**  
**DEH and SCOMET**

**Submitted to:**

**Mr. R.K Roy**  
**Deputy DGFT**  
**DEH and SCOMET**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, Abhivyakti Mishra, an intern with the Districts as Export Hubs, am deeply grateful for the opportunity to work on this report, and I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to Mr. Nitish Suri, Joint Deputy General, for his guidance, mentorship, and unwavering support throughout the project. Additionally, my heartfelt gratitude goes out to Mr. R.K Roy for his valuable insights, expertise, and encouragement which have been instrumental in the direction of this report. Their commitment to promote export-led development and their expertise in the field of foreign trade has been a source of inspiration for me as I navigated through the complexities of the subject matter.

I am also grateful to Mr. Abhimanyu Kumar, IAS, Ms. Simmi Chaudhary, Economic Advisor at the Ministry of MSME, Mr. Deepak Narang, Director at the Ministry of MSME and the team at Jhaji Store for providing me with crucial insights. Finally, I extend my appreciation to my family and friends for their encouragement and understanding during this project.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to Ms. Mehr Suri, Mr. Aishwary Raj Singh, Ms. Surbhi Siwach and the entire team at the office including my fellow batch of interns especially Ananya and Shreya for their willingness to aid and provide resources whenever needed. Their commitment to fostering a conducive learning environment has made this internship experience truly rewarding.

Yours Sincerely,  
Abhivyakti Mishra

# INDEX

## 1. Overview

- Districts as Export Hubs Initiative

## 2. About The Project

- Why Achar
- Research Methodology

## 3. Introduction

- The Difference Between Achar and Pickle
- A Brief History of Achar Making
- Cultural Significance of Achar
- Health Benefits of Achar

## 4. The Current Export Landscape

- Export Data Analysis
- Major Export Destinations for India
- Competitive Landscape for India

## 5. Kimchi From Korea and Achar from India: Comparable Products and Lessons for Growth

- Comparative Analysis: Kimchi and Achar
- Global Success of Kimchi: Lessons for Achar

## 6. SWOT Analysis of Achar Industry

## 7. Expanding Indian Achar Exporters: Strategies and Innovations

- New Markets: Identifying Potential Regions for Indian Achar
- Product Innovation
- E-Commerce: Leveraging Online Platforms and Global Reach

## 8. Talking to On Ground Manufacturers and Exporters

- Results of Telephonic Surveys
- Case Study on Jha Ji Store

## **9. A Cluster Based Approach**

- Formation of a Geographical Cluster in Bihar

## **10. Challenges and Opportunities**

- Regulatory Hurdles
- Competition
- Logistics and Supply Chain
- Quality Control
- Packaging and Labeling

## **11. Required Interventions for Increasing Achar Exports**

- Short Term Interventions
- Medium to Long Term Interventions
- Continuous Interventions

## **12. Projections for the Next Decade**

- Formula for the Projections
- Projected Value for the Next Decade





# OVERVIEW

Exports play a vital role in the economic growth and development of nations. It contributes to expanding markets, creating employment opportunities, attracting foreign investment, and generating foreign exchange earnings. Earlier, export promotions were dealt with by only the Central Government without any active, credible mechanism involving the State or District level stakeholders in the decision making process to promote goods and services produced at the grassroots level. Therefore, the export promotion activity had to be decentralized to boost local production and make districts active stakeholders in driving the export growth of local products/services. The Districts as Export Hubs initiative is a step in this direction, bringing export promotion into the focus in the States and Districts. This paper examines this initiative through a case study of Achar and highlights the challenges in exporting the same. The paper analyzes the upcoming scheme with the cluster approach. It provides a brief study of countries with an export potential of Achar and interventions that will help in increasing exports of Achar worldwide.

## District As Export Hubs (DEH) Initiative

The foreign trade today constitutes 45% of India's GDP. Special focus and dedicated attention need to be paid to India's export promotion in its economic policies to leverage trade for higher sustained growth. Given the diverse elements that contribute towards an enabling and conducive foreign trade environment, any policy/strategy to boost exports requires

the active support of the State Governments. The foreign trade today constitutes 45% of India's GDP. Special focus and dedicated attention need to be paid to India's export promotion in its economic policies to leverage trade for higher sustained growth. Given the diverse elements that contribute towards an enabling and conducive foreign trade environment, any policy/strategy to boost exports requires the active support of the State Governments. Thus, States need to be engaged actively in export promotion activities and exports cannot exponentially increase without their active involvement.

The call of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to convert each district into an export hub from the ramparts of Red Fort in his Independence Day Speech in 2019 redirected focus towards making Districts active stakeholders in the promotion of exports of goods/services produced/manufactured in the district.

**"Each district of our country has a potential equal to that of one country, each of our districts has the capacity equal to a small country in the world. Why should each district not think of becoming an export hub? Each of our districts has a diverse identity and potential for the global market".**

**-Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi**

The objectives of the District as Export Hub initiative are as follows:

- To enable MSMEs, farmers and small industries to benefit from export opportunities in overseas markets.
- To shift focus on District led Export Growth for self-sufficiency and self-reliance.
- Attract investment in the district to boost manufacturing and exports and reduce transaction
- Provide an ecosystem for Innovation/use of at the District level to make them export competitive and generate employment in the districts.
- Hand Holding and assistance to exporters by doorstep delivery of timely and relevant information.
- Providing platforms for the wide and global reach of products and services from the district through Ecommerce and Digital marketing.

## Why Achar

This topic is fascinating because it reveals how food can be a storyteller, reflecting the history and customs of different communities. Moreover, achar has gained international attention due to the rising global popularity of Indian cuisine. As consumers worldwide become more adventurous in their culinary choices, there is a growing demand for authentic and exotic flavors, making achar a potential export powerhouse. Focusing on this topic offers insights into the challenges and opportunities within the food export sector, particularly for small and medium enterprises in India. By studying achar we can explore strategies for branding and marketing

traditional products in modern, competitive markets. Additionally, achar production is often a family-run endeavor, deeply rooted in traditional methods. This aspect highlights the role of women in the industry, as many are involved in production and management, making achar a vital contributor to women's empowerment and community development.

This topic also enables the exploration of sustainable practices within the food industry, emphasizing the importance of ethical sourcing and eco-friendly packaging.

By choosing achar, I aim to highlight its cultural richness and economic potential, showcasing how traditional products can thrive in global markets while preserving their authentic essence.

By studying achar, we can explore strategies for branding and marketing traditional products in modern, competitive markets. Additionally, achar production is often a family-run endeavor, deeply rooted in traditional methods. This aspect highlights the role of women in the industry, as many are involved in production and management, making achar a vital contributor to women's empowerment and community development. One of the things that is not highlighted enough about achar is that it is a value added agricultural product and requires no cold storage to transport, so if the spillage issue is taken care of achar can be a leading value added agricultural product in India's exports.

**Research Design**

## **Research Methodology**

**Market Research, Challenges,  
Recommendations and Conclusion**

**Literature Review**

**Data Collection**

**Primary Data - Collected through Telephonic Surveys**  
**Secondary Data - Collected via DGCIS, ITC Trade Map, Ministry of Commerce**

**Purposive Sampling from Samastipur, Darbhanga and  
Madhubani**

**Data Analysis and SWOT Analysis**



# INTRODUCTION

## Difference Between Achar and Vinegar Based Pickle

	Achar	Vinegar Based Pickle
Definition	Achar is a traditional Indian condiment made by preserving fruits, vegetables, or spices in oil, along with a blend of spices and salt. This process enhances flavor and extends shelf life, creating a tangy, spicy accompaniment to meals. Achar varies regionally, reflecting diverse tastes and ingredients, and is integral to Indian cuisine.	A pickle is a food item made by preserving vegetables, fruits, or other ingredients in a solution of brine or vinegar, often with added spices and seasonings. This process enhances flavor and extends shelf life, resulting in a tangy, savory condiment commonly used to complement meals. Pickles are enjoyed globally in various forms and recipes.
Shelf Life	At Least 1 Year (No need of refrigeration)	75 Days when Refrigerated

	Achar	Vinegar Based Pickle
Medicinal Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rich in probiotics helps in gut health</li><li>• Strong antioxidants properties and have rich vitamin-C properties</li><li>• Helps in weight management</li><li>• Rich in micronutrients and helps in nutrient absorption</li><li>• Supports liver health</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Might help restoring electrolyte balance</li><li>• Reduces Insulin Spikes</li></ul>
Preservation Method	At Least 1 Year (No need of refrigeration)	75 Days when Refrigerated
Flavour Profile	Tangy, Spicy, Complex and Rich	Vinegar is the primary source

# A Brief History of Achar Making

Achar holds a cherished place in Indian cuisine. This age-old condiment, crafted from a variety of fruits, vegetables, and spices, is more than just a flavorful accompaniment; it is a cultural artifact that encapsulates the rich culinary heritage of India. The importance of achar in Indian cuisine can be attributed to its historical roots, diverse regional variations, health benefits, and its role in enhancing the dining experience.

Historically, the tradition of achar making in India dates back several millennia. Ancient texts and scriptures document the art of preserving seasonal produce using salt, oil, and natural preservatives. Achar making was a practical solution to extend the shelf life of perishable items in the pre-refrigeration era. This method ensured that fruits and vegetables

harvested during peak seasons could be enjoyed throughout the year. Over time, this practical necessity evolved into a culinary art form, with each region of India developing its unique recipes and techniques.

## Cultural Significance of Achar

The process of making achar is often a communal activity, bringing together family members across generations. Grandmothers and mothers pass down their secret recipes and techniques to the younger generation, fostering a sense of continuity and tradition. The act of pickling becomes a way to connect with one's heritage and preserve family customs.

Moreover, achar is often given as gifts during festivals and special occasions, symbolizing love, care, and hospitality. Through its regional variations, health benefits, and role in family traditions, achar remains an indispensable part of the Indian dining experience.

## Health Benefits of Achar

Contrary to popular belief, achar also plays a significant role in the health and nutrition of those who consume them. Traditionally, Indian achar is made using natural fermentation processes, which encourage the growth of beneficial bacteria, acting as natural probiotics. These probiotics are known to aid in digestion, boost immunity, and promote gut health. Additionally, the spices used in achar, such as turmeric, fenugreek, and mustard, have well-documented health benefits. Turmeric, for example, contains curcumin, known for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Mustard seeds are rich in selenium, magnesium, and omega-3 fatty acids, all of which contribute to overall well-being.

### 1. Rich Source of Probiotics

- **Fermentation:** Many Indian achar are prepared through fermentation, which fosters the growth of beneficial bacteria known as probiotics. Probiotics are essential for maintaining a healthy gut flora, aiding digestion, and enhancing the immune system.
- **Digestive Health:** The probiotics in fermented achar help balance the gut microbiome, improving digestion and reducing the incidence of gastrointestinal issues such as bloating, constipation, and IBS.

## **2. Boosts Immune System**

- **Antioxidant Properties:** Indian pickles often contain ingredients like turmeric, ginger, garlic, and various spices, all of which are rich in antioxidants. Antioxidants help neutralize harmful free radicals in the body, reducing oxidative stress and boosting overall immunity.
- **Vitamin C:** Pickles made from fruits and vegetables such as lemons, amla (Indian gooseberry), and mangoes are high in vitamin C, a vital nutrient that strengthens the immune system and enhances the body's ability to fight infections.

## **3. Enhances Nutrient Absorption**

- **Bioavailability:** The fermentation process in pickles breaks down complex nutrients into simpler forms, making them easier for the body to absorb. This increased bioavailability ensures that the body gets maximum benefits from the nutrients present in the pickles.
- **Mineral Absorption:** Ingredients like vinegar and citric acid in pickles can improve the absorption of minerals such as calcium, iron, and zinc, essential for bone health and overall metabolic functions.

## **4. Aids in Weight Management**

- **Low-Calorie Content:** Most Indian pickles are low in calories, making them a suitable addition to weight-conscious diets. They add flavor and zest to meals without significantly increasing calorie intake.
- **Appetite Control:** The tangy and spicy flavors of pickles can stimulate appetite and aid in better portion control, helping individuals avoid overeating.

## **5. Supports Heart Health**

- **Healthy Fats:** Pickles prepared in mustard oil or sesame oil contain healthy fats that can benefit heart health. These oils are rich in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, which help reduce bad cholesterol (LDL) levels and increase good cholesterol (HDL) levels.
- **Anti-inflammatory Properties:** Ingredients like turmeric and ginger have anti-inflammatory properties that can reduce inflammation in the body, contributing to better cardiovascular health.

## **6. Rich in Micronutrients**

- **Essential Vitamins and Minerals:** Indian pickles are made from a variety of fruits and vegetables, each bringing its own set of vitamins and minerals. For instance, pickles made from carrots and radishes are rich in vitamin A and K, which are essential for vision and blood clotting.
- **Trace Elements:** Pickles also provide trace elements such as potassium, magnesium, and manganese, which are crucial for various bodily functions, including muscle function, nerve transmission, and enzymatic reactions.

## **7. Natural Preservatives and No Additives Preservative-Free**

Traditional Indian pickles are made using natural preservatives like salt, oil, and vinegar, eliminating the need for artificial additives and preservatives found in many processed foods. Clean Ingredients: The use of fresh, natural ingredients in pickles ensures that they are free

from harmful chemicals and additives, promoting better health and wellbeing.

## **8. Supports Liver Health**

- **Detoxification:** Certain ingredients in pickles, such as turmeric and garlic, are known for their detoxifying properties. They help in flushing out toxins from the liver, supporting its function and overall health.
- **Liver Enzyme Activation:** The spices and herbs used in pickles can stimulate the production of bile and activate liver enzymes, aiding in the digestion and metabolism of fats.

## **9. Enhances Appetite and Digestion**

- **Digestive Enzymes:** The spices and acidic content in pickles can stimulate the secretion of digestive enzymes, enhancing appetite and improving digestion.
- **Salivation:** The tangy and spicy taste of pickles can increase saliva production, which contains enzymes that start the digestive process in the mouth.

## **10. Antibacterial Properties**

- **Natural Antibiotics:** Ingredients like garlic, ginger, and chili have natural antibiotic properties that can help fight off bacterial infections. Consuming pickles can thus contribute to maintaining better overall health by reducing the risk of infections.





**PICKLING SENSES AROUND THE GLOBE**

# THE CURRENT EXPORT LANDSCAPE

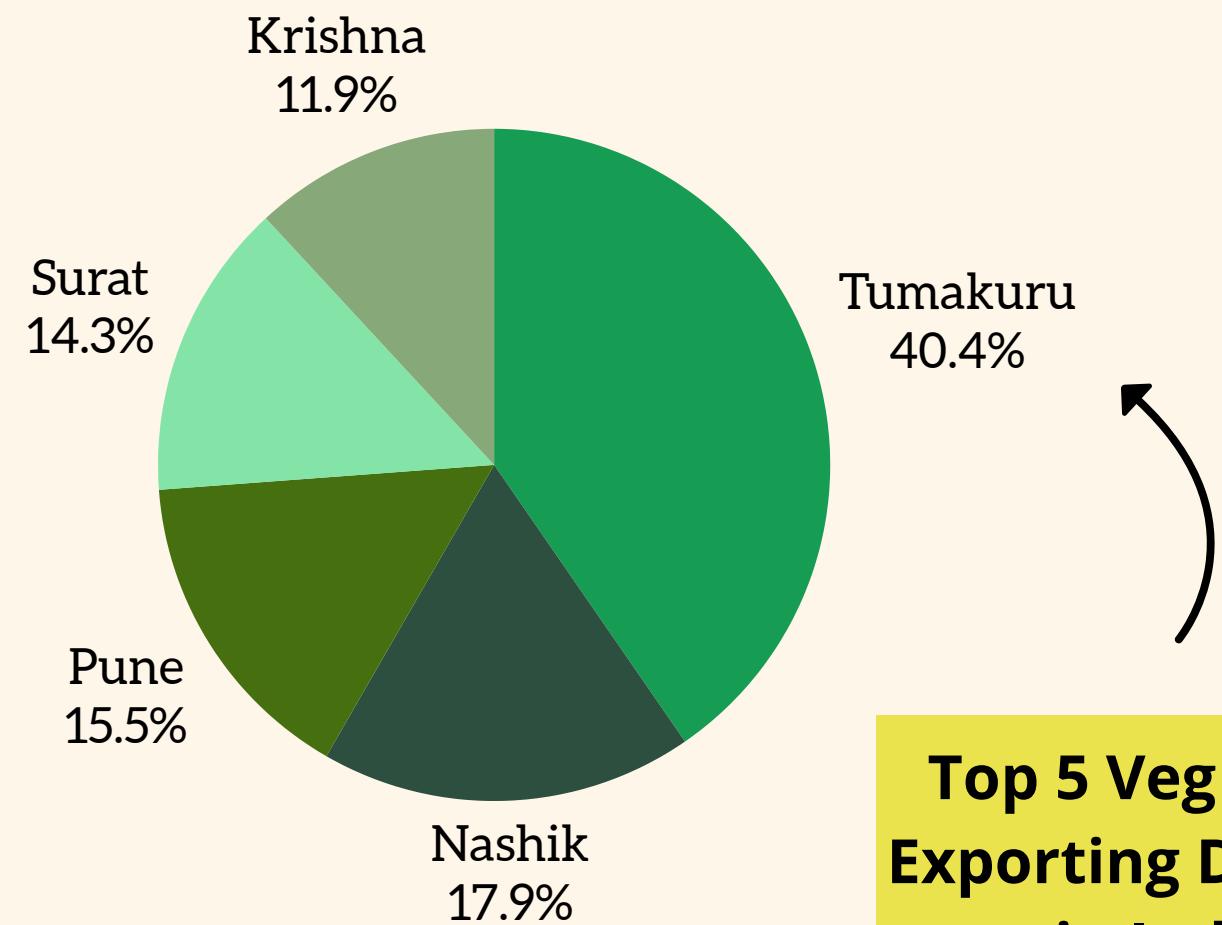
## Export Data Analysis

S.No	HS Code	Description of HS Code	Top 5 Exporters	Top 5 Importers	India's Position in the World As an Exporter
1.	2001	Vegetables, fruit, nuts and other edible parts of plants, prepared or preserved by vinegar or acetic acid	Turkey, Mexico, Germany United States of America, Canada	Germany, United States of America, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Canada	4
2.	20011000	Cucumbers and gherkins	Germany, Turkey, India, United States of America, Netherlands	United States of America, Germany, Canada, United Kingdom, Netherlands	3

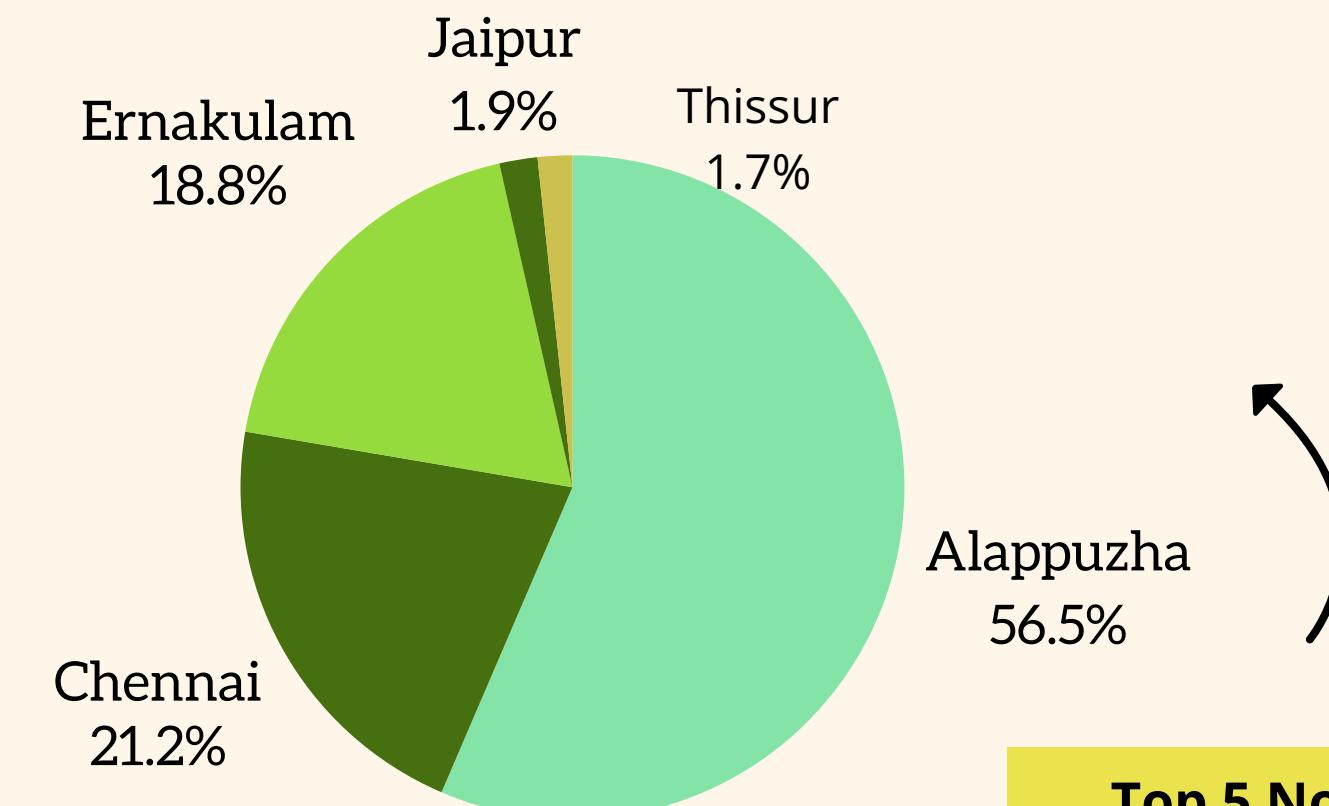
S.N o	HS Code	Description of HS Code	Top 5 Exporters	Top 5 Importers	India's Position in the World As an Exporter
3.	20019000	Other	Turkey, Mexico, China, Greece, Germany	United States of America, Germany, United Kingdom, Canada, Netherlands	8
4.	16041210	Pickled Fish	Poland, Denmark, Norway, Lithuania, Germany	Germany, Poland, United States of America, Netherlands, Austria	33

India stands as the 8th largest exporter of pickles globally under HS Code 20019000. The country's pickle export landscape is evolving rapidly, fueled by a growing demand for ethnic and traditional foods worldwide. While Turkey, Mexico, and China dominate the global pickle export market, India has made significant strides in expanding its export footprint, particularly to markets such as the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States of America, Canada, and the United Arab Emirates.

In recent years, India's pickle exports have seen consistent growth. According to data from the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S), Indian pickle exports have increased by an average of 5-6% annually over the past five years. This growth is driven by the rising global popularity of Indian cuisine and the increasing demand for ethnic foods.

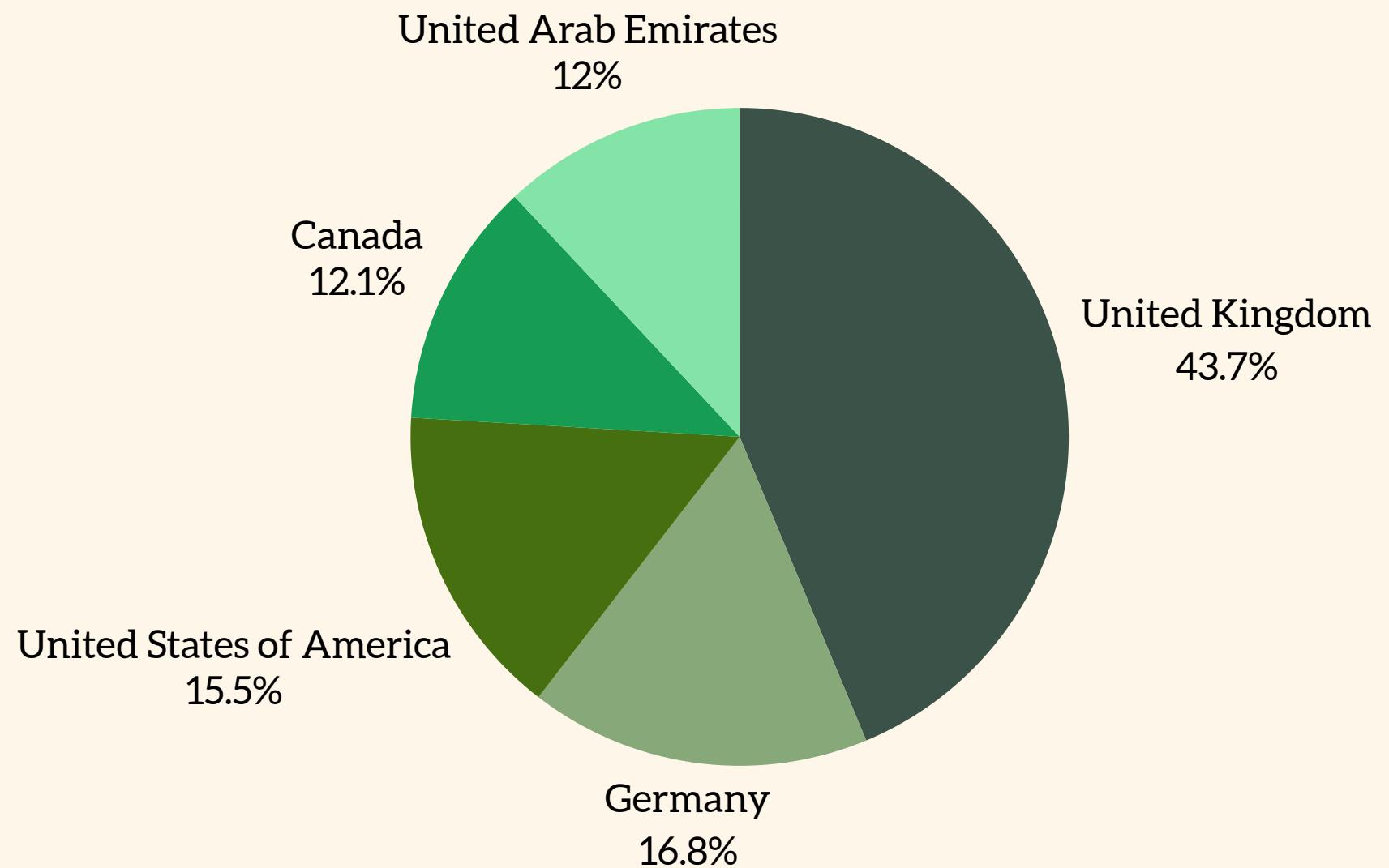


**Top 5 Veg Achar  
Exporting Districts  
in India**



**Top 5 Non-Veg  
Achar Exporting  
Districts in India**

# Top 5 Indian Achar Importing Countries



India's primary export destinations for pickles include the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States of America, Canada, and the United Arab Emirates. They contain 60% of India's exports. These countries have a significant Indian diaspora, which contributes to the demand for Indian pickles. Additionally, the growing trend of multiculturalism and the popularity of Indian restaurants and cuisine in these regions have further boosted the demand.



The **United Kingdom** remains one of the largest markets for Indian pickles. The strong presence of the Indian community and the popularity of Indian food contribute to the high demand for pickles. Indian brands like Mother's Recipe, Priya Foods, and Pachranga are well-received in this market. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, around 37 lakh people of Indian origin live currently in the United Kingdom. Around 37% of their population is of South Asian origin, sharing the same palette as Indians.

**Germany**, known for its diverse food culture, has shown an increasing appetite for Indian pickles. The market is driven by consumers seeking new and exotic flavors. Around 5 lakh people of Indian origin live in Germany and 21% of the population is of South Asian origin. In 2023, India exported achar worth \$7,000,000 to Germany and according to ITC Trade Map, India has the potential to trade achar worth at least \$10,000,000.



The **United States of America** is another key market for Indian pickles, with a growing demand from both the Indian community and Americans who enjoy ethnic foods. The proliferation of Indian restaurants and the presence of Indian food in mainstream supermarkets have significantly contributed to this trend. In 2023, India exported achar worth \$5,000,000 to the United States of America, and according to ITC Trade Map, India has the potential to trade achar worth at least \$27,000,000.



Similar to the USA, **Canada** has a substantial Indian population and a growing interest in Indian cuisine. The availability of Indian pickles in local supermarkets and ethnic stores makes it accessible to a wider audience. Around 28 lakh people of Indian origin live in Canada. In 2023, India exported achar worth \$5,000,000 to the United States of America, and according to ITC Trade Map, India has the potential to trade achar worth at least \$27,000,000.

The **United Arab Emirates**, with its large expatriate population from the Indian subcontinent, serves as a vital market for Indian pickles. The demand here is robust, supported by the presence of numerous Indian restaurants and food outlets. In 2023, India exported achar worth \$5,000,000 to the United States of America, and according to ITC Trade Map, India has the potential to trade achar worth at least \$6,000,000.



# Competitive Landscape

While India holds a significant position in the global pickle market, it faces stiff competition from Turkey, Mexico, and China, which are the top three exporters of pickles. These countries have leveraged their large-scale production capabilities, advanced food processing technologies, and extensive distribution networks to dominate the market.



Known for its diverse range of pickles, Turkey's export strategy includes aggressive marketing and competitive pricing, making Turkish pickles widely popular in Europe and the Middle East.



Famous for its pickled jalapeños and other vegetables, Mexico caters primarily to the North American market. The country's proximity to the USA gives it a logistical advantage, enabling faster and more cost-effective exports.



With its massive production capabilities, China exports a wide variety of pickled products, focusing on cost competitiveness and large-scale distribution. Chinese pickles are prevalent in Asian markets and are making inroads into Western markets as well.



# KIMCHI FROM KOREA AND ACHAR FROM INDIA: COMPARABLE PRODUCTS AND LESSONS FOR GROWTH

Kimchi from Korea and Achar from India stand as cultural symbols deeply rooted in their respective cuisines. These fermented foods are celebrated not only for their unique flavors but also for their significant health benefits. While kimchi has successfully made its mark as an internationally recognized superfood for improving gut health, there are valuable lessons that India can learn from Korea's strategic approach to enhancing its global appeal and export potential. By examining the similarities between these products and the strategies employed by Korea, India can develop a roadmap to elevate the global presence of Indian achar.

## Comparative Analysis: Kimchi and Achar

Both kimchi and achar share several characteristics that make them comparable. They are traditional, fermented foods with a long history and cultural significance. Each country's pickling methods and ingredients vary based on regional preferences and available produce, but the underlying process of fermentation remains central to their preparation. Kimchi is a staple in Korean cuisine, typically made from napa cabbage and radishes, and flavored with a variety of seasonings such as chili pepper, garlic, ginger, and salted seafood. The fermentation process enhances the nutritional value of kimchi, enriching it with probiotics that promote gut health, boost immunity, and offer other health benefits. Kimchi is also low in calories and rich in vitamins A, B, and C, making it a nutritious addition to any diet.

Achar, on the other hand, is an integral part of Indian cuisine, with a diverse range of pickles made from fruits, vegetables, and even meats. Common ingredients include mango, lime, carrot, and mixed vegetables, spiced with turmeric, mustard seeds, fenugreek, and chili. The use of oil, salt, and vinegar as preservatives in achar not only extends its shelf life but also contributes to its distinct tangy and spicy flavors. Like kimchi, achar is known for its probiotic content and health benefits, including improved digestion and enhanced nutrient absorption.

### Global Success of Kimchi: Lessons for Indian Achar

Korea has successfully turned kimchi into a globally recognized product through a combination of strategic marketing, quality control, and emphasis on health benefits. India can draw inspiration from Korea's approach to enhance the global appeal of Indian achar.

#### 1. Strategic Marketing and Branding Cultural

- **Storytelling:** Korea has effectively used cultural storytelling to promote kimchi. The narrative of kimchi as a symbol of Korean heritage and identity has resonated with consumers worldwide. India can similarly highlight the cultural significance of achar, emphasizing its historical roots and the diverse regional variations that reflect the rich tapestry of Indian cuisine.
- **Celebrity Endorsements and Influencers:** Korea has leveraged celebrity endorsements and collaborations with food influencers to popularize kimchi. India can adopt a similar strategy by partnering with

renowned chefs, food bloggers, and influencers to showcase the versatility and flavors of achar in various culinary contexts.

## **2. Health Benefits and Scientific Validation**

- **Probiotic Properties:** The promotion of kimchi has heavily focused on its health benefits, particularly its probiotic properties. Scientific studies and endorsements from health experts have played a crucial role in building credibility. India can invest in research to highlight the health benefits of achar, such as its probiotic content, antioxidant properties, and role in improving digestion. Publishing these findings in reputable journals and collaborating with health professionals can help build a strong case for achar as a health-promoting food.
- **Nutritional Information:** Providing detailed nutritional information on packaging and marketing materials can educate consumers about the health benefits of achar. Highlighting the presence of essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants can make achar appealing to health-conscious consumers.

## **3. Quality Control and Certifications**

- **International Certifications:** Obtaining international certifications such as ISO, HACCP, and USDA Organic has helped Korean kimchi gain trust and credibility in global markets. Indian achar manufacturers can similarly seek these certifications to assure consumers of the product's quality and safety. Certifications not only enhance the product's appeal but also facilitate entry into stringent international markets.
- **Standardization of Recipes:** Standardizing recipes and maintaining

consistent quality is essential for building a reliable brand. Korea has established standards for kimchi production, ensuring uniformity in taste and quality. India can develop guidelines and standards for achar production, focusing on quality control at every stage, from sourcing ingredients to packaging.

## **4. Innovative Packaging and Presentation**

- **Eye-catching Design:** Attractive and innovative packaging can make a significant difference in capturing consumer attention. Korea has utilized modern, visually appealing packaging for kimchi, which stands out on retail shelves. Indian achar can benefit from similar efforts by investing in contemporary, vibrant packaging designs that reflect the cultural richness and exotic flavors of the product.
- **Convenient Packaging:** Offering achar in various packaging formats, such as single-serve packets, resealable jars, and travel-friendly packs, can cater to different consumer needs and lifestyles. Convenience is a key factor in appealing to busy, modern consumers.

## **5. Digital Marketing and E-Commerce**

- **Online Presence:** A strong online presence is crucial for reaching a global audience. Korea has effectively used digital marketing to promote kimchi, with engaging content, social media campaigns, and e-commerce platforms. Indian achar brands can enhance their digital presence by creating informative websites, leveraging

social media platforms, and listing products on popular e-commerce sites like Amazon and specialty food websites.

- **Content Marketing:** Producing high-quality content, such as blog posts, videos, and infographics, about the history, preparation methods, and health benefits of achar can attract and educate consumers. Collaborating with food bloggers and influencers to create recipes and cooking demonstrations featuring achar can also drive interest and sales.

## **6. Participation in International Food Fairs and Trade Shows**

- **Exhibitions and Trade Shows:** Participating in international food fairs and trade shows can provide Indian achar brands with exposure to potential buyers, distributors, and consumers. Korea has successfully showcased kimchi at various international events, helping to establish its presence in global markets. Indian achar manufacturers can follow suit by actively participating in such events, offering samples, and networking with industry stakeholders.

## **7. Market Research and Adaptation**

- **Consumer Insights:** Understanding consumer preferences and trends in different regions is essential for tailoring products to meet market demands. Korea has conducted extensive market research to adapt kimchi to suit international tastes while maintaining its authenticity. Indian achar brands can invest in market research to identify preferences and develop product variations that cater to diverse consumer palates.

- **Competitive Analysis:** Analyzing competitors' strategies can provide valuable insights into successful approaches and areas for improvement. By studying the global kimchi market and other successful ethnic food products, Indian achar brands can identify opportunities for differentiation and innovation.

## **8. Strategic Partnerships and Distribution Networks**

- **Global Distributors:** Forming partnerships with reputable international distributors and retailers can ensure wider distribution and availability of Indian achar. Korea has established strong distribution networks for kimchi, making it accessible in supermarkets and specialty stores worldwide. Indian achar brands can work with global distributors to expand their reach and presence in key markets.
- **Restaurant Collaborations:** Collaborating with Indian and international restaurants to feature achar in their menus can introduce the product to a broader audience. Korea has promoted kimchi through restaurant partnerships, enhancing its visibility and appeal.

The global success of kimchi offers valuable lessons for Indian achar brands looking to enhance their international presence. Kimchi requires cold storage and thus has a huge transportation cost associated with it, achar has a competitive advantage over kimchi in this regard, as it can be transported even without cold storage.

# SWOT ANALYSIS

- **Cultural Significance:** Deep-rooted cultural heritage and traditional recipes that resonate with Indian and South Asian consumers.
- **Diverse Flavors:** Wide variety of flavors and ingredients, appealing to diverse palates.
- **Growing Demand:** Increasing global interest in ethnic foods and Indian cuisine.
- **Health Benefits:** Probiotic properties and use of natural ingredients enhance appeal.

## STRENGTHS

- **Export Potential:** Rising global demand for authentic Indian foods.
- **E-Commerce Growth:** Online platforms offer access to international markets.
- **Product Innovation:** Opportunities for organic, low-sodium, and ready-to-eat variants.
- **Culinary Trends:** Increasing interest in fermented foods and their health benefits.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- **Fragmented Industry:** Pre-dominance of small-scale producers with limited resources.
- **Quality Variability:** Inconsistent quality control among different producers.
- **Limited Branding:** Many brands lack strong international recognition.

## WEAKNESSES

- **Competition:** Strong competition from other pickle-exporting countries like Turkey and China.
- **Regulatory Barriers:** Stringent international food safety standards and import regulations.
- **Market Saturation:** High competition in domestic markets.
- **Cultural Differences:** Varied consumer preferences across global markets may limit appeal.

## THREATS

# EXPANDING INDIAN ACHAR EXPORTS: STRATEGIES AND INNOVATIONS

As Indian cuisine gains popularity worldwide, Indian achar, known for their probiotic benefits and aromatic flavors, present a significant opportunity for export growth. To capitalize on this potential, Indian achar manufacturers can explore new markets, innovate products, and leverage e-commerce platforms. Here's an in-depth look at each of these strategies:

## New Markets: Identifying Potential Regions for Indian Achar

### 1. Emerging Markets

- **Africa:** Many African countries are experiencing rapid economic growth and an expanding middle class with a growing interest in diverse cuisines. Nations like South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria show increasing demand for international foods, making them promising markets for Indian pickles.
- **Latin America:** Countries such as Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico have vibrant food cultures and are open to experimenting with new flavors. The spicy and tangy profile of Indian pickles can appeal to Latin American palates, especially given the popularity of similar pickled and fermented foods in the region.

### 2. Regions with Growing Indian Diaspora

**Middle East:** The Middle East has a significant Indian expatriate population, particularly in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and

Qatar. The familiarity with Indian cuisine among locals and expatriates alike makes these markets ripe for Indian pickle exports.

- **Southeast Asia:** Countries like Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia have a substantial Indian community and a general affinity for spicy foods. Indian pickles can find a ready market in these countries, both among Indian expatriates and local populations.

## 3. Western Markets with Increasing Popularity of Indian Cuisine

- **United States and Canada:** The popularity of Indian cuisine in North America is on the rise, with Indian restaurants and food products becoming mainstream. Indian pickles can cater to both the Indian diaspora and adventurous local consumers seeking authentic ethnic foods.
- **Europe:** In countries like the United Kingdom, Germany, and the Netherlands, Indian food is widely appreciated. Indian pickles can be marketed not only to the Indian community but also to locals who enjoy the bold flavors of Indian cuisine.

## 4. Product Innovation: Flavors, Packaging, and Convenience (A)Flavors

- **Fusion Flavors:** Combining traditional Indian pickle flavors with global taste profiles can create unique products. For example, creating pickles with a hint of Mediterranean herbs or incorporating Japanese umami flavors can attract international consumers.

- **Health-Oriented Flavors:** Developing pickles that cater to health-conscious consumers by using superfoods like moringa, turmeric, or ginger can provide added health benefits. Additionally, experimenting with low-sodium or no-sugar-added versions can appeal to those looking to reduce their intake of these ingredients.

## 2. Packaging

- **Eco-Friendly Packaging:** Utilizing sustainable, eco-friendly packaging material can attract environmentally conscious consumers. Biodegradable jars, recyclable containers, and minimalist packaging designs can reduce environmental impact and appeal to a growing segment of eco-aware consumers.
- **Convenient Formats:** Offering Indian pickles in convenient packaging formats such as single-serve packets, resealable jars, and travel-friendly pouches can cater to busy lifestyles. These formats make it easy for consumers to enjoy pickles on the go or in controlled portions, enhancing their appeal.

## 3. Ready-to-Eat Formats

- **Pre-Portioned Snacks:** Creating ready-to-eat pickle snacks that combine pickles with other complementary items, such as crackers or cheese, can provide a quick and convenient snack option. These snack packs can be marketed as healthy alternatives to traditional processed snacks.
- **Meal Kits:** Including Indian pickles in meal kits that feature complete Indian meals can introduce consumers to the versatility of pickles.

These kits can be marketed for their convenience and the authentic culinary experience they provide. Other Platforms: Utilizing platforms like eBay, Walmart, and niche food marketplaces can diversify market presence. Listing products on multiple platforms increases visibility and accessibility for international consumers.

## 4. Building a Strong Online Presence

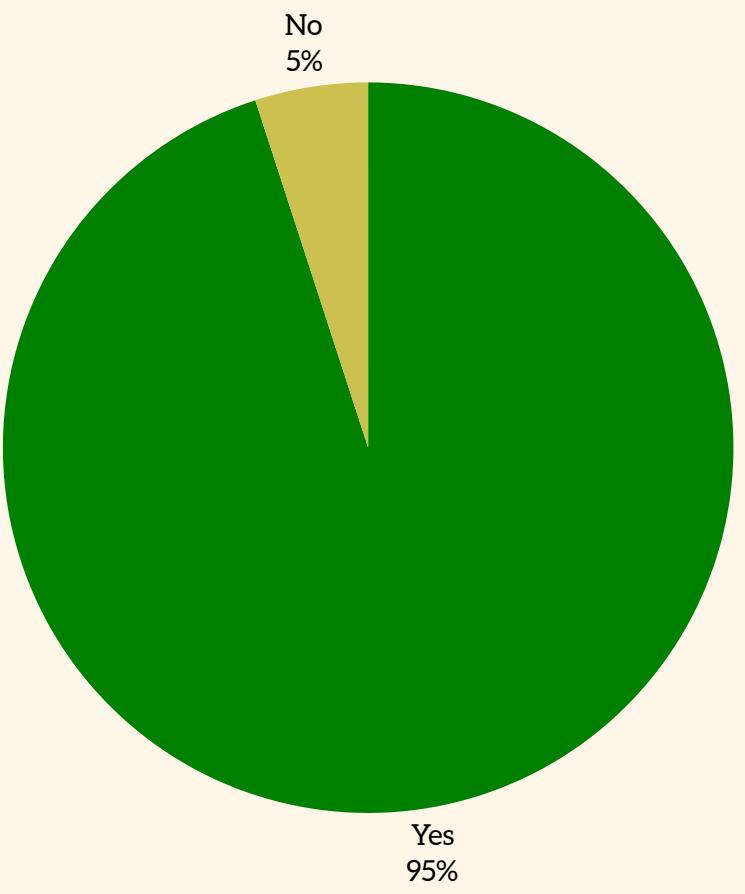
- **Dedicated Website:** Creating a user-friendly website with detailed product descriptions, high-quality images, and customer reviews can build brand credibility. An online store with easy navigation and secure payment options can drive direct sales.
- **Social Media Marketing:** Engaging with consumers through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter can create brand awareness and foster a loyal customer base. Posting recipes, behind-the-scenes content, and customer testimonials can enhance engagement.
- **Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** Implementing SEO strategies can improve the website's visibility on search engines, driving organic traffic. Using relevant keywords, creating valuable content, and optimizing website performance are crucial components of a successful SEO strategy.

## **TALKING TO THE MANUFACTURERS AND EXPORTERS ON GROUND**

### **Results of the Telephonic Surveys**

During the course of this project, I had telephonic surveys with the 20 manufacturers from Madhubani, Samastipur and Darbhanga and exporters to understand the ground reality of what problems they are facing and suggestions regarding interventions that they feel will help them thoroughly. The following is the analysis of the survey along with the questions asked to them.



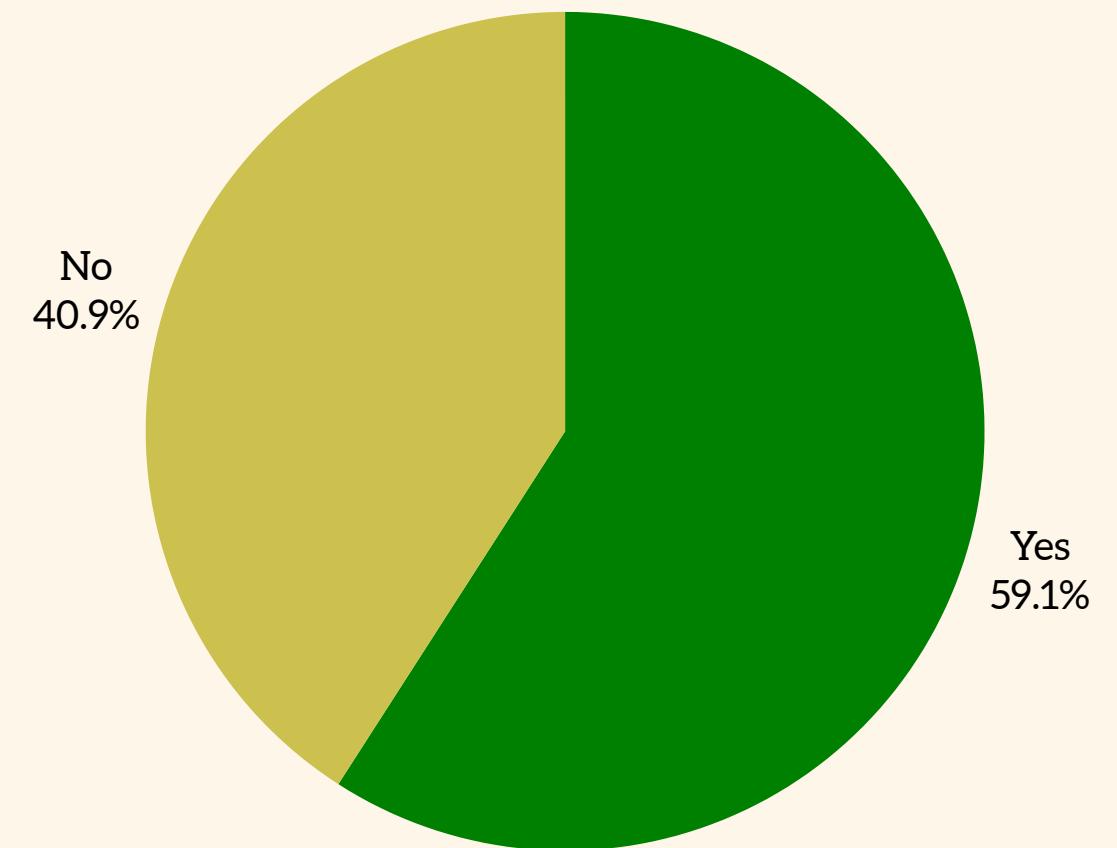


**Question 1:** Do you feel that DEH and DGFT outreach events will help you to either kickstart or increase your already existing achar exports from the country?

**Answer:** According to the exporters and manufacturers, the outreach events will give them a unique opportunity to interact with industry experts and also get their query resolved. They seem really excited about it.

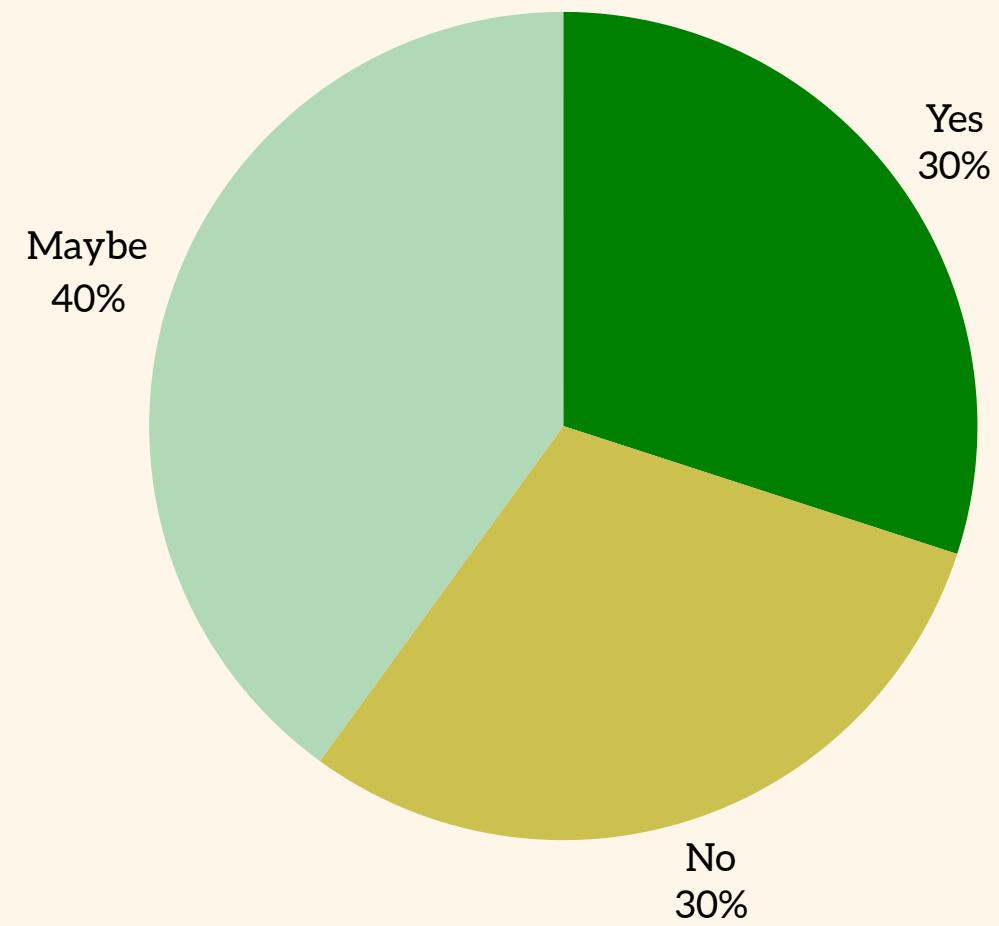
**Question 2:** Do you need help with your social media presence, with catching up with social media trends and building your brand via social media?

**Answer:** They struggle with social media presence. Most of them are really on digital phone books like Justdial to get in order, so they were eager to learn how they can improve their social media presence.



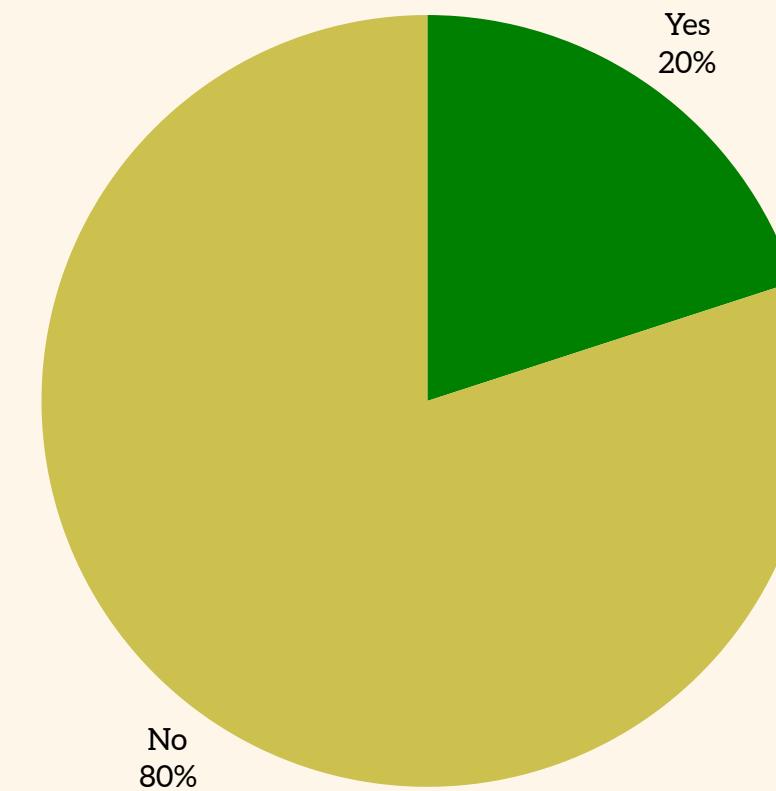
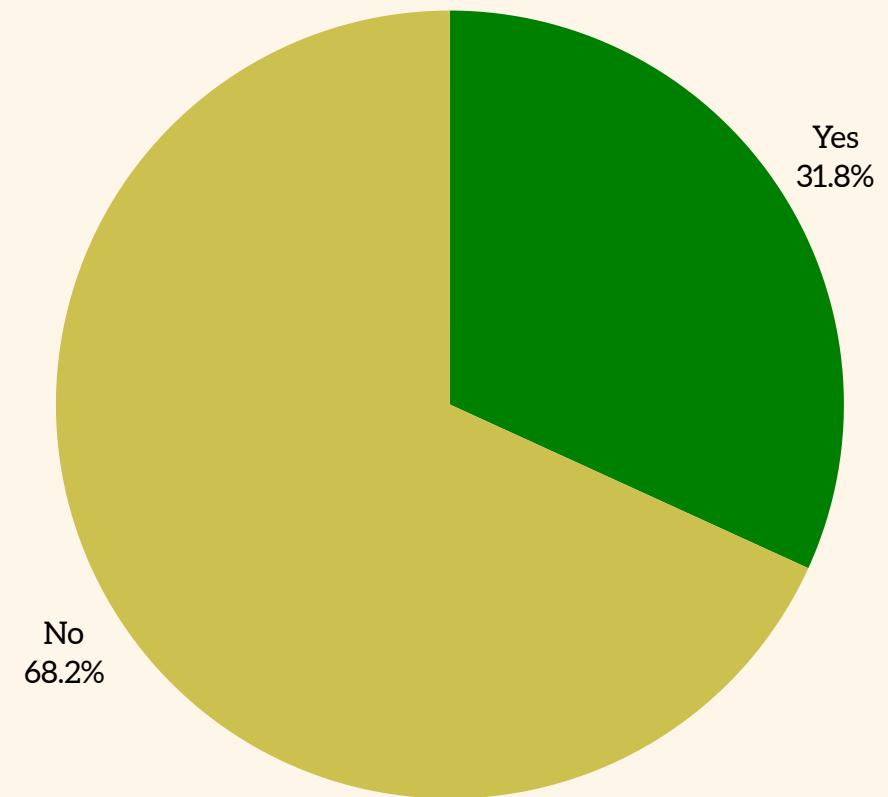
**Question 3:** Do you know the potential of achar in markets abroad and how to tap in that market without any external help, like government interventions or public private partnership?

**Answer:** Many of the respondents know what is their potential export market, however, 7 out of 20 respondents needed guidance to tap into their exports so that they can channel in their revenues.



**Question 4:** As you know that achar is a spicy and sodium heavy product, and there are changes that those who are not very familiar with its taste or health benefits might not buy it because of these levels, so with your current technology and equipment do you feel that you can launch a variety of your product that is lower in spice and sodium levels?

**Answer:** Many of the respondents know that the foreign consumer may not like the current spice and sodium levels, 6 out of 20 respondents are sure that they have the capacity to produce the kind of product that might be demanded, however, 6 out of 20 don't have the capacity yet and the remaining 8 weren't sure about that when the interview was being conducted.

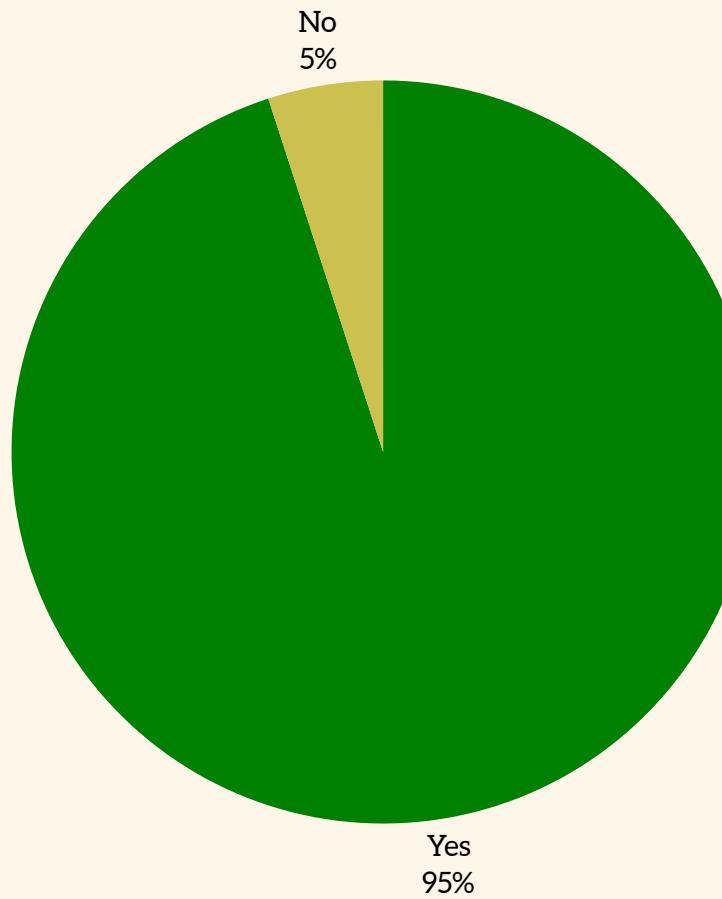
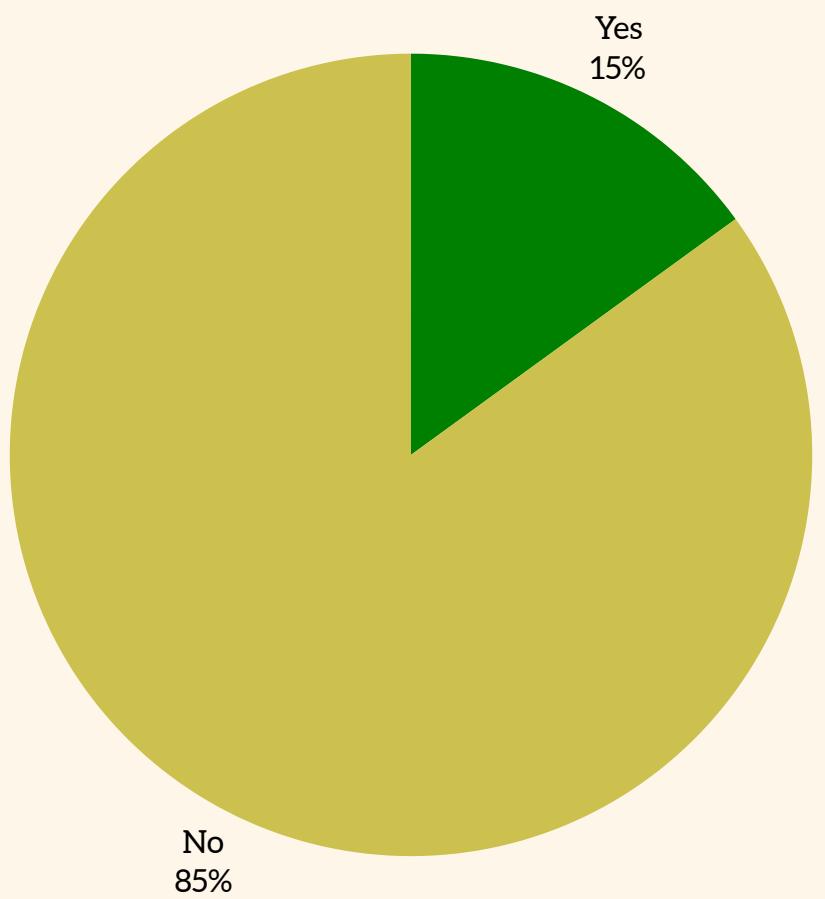


**Question 5:** Do you feel if you would need financial assistance with your current revenues and collateral, you can get a loan from a bank or funding from our organized sources?

**Answer:** 14 out of 20 respondents felt that they would get a loan from the organized sector, they felt that government schemes specific for financing for achar exporters will help them out immensely.

**Question 6:** Do you feel that your current social media presence, on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc. is up to the mark enough that they will get you consumers via these platforms?

**Answer:** 16 out of 20 respondents felt that they don't have good enough social media presence, and as they are mostly family runned businesses, they might need to hire a professional, or else need to train an existing family member and include them in the business only for social media.

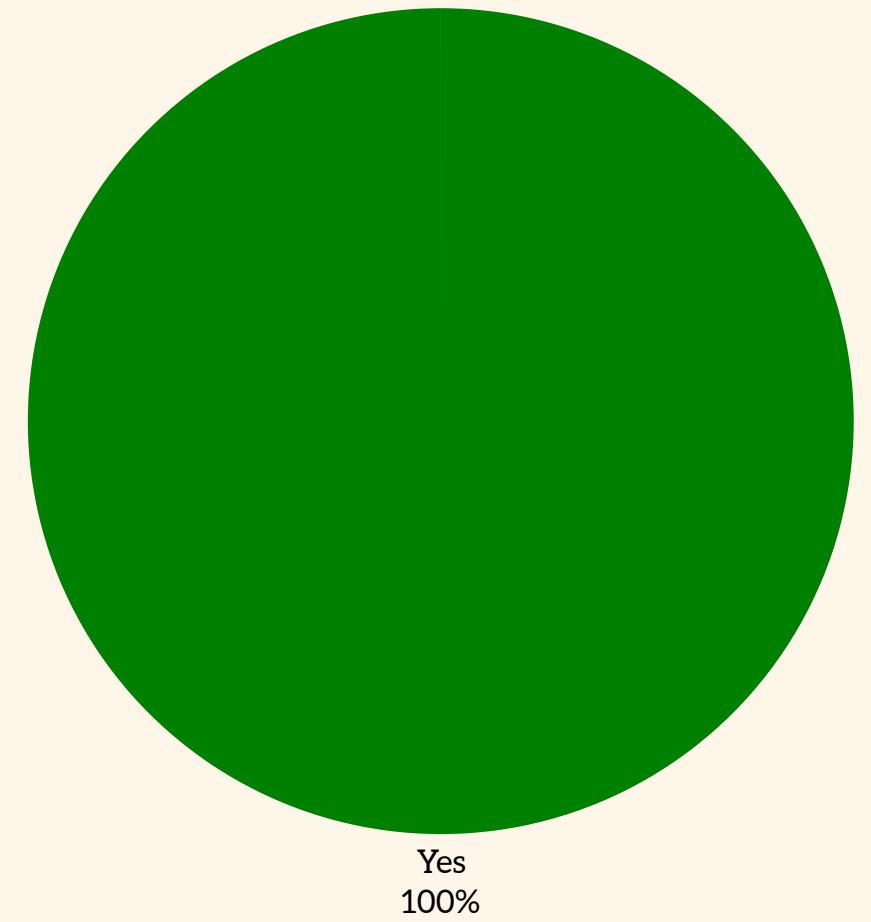


**Question 7:** Do you currently have a website of your own?

**Answer:** Only 3 out of 20 respondents have a website of their own where they take in orders for their business, but the rest of them have the traditional methods of selling via a middle man.

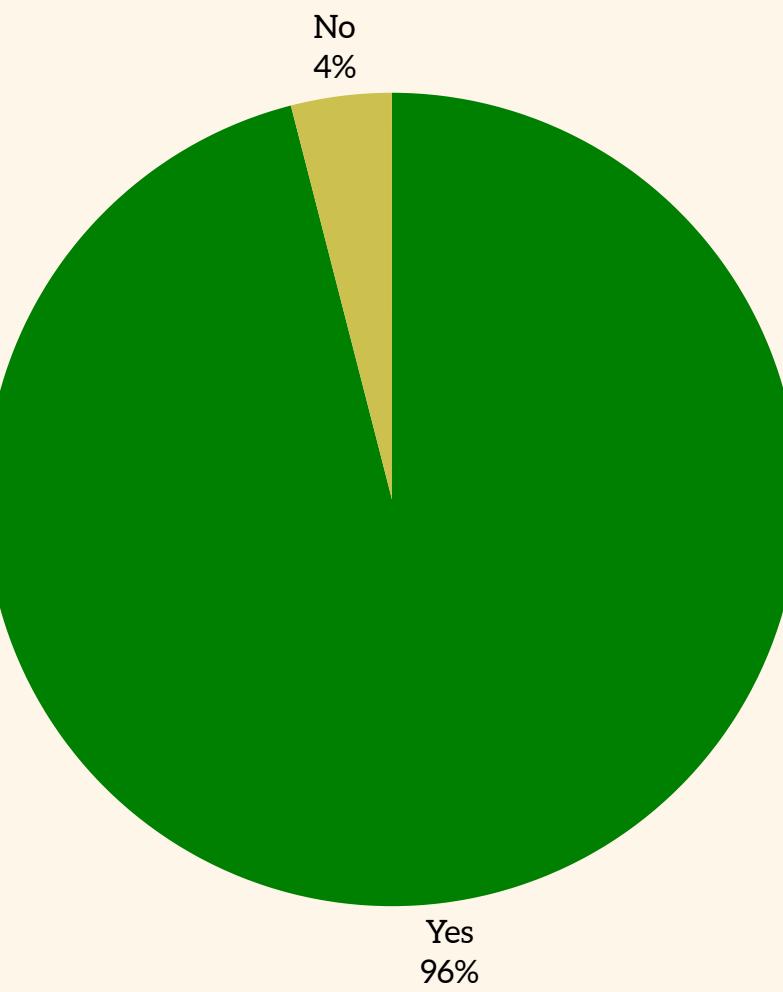
**Question 8:** Do you consider Nepal as one of your most lucrative export destinations given the strategic advantage of Madhubani sharing a border with this country?

**Answer:** All the respondents were aware of the strategic advantage that they and also have trade with Nepal for achar, however, most of them were aware that the product goes via Patna through air for exports.



**Question 9:** Do you need strategic help from the government specifically in the field of strategic interventions, capacity building and training programs?

**Answer:** The respondents were eager to have the input from the government in the above mentioned subjects, they felt that this will help them to easily rock shoot their production.



**Question 10:** Do women make more than 70% of your workforce?

**Answer:** This industry is a female dominant industry and mostly after COVID-19, when the migrant laborers came back, most of them who were men, the woman of the household took in the responsible to be the breadwinners and the achar manufacturing sector was one of the biggest employers for them.

Jhaji Store is a pickle and chutney startup from Darbhanga, Bihar. Started in 2020, this startup appeared on Shark Tank India Season 1 to gather funding, and since then has been a household name throughout the country for Mithalanchal Achar. Their products are made without any artificial coloring and preservatives. They use the traditional method of sun-drying to avoid spoilage of the product.

Founded by two women, Kalpana Jha and Uma Jha, their workforce consists of 75% women. Their major products include Mango Achar, Mirchi Barua Achar, Panchagraha Achar, Garlic Achar, Imlai Chutney, Amla Achar and Jackfruit Pickle. They sell in bottles of 250g and 500g, along with sample bottles in packets of 20g.

They have created over 90+ jobs and are an EBITA positive business. Their appearance on Shark Tank also garnered them an investment from Vineeta Singh, founder of Sugar Cosmetics, Namita Thapar, Executive Director of Emcure Pharmaceuticals and Jharkhand Angels. They plan to start their exports in the upcoming years (the estimate is that they will start their exports after two years, in the year 2026). Right now, they are trying to establish their brand in export market destinations and are trying to figure out the quality control measures that their export destinations demand.

According to the owner, as their business has rockshoothed after their appearance on Shark Tank, what they were able to sell in three months, they had equivalent sales overnight. They believe that the national

## CASE STUDY ON JHAJI STORE

television in India has helped them to establish their brand domestically and have helped to get the trust of the demographic. They plan to do something similar to establish themselves as the "Mithilanchal Achar" brand globally.



**The Founders of Jhaji Store - Kalpana Jha and Uma Jha**

# A CLUSTER BASED APPROACH

Based on the outreach activities undertaken under the DEH initiative, it is found that there are several challenges faced by individuals and businesses such as limited resources and expertise related to exports, especially in case MSMEs, lack of focus on capacity building, lack of export-oriented infrastructure, skill gaps and limited market knowledge, limited export promotion and lack of dedicated support from the Government in handholding new businesses to export. All these gaps contribute to most of these individuals and businesses not joining the export initiatives.

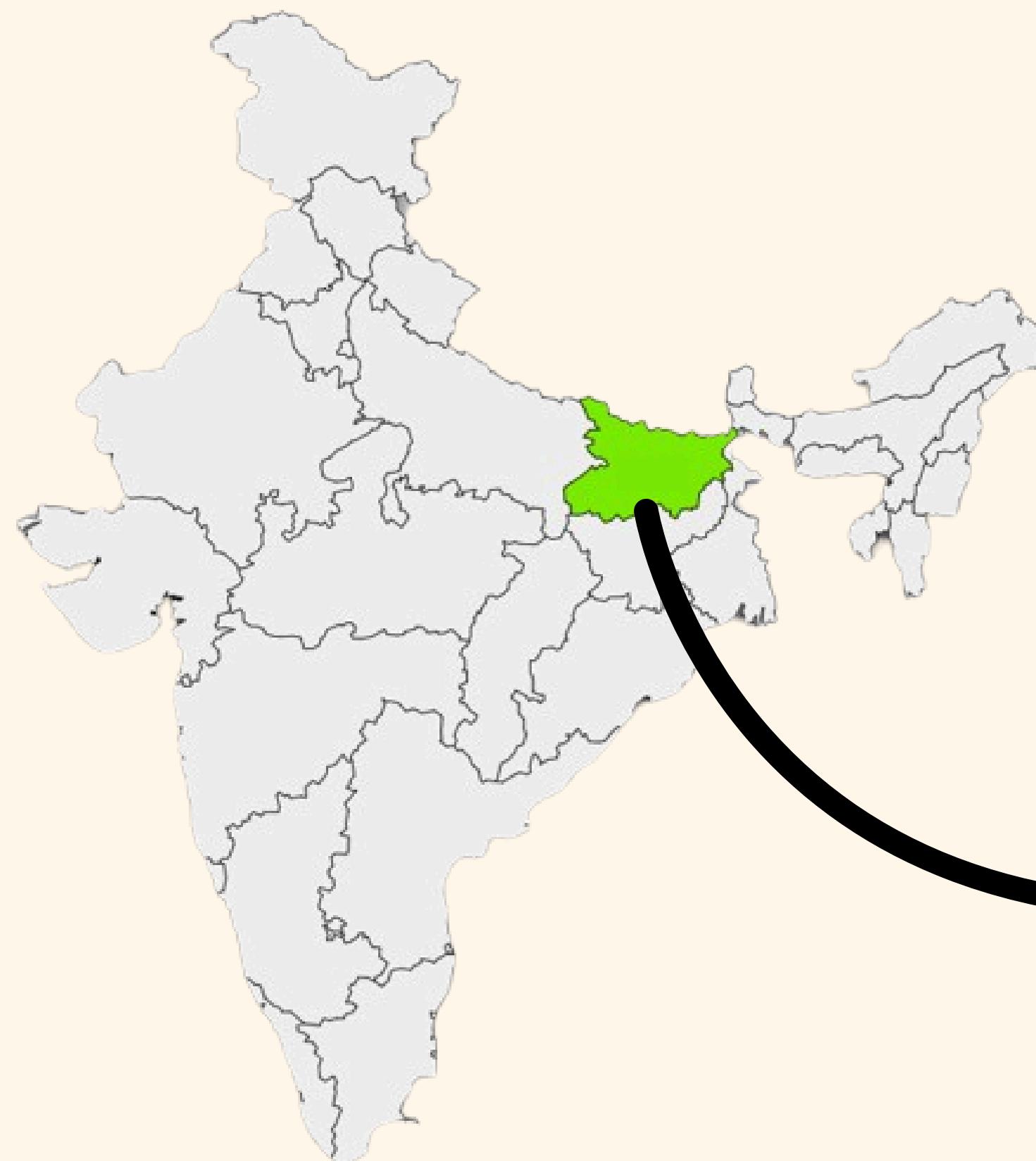
A cluster-based approach may supplement the efforts under the Districts as Export Hubs initiative and achieve the desired target of export growth from the country through a targeted approach which is based on cluster and sector/product focus. This approach will provide platforms for a wide and global reach of products and services.

A cluster is defined as a unit or a group of districts collectively developing new products/services with tremendous export potential. These can further be distinguished as geographical, product and service-based clusters.

- **Geographical Cluster:** A cluster that originated due to geographical factors like proximity to raw material/industry/labor with immense potential to achieve scale. A Geographical Cluster will be a unit or units in a district or a group of districts collectively developing new products

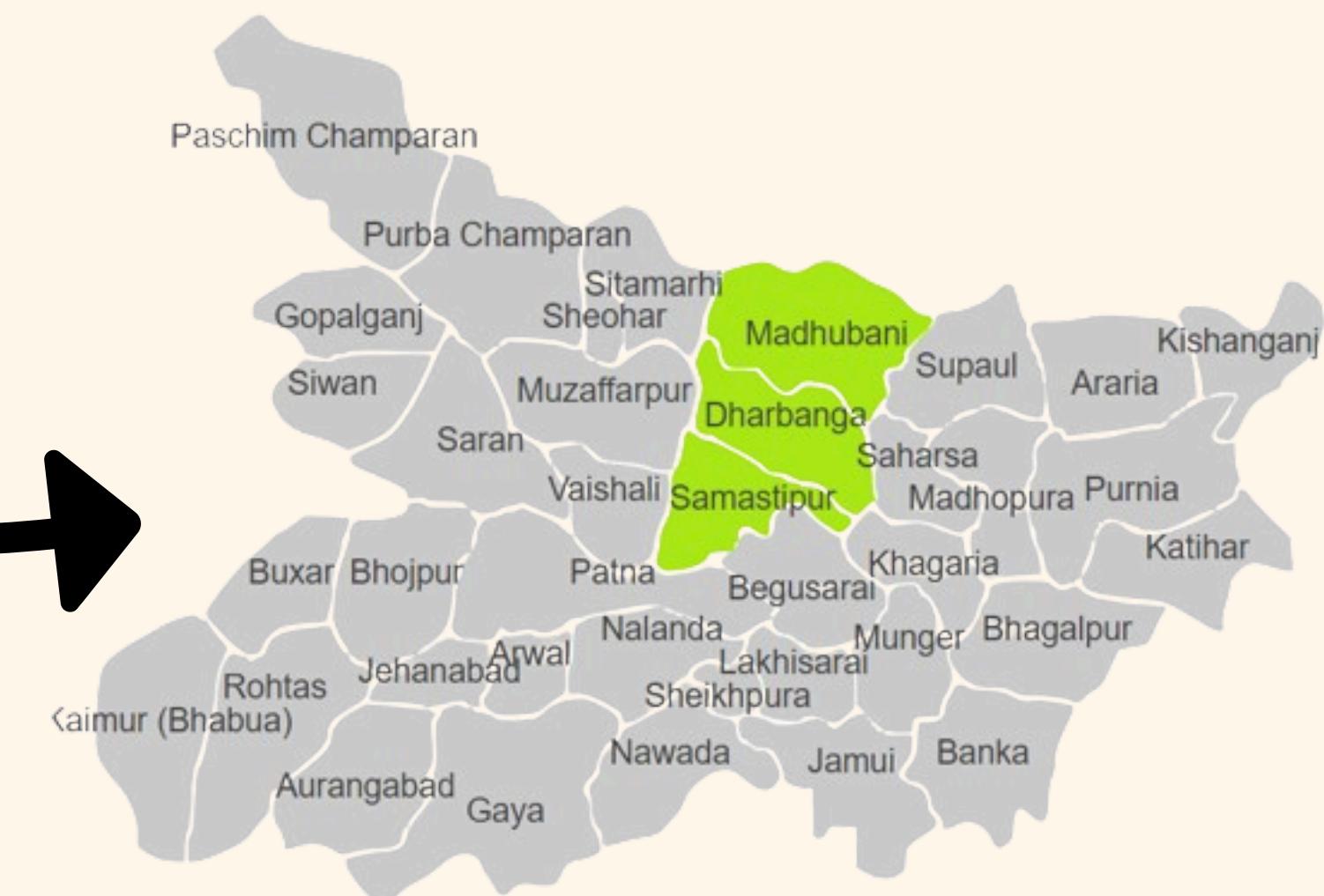
or services but has tremendous export potential. It is proposed that to ensure equitable focus on the least developed districts/aspirational districts, 1/3rd of the geographical cluster selected under the scheme will include these regions.

- **Product and Service Cluster:** This cluster is based on product/services, not geographical location. The cluster is not limited to its geographical positioning, rather it is spread across multiple regions which may be the focus area for exporting the identified product/service and has a huge export potential. To understand the cluster-based approach, let us look at the Bhadohi Carpet Cluster. This cluster includes Bhadohi and its neighboring districts, Mirzapur, Varanasi and certain pockets of Chandauli that together make up a carpet hub that accounts for ₹7,000 crores of India's annual export of ₹12,000 crores. Of all products manufactured in the cluster including Persian carpets, Dhurries, Hand tufted carpets, Handloom etc. It is the largest exporter of carpets in the region and engages around 3.2 million people in the industry. The key importing nations of this product-based cluster include the United States, UAE, United Kingdoms, Switzerland, Germany, and other parts of Europe. By clustering together these regions within a specific carpet. industry, it has helped in collectively addressing common challenges related to international trade, certification, and compliance.



## Formation of Geographical Cluster in Bihar

Bihar, a state with rich agricultural resources and vibrant culinary traditions, holds significant potential for the export of Indian achar. The districts of Darbhanga, Samastipur, and Madhubani are particularly well-suited for this endeavor due to their abundant production of key ingredients and proximity to international markets like Nepal.



According to a primary telephonic survey conducted by me, these three districts make 45,000 kg of achar in roughly two months. By leveraging these advantages and utilizing the Raxaul port, Bihar can boost its pickle exports and contribute to economic growth.

### 1. Rich Agricultural Output

- **Darbhanga:** Known for its fertile land, Darbhanga produces a variety of fruits and vegetables essential for pickle production, such as mangoes, limes, and green chilies.
- **Samastipur:** This district specializes in mustard, a crucial ingredient in many Indian pickles, alongside other produce like carrots and radishes.
- **Madhubani:** Famous for its indigenous spices and unique recipes, Madhubani adds a distinctive flavor to pickles, enriching the variety of products available for export.

### 2. Strategic Location

**(A) Proximity to Nepal:** The geographic location of these districts provides a logistical advantage, as they are close to the Raxaul port, one of the major trade gateways to Nepal. This proximity allows for efficient transportation and reduced shipping costs, making it easier to penetrate the Nepalese market.

- In 2023, Nepal imported achar worth \$203,000. Especially during the pandemic, when Nepal had zero achar exports of its own, it imported pickles worth 2.91 million Nepalese Rupee, which is around \$217,000, from countries such as Australia, China, India and UAE.

- Given the geographical advantage, India was the biggest trade partner for Nepal during the pandemic, and still continues to be the biggest trading partners in various other commodities.

### (B) Raxaul Port: A Key Trade Hub

- The Raxaul port facilitates the seamless movement of goods between India and Nepal. Utilizing this port can enhance trade efficiency, streamline customs processes, and increase the volume of achar exports to Nepal. Land Port Raxaul is located along the international border between India and Nepal, located at a distance of about 230 kms from the city of Patna. Raxaul (India) – Birgunj (Nepal) is the most important route for interchange of bilateral and third country trade between India and Nepal. Land Port Raxaul is located at a distance of approx. 5 kms from Railways Station, Raxaul. Madhubani, one of the three districts that are suggested in this project, also shares a border with Nepal, if a landport is created via Madhubani, it will be strategically convenient to export achar from this cluster to Nepal. When I was conducting my primary survey, the exporters and manufacturers in these districts highlighted that the achar that they are making is being sold to global markets via air through Patna, none of them knew if it was being exported via the roadways or via Raxaul port or not. Given the close proximity, from these three districts (less than 170 KM) Raxaul port is used very frequently to export products to Nepal, fit analysis that how much trade can boost up by making this port.

and achar can be one of them. Similarly, if a landport is made via Madhubani, the transportation cost can be reduced more drastically. Given the fact that Nepal has a huge market, and these three districts also produce other products such as Makhana, a land port can help boost overall exports. In the Union Budget of 2024, Rs. 58,900 crores have been allocated to Bihar out of which Rs 26,000 crore is solely for roadways and infrastructural development. This is a good opportunity for Bihar to develop their infrastructure and also allocate some money towards development of a land port via Madhubani to Nepal.

### 3. Economic Opportunities

#### (A) Access to Markets

- **Nepal as a Primary Market:** With cultural and culinary similarities, Nepal presents a ready market for Indian pickles. The shared tastes and dietary habits create a natural demand for these products. Nepal has just started its pickle export in 2019-2020, but only recorded some numbers in 2021-2022. This is a golden opportunity for India to tap into Nepal's domestic market taking advantage of its geography.
- **Potential for Growth:** The growing middle class and increasing appetite for diverse foods in Nepal indicate strong potential for expanding achar exports.

**(B) Job Creation and Economic Development:** The growth of the pickle export industry can generate employment opportunities in agriculture, manufacturing, and logistics within these districts. This can lead to improved livelihoods and economic development in rural areas.

The workers in these districts working in manufacturing of achar are majorly women. Women in Bihar's achar manufacturing industry, especially in districts like Darbhanga, Samastipur, and Madhubani, are experiencing significant empowerment. As primary contributors to this sector, they gain economic independence, which elevates their status within their families and communities. Earning their own income provides financial stability and enables women to contribute to household decisions, improving living standards and enhancing their voice in family matters. Through this work, women acquire valuable skills in food processing, quality control, and business management, increasing their employability and opening doors to entrepreneurship. These skills empower them to start their own ventures, fostering a sense of confidence and self-reliance. By actively participating in the workforce, women challenge traditional gender roles, inspiring others in their communities to pursue education and employment opportunities. The empowerment of women in this industry has a ripple effect, leading to broader community benefits. Educated and financially independent women are more likely to invest in their children's education and health, contributing to overall community development. Additionally, various government schemes and NGOs support these women by providing training programs, financial assistance, and market access, further enhancing their capabilities and opportunities for growth. As a result, the achar industry not only boosts local economies but also serves as a powerful tool for women's empowerment. It transforms the lives of women, fostering economic independence, skill development, and social empowerment, which

ultimately paves the way for a more equitable and prosperous society. Through this industry, women gain a platform to thrive, breaking barriers and setting examples for future generations, while contributing significantly to the economic and social fabric of their communities.

#### **4. Strategic Initiatives**

##### **(A) Capacity Building**

- **Training Programs:** Training programs in achar manufacturing are vital for enhancing the industry's potential in the districts of Darbhanga, Samastipur, and Madhubani. By equipping local MSMEs with modern production techniques and quality control measures, these programs significantly boost product competitiveness. They empower workers, especially women, by enhancing their technical skills and increasing employability, leading to better job satisfaction and higher wages. Training initiatives also encourage innovation, allowing entrepreneurs to explore new flavors and health-focused products, aligning with global trends. Collaboration with industry experts ensures training remains effective, addressing regional challenges and opportunities. These programs foster cooperatives and networks, facilitating knowledge exchange among manufacturers.
- **Support for MSMEs:** Encouraging MSMEs to enter the pickle production industry can stimulate innovation and competition, driving growth. Supporting MSMEs in achar manufacturing in the districts of Darbhanga, Samastipur, and Madhubani is crucial for capacity building and economic growth. These regions have the potential to become significant hubs for achar production due to their rich

agricultural resources. However, local MSMEs face challenges like limited access to modern technology, finance, and skilled labor. By providing financial assistance, training programs, and infrastructure improvements, these enterprises can enhance production efficiency and product quality. Streamlined regulations and supportive policies will encourage entrepreneurship and innovation. Empowering MSMEs in these districts not only boosts local economies but also creates jobs, reduces poverty, and fosters social development, making them vital contributors to regional and national progress.

- **Financial Support Programmes:** In conversation with the manufacturers and exporters, they highlighted that sometimes it gets difficult for them to get funding via organized sector, such as banks because of various reasons, so finance needs of such manufacturers who wish to start exporting are usually not met, those who tend to go via the unorganized sector tend to fall in debt trap. So, to tackle this problem a similar model like Grameen Bank by Mohammad Yunus in Bangladesh can be applied in the cluster. Grameen Bank, founded by Muhammad Yunus, provides microloans to the impoverished without requiring collateral, empowering them to start small businesses and escape poverty. A similar setup via the panchayat or district levels bodies can be set up which provides loans, against a very small collateral and reasonable interest rate.



## CHALLENGES AND OPPURTUNITIES

During my primary telephonic survey with 20 manufacturers I gathered insights on what problems they are facing. In this part of the report I am listing out the concerns that the respondents put forward and the solution to them in the subsequent chapter.

Despite the positive growth trajectory, Indian pickle exporters face several challenges. These include stringent food safety regulations in importing countries, competition from other major exporters, and logistical issues related to supply chain management.



**1. Regulatory Hurdles:** Different countries have varying food safety standards, which can pose challenges for Indian exporters. Ensuring compliance with these regulations requires significant investment in quality control and certification processes. According to the primary telephonic survey conducted by me, 18 out of 20 respondents to this question felt that they need a streamlined process to understand the regulations for other countries so that they can make their products accordingly.

**2. Competition:** Competing with countries like Turkey, Mexico, and China necessitates continuous innovation in product offerings, pricing strategies, and marketing efforts. Indian exporters need to differentiate their products by highlighting unique flavors and traditional preparation methods.

**3. Logistics and Supply Chain:** During my conversations with the manufacturers and exporters they highlighted that they sometimes have problems buying in bulk for their raw material and that lessens their production to meet the effective demand. Efficient supply chain management is crucial to maintain the quality and shelf-life of pickles during transit. Addressing logistical challenges such as transportation costs and delays is essential for sustaining export growth.

**4. Quality Control:** Maintaining consistent quality is crucial for export success. However, ensuring uniform quality can be challenging due to variations in cultivation practices, post-harvest handling, and processing methods. Also, as we are aiming to increase Exports, the exporters need to implement

implement rigorous quality control measures to meet international standards and customer expectations.

**5 Packaging and Labeling:** Achar as a product does not need cold storage, so it is very easy to transport, however, spillage might be a huge issue in this transfer. So people need to be trained so that they can make exports a seamless process.

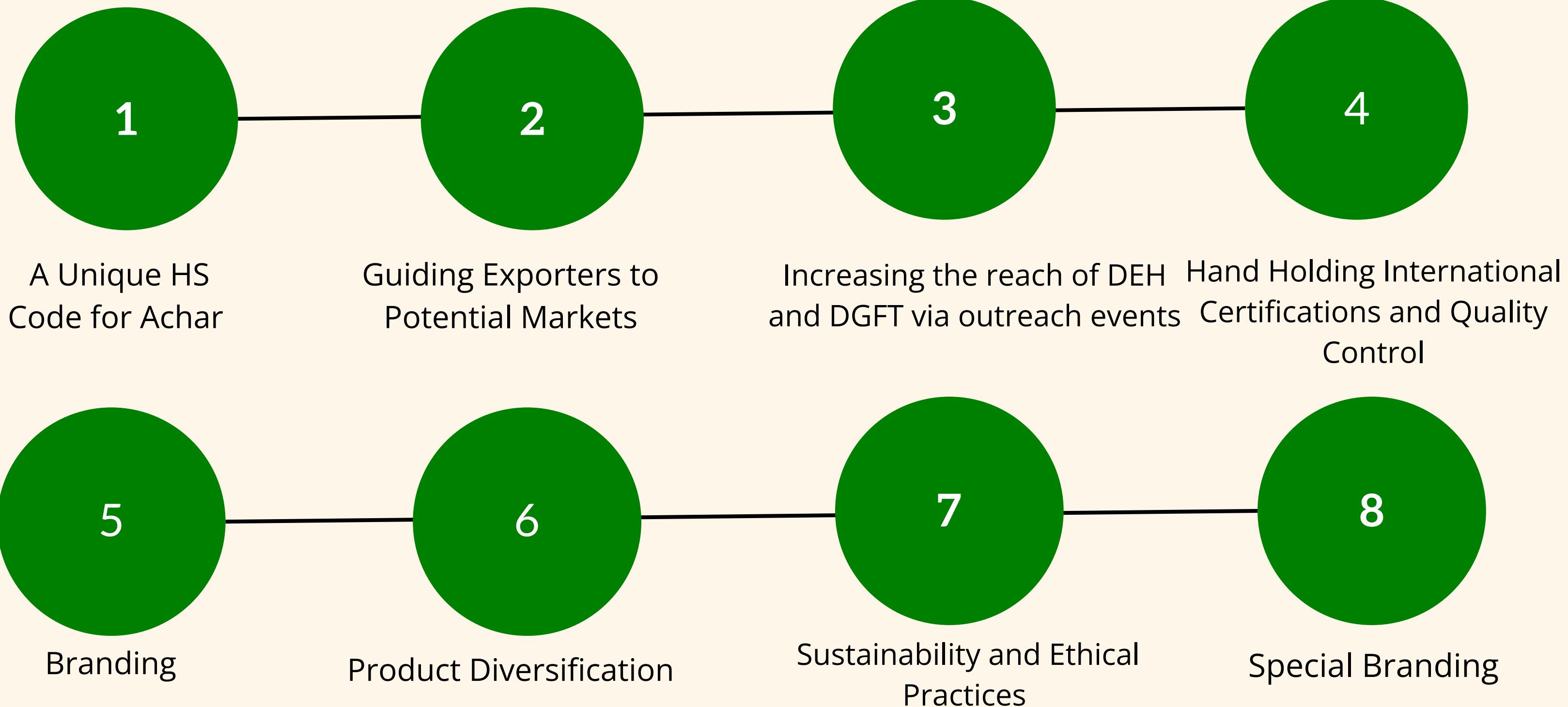
Compliance with packaging and labeling regulations of the destination countries can be complex. Achar exporters need to ensure that packaging materials are suitable for international shipping, including mandatory information such as nutritional labeling, organic tag, and sustainability tag to adhere to specific labeling requirements of the target market. As achar is a FMCG product packaging and labeling is a very important aspect to have successful exports.





# REQUIRED INTERVENTIONS FOR INCREASING ACHAR EXPORTS

## Short Term Interventions



**Short Term Interventions** - These are the interventions that can be rolled out within 3-4 years of establishing the cluster. Most of them are administrative interventions that I feel will streamline the process of achar exports from the country and some of them have been included after talking to the manufacturers and exporters.

**1 A Unique HS Code for Indian Achar** During my research it was difficult to collect data for achar exports, as achar is being exported under the various HS Codes in Chapter 20 - Preparations Of Vegetables, Fruit, Nuts Or Other Parts Of Plants for vegetarian achar and Chapter 16 - Preparations of Meat, of Fish, of Crustaceans, Molluscs or other Aquatic Invertebrates or of Insects for Non-Vegetarian Achar. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade and the Department of Revenue should assign a separate HS Code for achar. This will help in establishing the fact that achar is different from pickle and will help in analyzing the export data more seamlessly, which inturn will help in target based policy making.

**2. Guiding Exporters to Potential Markets:** During my telephonic surveys, 15 out of 20 manufacturers, who have the capacity and means to export have delayed their exports as they are not aware of which markets to target. Having sessions with potential exporters, as a part of the already going outreach events, the domestic manufacturers will know how to introduce its product in the outside market. Helping them to get the correct mentorship via industry experts and experts from international delivery giants like Amazon will help them understand which markets are best suited for them and which country will give them profits.

**3. Increasing the Reach of DEH and DGFT via Outreach Events:** During my telephonic surveys, 20 out of 20 respondents said that they will be extremely beneficial for them, however they haven't attended any such program yet related only for exports. One of the manufacturers mentioned that the programmes done by the Ministry of MSME has been very helpful for him and he will be very interested to learn about exports via similar events organized by the government of India.

**4. Hand Holding International Certification and Quality Controls:** We can collaborate with APEDA to create a web based certification and traceability software system for monitoring worldwide standards. We can take a subscription to online platforms like Volza/Panjim for the same. We can create a team of two-three researchers that would generate quarterly reports through market research to analyze consumer preferences, market trends, and competition in those markets. We have to focus on countries with a growing demand for healthy and natural food products and promote achar exports in these countries. Once every six months, we can put up an official information desk in the dominant markets that trade Achar. This desk will include an officer that will help with the registration, export documentation, or any other official assistance. If the exporters cannot reach us, we will try to reach them. We should promote the Status Holder Certificate System under foreign trade policy. We have to ensure consistent quality control measures throughout the production process, from manufacturing to packaging. We can find the common food safety standard rules from the countries that import most achar and make it mandatory for our exporters to adhere to them. We also obtain relevant

certifications to meet international quality requirements including certifications such as Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP). The government can provide sustainability and women at work tag on the final product to increase public consciousness. Here is a list of compulsory labeling requirements that the achar bottle and packets should definitely have so that consumers in the export destinations deem them safe for their own consumption.

## **5. Branding**

Branding Indian achar for the international market involves highlighting their unique flavors, cultural heritage, and health benefits while ensuring quality and compliance with international standards. Branding is crucial for achar exports as it creates a distinct identity that differentiates Indian pickles in the global market. Effective branding highlights the unique flavors, cultural heritage, and health benefits of achar, appealing to diverse consumer preferences. It fosters recognition and trust, essential for competing with established international products. By telling the story of traditional recipes and authentic preparation methods, branding connects emotionally with consumers seeking genuine cultural experiences. This connection can lead to increased customer loyalty and repeat purchases. Branding also communicates quality assurance, including international certifications, which builds confidence in product safety and compliance with global standards. Attractive packaging and consistent branding help products stand out on shelves, capturing consumer attention. Moreover, branding supports strategic marketing efforts across digital platforms, enabling targeted campaigns that reach broader audiences. Social Media

engagement, influencer collaborations, and storytelling through content marketing all benefit from a strong brand presence, enhancing visibility and consumer interaction. Participation in international trade shows and partnerships with distributors further leverage branding to open new market opportunities. Additionally, branding allows for adaptation to local tastes, offering variations that resonate with different cultural preferences while maintaining authenticity. By emphasizing sustainability and ethical sourcing, branding aligns with global consumer values, reinforcing a positive brand image. Overall, strong branding is vital for building market share, establishing Indian achar as a premium product, and driving export growth, ultimately contributing to the economic development of the regions involved in its production.

## **6. Product Diversification Innovative Flavors:** Developing new and innovative pickle flavors that cater to international tastes can differentiate products in the market.

- **Organic and Health-Focused Products:** Introducing organic and health-focused pickles can appeal to health-conscious consumers and meet global demand for clean-label products.
- **Reducing Spice and Sodium Levels:** The native consumers in the West might not have the same taste palette of high sodium and spice levels, so some special achars can be made that can be bought by those who want to introduce themselves to this new product.
- **Add Indian Superfoods to Catch more Attention:** Foods like Moringa that have ayurvedic benefits like weight loss and increasing attention span can be introduced. Available in both powder and fruit form, it can

be included in various kinds of achar that India exports.

**7. Sustainability and Ethical Practices Eco-friendly Packaging:** Use sustainable and eco-friendly packaging materials to appeal to environmentally conscious consumers.

## **8. Special Labels for Branding**

In today's day and age, the consumer is very conscious of what product they purchase and how it affects the environment. They are also concerned whether the product that they are buying, the raw material for that is being sourced ethically or not, and the workers who are making that product, are they being paid fairly or not. So companies can use this to their advantage and tell that their business is being run on ethical means.

For example, Anomaly Haircare, a brand by Priyanka Chopra Jonas has surpassed Kylie Jenner's brand Kylie Cosmetics and Selena Gomez's Brand Rare Beauty, by bringing in a revenue of over \$500 million in revenue. Priyanka Chopra Jonas' hair care line Anomaly has climbed to the second-richest of 2023, just behind Rihanna's Fenty Beauty. One thing that this brand does different from almost all the celebrity brands, is that it is an extremely climate conscious brand. Anomaly makes its bottles out of recycled plastic and helps in lowering of plastic waste throughout the globe. Majority of its revenue comes from continents like Europe and America, as the consumer over there is very particular about how their consumption is affecting the environment. Indian Achar companies can

take inspiration from this and can come up with a similar label that is not necessarily mandated by the government but gives out the idea to the foreign consumer that this product is indeed ethically sourced and made.



## Type of Label

## About the Label

### Child Labour

It is illegal for children under the age of 14 to work at any industrial establishment, so the companies can make a small label that can explicitly mention that no child labour was used in production for that unit of achar and the product is ethically sourced.

### Women

The achar manufacturing industry is dominated by women in its workforce, the companies can make a small label that depicts this fact, like 75% women labourforce. This will send a very powerful message of women empowerment and will help to attract consumers who exclusively support this cause.

### Story

The industry can also write a story in about 50-60 words about a farmer from whom the product was sourced or about a worker in the industry that how a livelihood at this industry has changed their life so that there is a personal connect to the consumers.

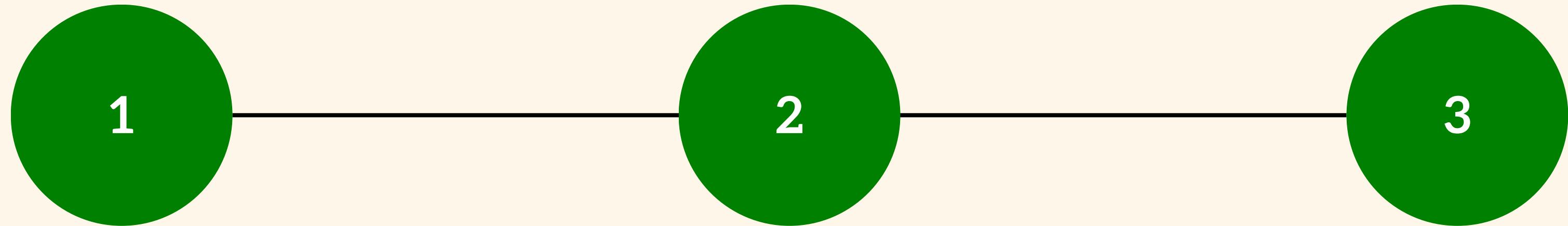
### Environment Conscious

If the brand or company is using anything that is helping the environment, like using biodegradable or reusable material for packaging they should mention that they are environment friendly and people tend to support such businesses whole-heartedly.

### A Simple Fact About Achar

The brand or the company can have a simple fact about achar on their packets, like how it is a probiotic and can help in maintaining gut health, how achar was discovered in India, which part of India is that particular achar native to etc.

## Middle to Long Term Interventions



Establish a Reliable  
Distribution and Logistics  
Network

**Medium to Long Term Interventions:** These suggested interventions would be rolled out from the fifth year and shall continue for a decade. They are suggested from my own understanding of the problems that achar exports are facing right now in India.

1. **Establish a reliable distribution and logistics network:** It is vital to ensure efficient logistics and transportation systems to maintain quality during export. Considering that private courier services are expensive, we have to seek the next best alternative. This service can be regulated by the India Post, and we can utilize their warehouse in the north-eastern region of Bihar to store achar. India Post has similar warehouses throughout the country, so they can be used to store the

Adapt to Market Feedback

Effetctive Ways to Connect  
Exporters to Buyers

product during export. To ensure timely delivery and responsiveness to customer needs we can create a blockchain system to help customers track and coordinate with the delivery partner.

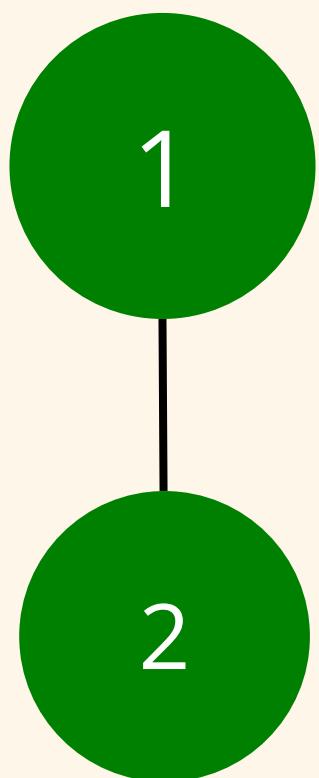
**2. Adapt to market feedback:** There is a need to adapt product offerings, packaging, pricing, and marketing strategies based on market demands and consumer preferences. We should conduct export awareness programs for Achar and aid under the Agriculture Export Promotion Plan Scheme of APEDA to potential export units in the producing states. We can build an additional online portal specifically for exports, including a list of importers, new trends, methods, goods, and services in demand, the BSM and RBSM meet recording, and a query section. This portal will be

accessed by registered exporters with a username and password. For those exporters that are not technologically advanced, a special class will be organized, this portal will include a google enabled language translating and audio mechanism. This will also include a tracking system for the issues raised by exports in the BSM meets to ensure accountability of the actions.

**3. Effective Ways to Connect Exporters with Buyers:** We should encourage our exporters to participate in international trade fairs, exhibitions, and industry-specific events related to the product being exported. These events provide opportunities to showcase products, meet potential buyers, and establish direct contacts with importers, distributors, and retailers from various countries. We should utilize online business-to-business (B2B) marketplaces that connect exporters and importers from around the world. Platforms like Global Sources, and TradeKey facilitate communication, product showcasing, and trade negotiations between buyers and sellers. These platforms allow exporters to create profiles, list their products, and interact with interested buyers. We should also engage in professional services providers, such as export consultants, trade facilitators, or agents, who specialize in international trade and have established networks in target markets. These professionals can assist in identifying and negotiating contracts and navigating the complexities of international trade. Establish a dedicated sales team or engage with sales agents in target markets to actively seek and connect with potential buyers. Sales representatives can proactively reach out to importers, retailers, and distributors, pitch products, and negotiate deals on behalf of the exporter.

## Continuous Interventions

Spreading the Message:  
Strategies to Increase  
Awareness



Government Initiatives and  
Industry Support

**Continuous Interventions** - These are the interventions that should shall be continuous, starting from when the cluster is established and thereon

**1. Spreading the Message: Strategies to Increase Awareness:** We can conduct educational campaigns and awareness programs to inform the general public about the nutritional value, health benefits, and culinary uses of Achar, on how it is a beautiful probiotic addition to their meal. These campaigns can be organized through various mediums such as social media, websites, newsletters, workshops, and community events. We can collaborate with nutritionists, dietitians, and health professionals to promote consumption of achar. Encourage them to include achar in their dietary recommendations and share information about its benefits with their clients and patients. We can collaborate with schools and educational institutions to introduce achar in their cafeterias or as part of nutrition education programs. Provide educational materials to teachers and students to raise awareness about its nutritional value. Organize sampling campaigns at supermarkets, health food stores, or community events to offer potential consumers the opportunity to taste. Provide samples along with informational brochures or recipes to encourage them to purchase and incorporate achar into their regular diet. These stories can emphasize personal transformations, weight loss journeys, or improved overall well-being. Establishing a strong online presence through a dedicated website and active social media accounts is important. Regularly share engaging and informative content about makhana, including health benefits, recipes, success stories, and user testimonials. Launch the series on a dedicated website or a proper video streaming

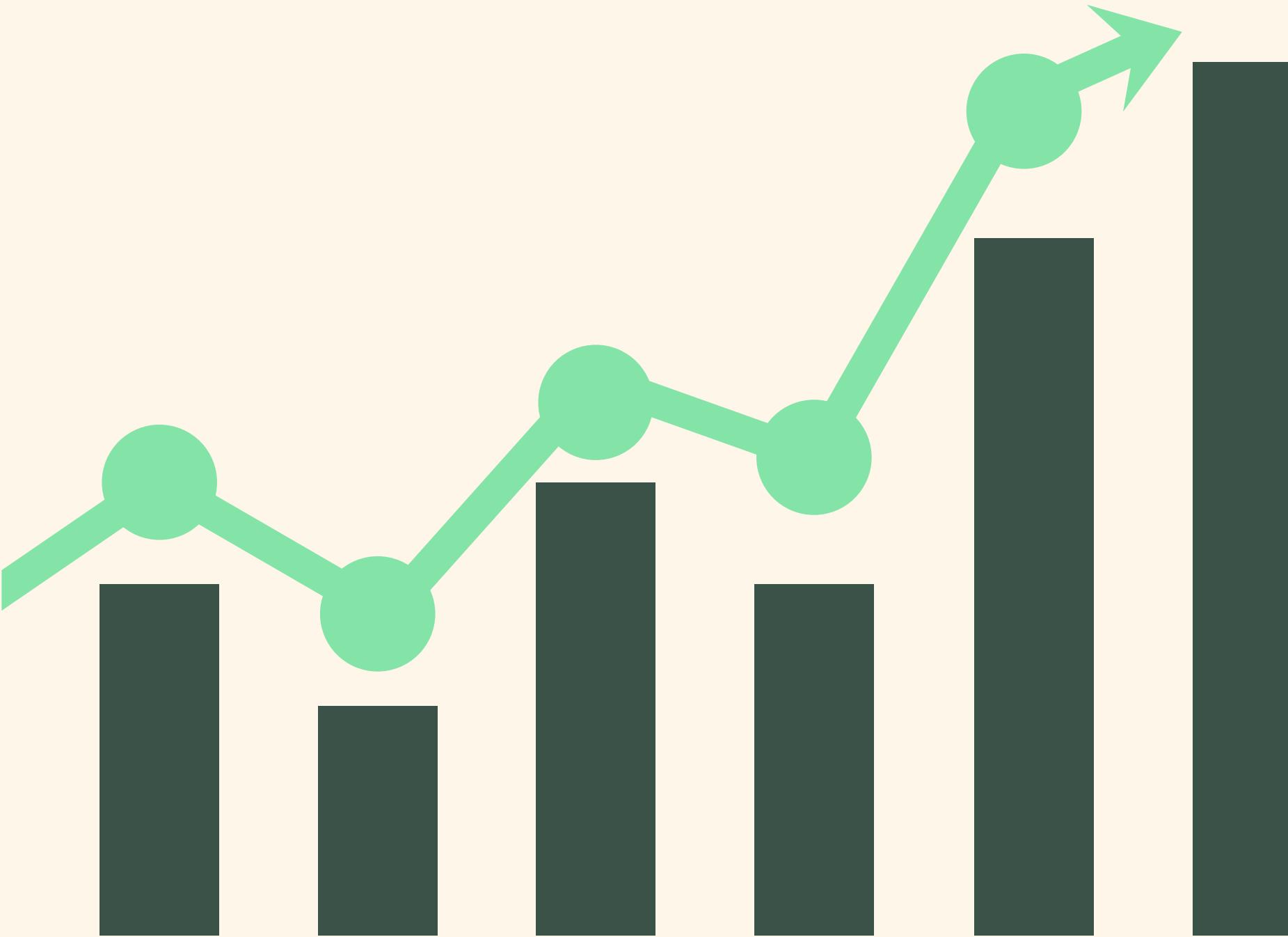
platform like YouTube or a social media channel. Ensure the content is visually appealing, engaging, and informative. Compile the recipes featured in the series into a beautifully designed, digital cookbook. Make it available for download on the website or as an ebook, ensuring it reaches a wider audience. Produce high-quality recipe videos featuring celebrity chefs and influencers preparing a range of makhana dishes. The videos should be well-edited, visually appealing, and cater to different skill levels of home cooks.

## **2. Government Initiatives and Industry Support**

The Indian government has been proactive in supporting the agro-processing sector, including pickle exports. Initiatives like the Districts as Export Hubs program aim to boost exports by developing export-oriented infrastructure and providing market access support. Additionally, the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) plays a crucial role in promoting Indian agro-products in international markets through trade fairs, buyer-seller meets, and market research. The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises also plays an important role as almost all the achar manufacturing companies in India usually come under this criteria. A similar scheme like Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) can be introduced for pickle manufacturers and exporters. Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) is a programme of the Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India and was launched in the year 2005 with the view to make the traditional industries more competitive, market-driven, productive, profitable and capable of

providing sustainable employment for traditional industry artisans and rural entrepreneurs. The Coir Board is the Nodal Agency for the implementation of the scheme. The scheme is being implemented by the Board through the Implementing Agencies engaged by the Board for each cluster. This scheme focuses on physical infrastructure creation, technology upgradation, training, product development, innovation, design interventions, marketability, improved packaging and marketing infrastructure with the aim of improving artisanal income. Cluster that make achar can be similarly identified throughout the country and they can be included in the SFURTI Scheme and this will help the manufacturers and exporters throughout the country to get to have a streamlined procedure of procuring raw material, producing the product and then finally exporting the product out of the country.





# Projections for the Upcoming Decade

# PROJECTIONS

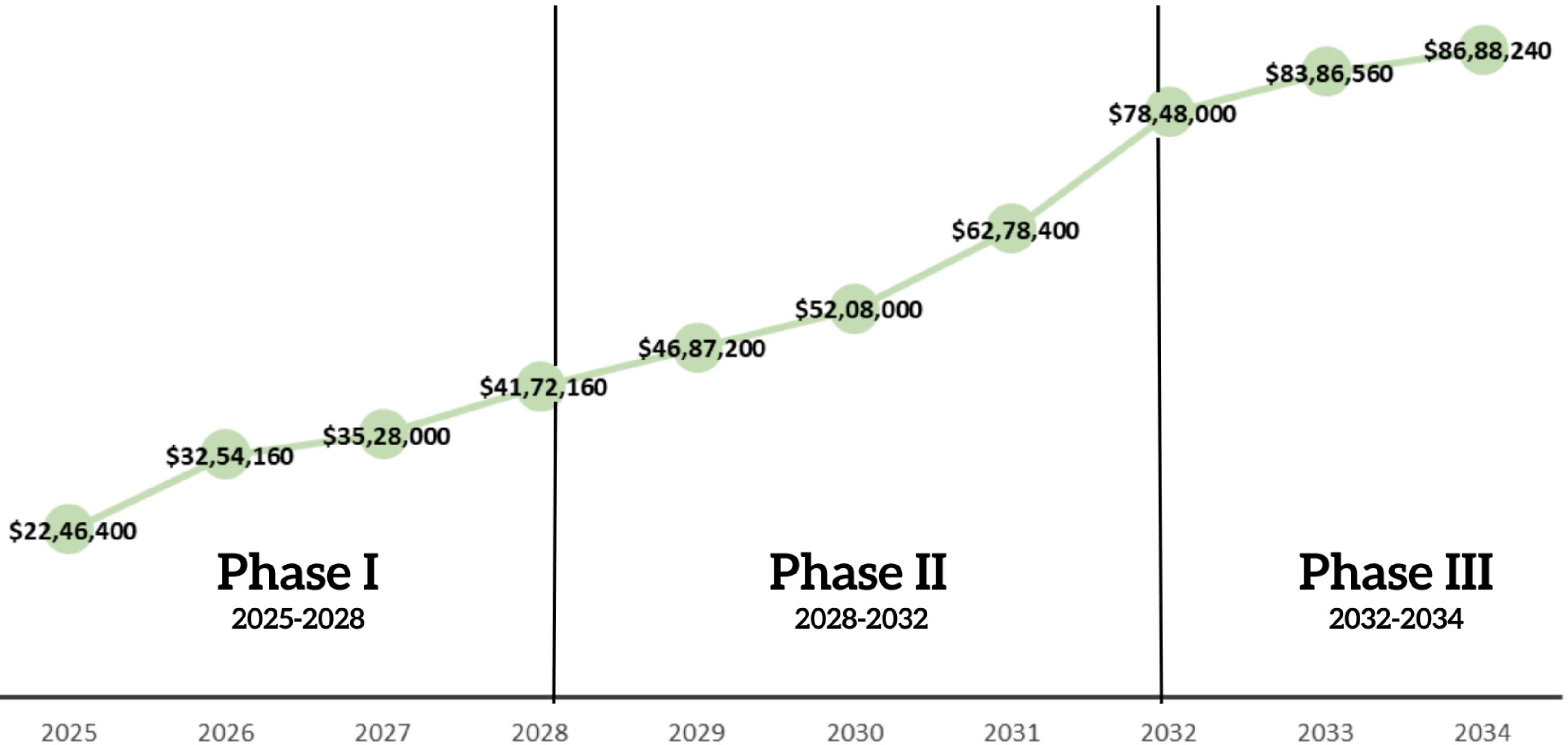
Taking in variables such as change in number of average % change in IEC holders, average % change in exchange rates and average % change in CPI-Combined over 2014-2024, with 2014 as the base year.the following formula has been calculated. The numerator that is a product of average of % change in number of IEC Holders and Average of % change in CPI-Combined will give a good estimation of the price of the product. The denominator is a % change in the number of foreign exchange helps in establishing the indirect relation of foreign exchange with exports. Multiplying this by hundred has given the percentage of the projected growth for the next 10 years in exports for achar.

$$\left| \frac{\%ChangeInNumberOfIECHolders \times \%ChangeInCPI - Combined}{\%ChangeInForeignExchangeRate} \right| \times 100 = 8.5\%$$

If we adhere to this formula, the achar industry can increase by 8.5% in the decade for 2025-2034. However, one has to keep in mind the mentioned caveats. There are chances that this might fail as achar is a commodity that can increase its quantity exported by various reasons other than that mentioned in the formula. Marketing, branding and spread of culture and soft power will play a very big role that this formula has not accounted for yet. If these variables are spread across well, the increase in achar exports can be way more than what the value just says.

A rough Amount of around 45,000 kg kilograms of achar production happening on a monthly basis for these three districts alone. So, in 2023, it can be estimated that this district will produce 540,000 kg of achar. We can assume that 60% of this produce will be used for domestic consumption and trade and 40% of this produce is exported abroad.

# Projected Exports for the Next Decade



In the **first phase i.e from 2025 - 2028**, as the short term interventions, that are, guiding exporters to the potential markets, increasing the reach of DEH and DGFT via outreach events, hand holding international certifications and quality control, branding, launching new products via product diversification, integrating sustainability and ethical practices and incorporating special branding labels to allure conscious consumers will be rolled out, this will give a huge push to the current exporters and this will be shown in slow but steady increase in exports (the calculation for this can be checked in the appendix). The new and diversified products that will be launched in the market, will help the exporters to have a big basket of products from which they can earn in revenue and can reinvest that in the expansion of their business. In this phase, one can see a steady increase of 85% through the years 2025-2028.

In the **second phase, i.e from 2028-2032**, as the short term interventions will start bearing fruits, the medium to long term interventions, that are establishing a reliable distribution and logistics network, adapting to marketing feedback, and getting through effective ways to connecting the buyers and the exporters, the exports of achar from these districts will show a exponential increase in this phase as compared to the exports in the year 2025. With the short term interventions giving the exporters, manufacturers and the government agencies an idea of what will help in boosting the export most and simultaneous implementation of continuous and medium to long term interventions the exports will see a drastic increase of 250% as compared to the year 2025. In the **third phase, i.e from 2032-2034**, the short term, medium to long term and continuous

interventions all of them will be bearing the fruits and along with that miscellaneous cultural factors can also come into play. As achar exports will be increasing exponentially, and marketing and branding of this value based agricultural product, culinary pop culture and social media trends will catch up and introduce an entirely new non-native consumer base that was unaware of this product before. This will increase exports by at least 290% in comparison with 2024.

The increase in exports in the third phase is astronomical when compared to the first phase, with a difference of 175%, but when compared to the second phase, the exports have only increased by 40%. This shows that at least after a decade there might be slow increase in exports and this will eventually lead to stagnated growth. But this can be tackled by implementing new interventions that will invite repeat consumers and help India infiltrate into new markets.

One of the most important parts about achar exports is that this product is a more culturally influential product. As the world is turning more towards Indian cuisine and sattvic meal, the spotlight is on what our ancient practices were for food. Achar has always been a vital part for our meal, and if a cultural wave of achar can be started (it is a factor that no one controls, but the direction of pop culture trend can always be set up) just like it did for Kimchi via K-Pop, one can see exports increasing in an exponential fashion, as the consumer who wasn't attracted with any of the benefits of achar and was not aware of it in anyway, can start purchasing the product just because of its social media hype.

