

## The spice trade: A Bangladeshi perspective



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There are some varieties of products and categories in the spice market but the most common are the powdered spices in the form of turmeric, chilli, cumin, coriander, beef masala and chicken masala, phuchka-chatpati spices, biryani masala, and even halim mixes. The powdered spice industry is growing popular because they have made cooking easier and they have almost replaced the mortar and pestle.

Aside from the attractive packaging, the spices come ready to be used

directly and the producers claim that it's produced with a certain standard.

"PRAN collects raw materials of powdered spice from its contractual farmers. We have one lakh contractual farmers who are cultivating crops for PRAN. Among them, around 10 thousand contractual farmers are dedicated to producing spice's raw material," said Kamruzzaman Kamal, Marketing Director of PRAN-RFL Group.

"We are the largest exporter of powdered spice from Bangladesh. PRAN boasts about 70 per cent of the spice

exported from Bangladesh in different countries, especially in Saudi Arab, UAE, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, UK, France, etc.," he added, pointing out that the seasons have a heavy impact on spice market due to the production of crops.

There is a crisis of raw materials throughout the year, especially in the rainy season which is why raw materials of mixed spices are basically import based.

"PRAN is producing spices under five categories and we are still trying to introduce new items in the category of mixed spice and others. Some recipes

are very popular in India, Pakistan, the Arab nations, and other countries. But those are not available in Bangladesh. We make the spices for those popular recipes and offer them to our local consumers as well as export them", Kamal added.

He also observed that even today, the majority of Bangladeshis are using spices from the open market which means that the opportunities in the spice trade are very promising.

The spice market is dramatic, profitable, and certainly an indicator of the overall trade of the country. In

medieval times, spices dominated the majority of the trades. One of the main reasons why the Indian subcontinent was so appealing to colonisers was because of the abundance of spices in this region. Times have changed but the spice market has remained equally appealing to traders. Reality may be different but one can hope that our dependency on imported spices is lessened, and we end up exporting more one day.

By Ashif Ahmed Rudro  
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

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