

## Exports of NTIS products up by 10.96pc

RAJESH KHANAL



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The export of products identified by the Nepal Trade Integration Strategy (NTIS), 2010, as having a comparative advantage increased by 10.96 percent in the last fiscal year. The NTIS products worth Rs 26.85 billion were exported in the last fiscal year compared to Rs 24.19 billion in 2011-12.

Of the 13 NTIS-identified products, seven saw an increase in exports in 2012-13. The eight items were cardamom, tea, medicinal herbs, ginger, essential oils, iron and steel products, woolen and pashmina products. The remaining items: lentils, noodles, natural honey, handmade paper, woolen products and silver jewellery all saw a fall in exports.

These products accounted for 34.9 percent of the country's total exports. Nepal exported goods worth Rs 76.92 billion in the last fiscal year.

The NTIS has identified cardamom, ginger, honey, lentils, tea, noodles and medicinal herbs/essential oils as being in the agri-product category. Similarly, handmade paper products, silver jewelry, iron and steel, pashmina and wool products are the items in the crafts and industrial goods category.

Among the NTIS products, iron and steel products topped the export chart. The country exported iron and steel products worth Rs 11.63 billion in the last fiscal year, an increment of 2.8 percent.

However, it was ginger that saw a whopping growth in exports. The export of ginger surged by 162.5 percent to Rs 1.3 billion last year. Cardamom, another agri-product, increased in exports by 10.1 percent to reach Rs 3.84 billion.

There was double digit growth in the export of tea also. Nepal exported tea worth Rs 2.04 billion last fiscal year. "Tea, pashmina, ginger and cardamom are the sustainable exportable products in our context," said trade expert Ratnakar Adhikari.

The NTIS products, pashmina products and medicinal herbs, also recorded a good growth in exports. Adhikari attributed their growth to the appreciation of the US dollar. "Apart from this, the promotion of a collective trademark and the search for a new market for Nepali pashmina products has helped in the segment," he said.

Meanwhile, the export of lentils remained stable at Rs 2.67 billion last year. Out of five products that witnessed a fall in exports, two items, noodles/pasta and natural honey are related with agricultural products.

Natural honey suffered a major setback last year. The product's export earning dropped to a negligible amount, down from Rs 1.89 million in 2011-12. The export earnings from noodles dropped marginally, to Rs 601.39 million from Rs 603.02 million.

Adhikari stressed the need for reviewing the NTIS policy, in order to increase the business of exportable goods under the segment. "The government has to initiate a technical review so as to improve productivity and the export market of the NTIS products," he added.