

Commercial Intelligence

Five years since the global financial crisis the world economy remains in a state of disarray. Strong expansionary monetary policies in the major developed economies have not succeeded in fostering credit creation and strengthening aggregate demand. Fiscal austerity and wage compression in many developed countries are further darkening the outlook, not only for the short term, but also for the medium term. The burden of adjustment of the global imbalances that contributed to the outbreak of the financial crisis remains with the deficit countries, thus strengthening deflationary forces in the world economy.

The dominance of finance over real economic activities persists, and may even have increased further. Yet financial reforms at the national level have been timid at best, advancing very slowly, if at all.

Some developing and transition economies have been able to mitigate the impact of the financial and economic crises in the developed countries by means of expansionary macroeconomic policies. In fact, many developing and transition economies are obliged to review their development strategies that have been overly dependent on exports for growth.

It is not a new insight that growth strategies that rely primarily on exports must sooner or later reach their limits when many countries pursue them simultaneously: competition among economies based on low unit labour costs and taxes leads to a race to the bottom, with few development gains but potentially disastrous social consequences. At the present juncture, where growth of demand from developed countries is expected to remain weak for a protracted period of time, the limitations of such a growth strategy are becoming even more obvious. Therefore, a rebalancing of the drivers of growth, with greater weight given to domestic demand, is indispensable. This will be a formidable challenge for all developing countries, though more difficult for some than for others. In any case, it will require a new perspective on the role of wages and the public sector in the development process. Distinct from export-led growth, development strategies that give a greater role than in the past to domestic demand for growth can be pursued by all countries simultaneously without beggar-thy-neighbour effects, and without counterproductive wage and tax competition. Moreover, if many trade partners in the developing world manage to expand their domestic demand simultaneously, they can spur South-South trade.

In the above cited trade environment, the role of commercial intelligence and relevant business information thus becomes a vital ingredient for success in the field of international trade today. The capacity to get the right commercial intelligence and right business information to the right place at the right time and at the right price, and knowing how to use it, is a major factor influencing international trade efficiency and competitiveness. The utility of Commercial Intelligence and business information is obvious – obtaining detailed insights into specific market requirements before full-scale production; identifying the most suitable foreign buyer rather than relying on casual contacts; knowing about import and export regulations or packaging requirements before goods are shipped; knowing about the tariff rules and commodity standards; and finding the most competitive source for imported inputs all have a major impact on the efficiency of international trade. Here lies the opportunity of a government endeavoring to promote foreign trade by providing the necessary commercial intelligence to the trading communities.

Taking into account the above challenges and concerns, the Commercial Intelligence Division of DGCIS strive to cater to the crucial requirement of information to exporters and importers both domestic and abroad. This Division intends to equip itself with the whole gamut of trade related information ranging from foreign importers addresses to the possibilities of trade in various commodities, from data relating to India's trade with its major partners to current international trade environment. The information is from sources as varied as inputs received from Indian Embassies and High Commissions and materials culled from websites. Thus armed, the branches assist and encourage the entrepreneurs who have the courage and foresight to look beyond India's frontiers, in their trade endeavors.

The up-to-date data on overseas importers and exporters are also maintained and constantly updated by fetching current information from Indian Embassies and High Commissions in respect of selected items and countries as per the requirement of Indian exporters and importers.

Country profile published in ITJ provides country-wise and commodity-wise trade information, indicating the potential and existing markets for different items in countries worldwide is provided. The Division do not confine themselves to answering letters. Rather desk information is provided regularly to visitors across the table on various aspects related to trade. This informal interaction help builds exporter's and importer's confidence. In addition, Commodity Exim update is compiled, showing imports and exports of major commodities and volume of trade with major trading partners and through major ports.

The branches of the Commercial Intelligence Division of DGCIS are listed below and their functions and achievements are discussed briefly as follows.

Indian Exporters/Importers Directory

The CI division is currently engaged in preparing the Exporters/Importers Directory. The IE Codes and names of the importers/exporters have been obtained from the BEs/SBs submitted by them to the custom authorities and the same have been matched with IE Master maintained by DGFT. Initially, 70888 Importers and 59810 exporters have been selected and letters have been sent to the importers/exporters for updating their profiles such as addresses, tel/fax nos, mail IDs, etc. The division will then enter the data and prepare a profile of the importers/exporters. Till now 3000 importers and 6000 exporters details have been finalized for inclusion in the Indian Importers/Exporters Directory.

Commercial Library Branch

The Commercial Library is the repository of books, periodicals, magazines (especially on Industry, Trade, Commerce, Statistics, Economics, Law, Taxation) mimeographs, reports, of the Government of India, trade organizations and other Countries of the World. The library has a stock of up-to-date Gazette Notifications of the Government of India which is also accessible to public use. It is open to all and free reading facility is available through Readership Card on all working days during office hours. The photocopy facility on payment is also provided. The Library has the following categories of publications –

- a) Text books on Statistics, Economics, Computer, IT, Law, Accounts, Management, Taxation, etc.
- b) Books on Statistical publication
- c) Statistical Yearbooks
- d) Publications on Foreign Trade (both Indian & Foreign), and International Customs Journal.
- e) Trade Directories (both Indian & Foreign)
- f) Publications of RBI and Annual Reports of the various Ministries of the Government of India.
- g) Reports of the various Committees and Commission, Lok Sabha & Rajya Sabha, Parliamentary Standing Committee, Census of India, etc.
- h) Publications of United Nations, IMF, WTO, UNCTAD, ESCAP, UNESCO, SAARC, etc.

The Commercial Library is in the process of retro-conversion & computerization. Preparation of data-base of library books, periodicals and Gazette of India Notifications under the upgraded Libsys Software-7 is being done. Rare books and documents have been identified for micro-filming and digitalization. Tender processing has been initiated in this regard.

Indian Trade Journal

The Indian Trade Journal is a weekly publication of DGCIS and is being published since 5th April, 1906. It is primarily involved in (i) publishing tender notices, both domestic and foreign/global, floated by different Government and Private organizations and (ii) facilitating export efforts of Indian exporters by disseminating various trade related information of use to them. This publication has retained statutory position under the new General Financial Rule 2005, which made it mandatory, through Rule 150(i) and 150(ii) of Chapter 6 that for procurement of goods of Rs.25 lakh and above, invitation of tenders by advertisement should be used and advertisement in such cases should be given in Indian Trade Journal and at least one national daily.

DGCIS has launched ITJ website: <http://itj.gov.in>. Both domestic and foreign tenders are published in ITJ. For export promotion, Indian Trade Journal incorporates new capsules on policies, both Indian and foreign. The broad categories in this regard are as follows:

“From our Embassies Abroad”: In this section important information regarding market trends of various commodities traded internationally, policy changes announced in foreign countries, economic and financial conditions in foreign countries, etc. received from Embassies abroad are published in backdrop of the information needs by the Indian exporters and the importers.

“Commodity EXIM Update”: This section of ITJ gives a brief analysis of the statistics related to Indian imports and exports of various commodities.

“Issues in International Trade”: This section reflects the latest events in the field of developments governing trading environment in the world. The materials in this section are prepared on the basis of press releases of WTO and other international agencies and institutions.

“Focus on International Trade”: This section gives a brief overview of a particular country’s economic and historical scenario, especially from the point of view of the Indian trading community. The table below shows the lists of countries published.

Date	Name of country	Date	Name of country
04/04/2012	Belgium	03/10/2012	Korea RP
11/04/2012	Romania	10/10/2012	Zimbabwe
18/04/2012	Israel	17/10/2012	Sudan
25/04/2012	Mauritius	24/10/2012	Indonesia
02/05/2012	Oman	31/10/2012	Spain
09/05/2012	Uzbekistan	07/11/2012	Paraguay
16/05/2012	Jordan	14/11/2012	Chile
23/05/2012	Panama	21/11/2012	Austria
30/05/2012	Belarus	28/11/2012	Croatia
06/06/2012	Thailand	05/12/2012	Turkey
13/06/2012	Switzerland	12/12/2012	Mexico
20/06/2012	Czech Republic	19/12/2012	Nepal
27/06/2012	Spain	26/12/2012	Bulgaria
04/07/2012	New Zealand	02/01/2013	Senegal
11/07/2012	Cambodia	09/01/2013	France
18/07/2012	Germany	16/01/2013	Uruguay
25/07/2012	Italy	23/01/2013	Australia
01/08/2012	Ukraine	30/01/2013	Slovenia
08/08/2012	Brazil	06/02/2013	Portugal
15/08/2012	Vietnam	13/02/2013	Denmark
22/08/2012	Tunisia	20/02/2013	Morocco
29/08/2012	Luxembourg	27/02/2013	Colombia
05/09/2012	Japan	06/03/2013	Peru
12/09/2012	South Africa	13/03/2013	Canada
19/09/2012	Finland	20/03/2013	Malaysia
26/09/2012	Sweden	27/03/2013	Bulgaria