



Adding Value to Indian Cocoa Beans

L Nitin Chordia

India is very uniquely positioned in the world cocoa map as a country which produces cocoa and consumes chocolates in large quantity. Traditionally, the growing, processing and consuming countries were geographically distantly located. Until now, the requirement of large chocolate companies who produced mass market/commercial chocolates did not revolve around flavor. The requirement was around having to procure large quantities without too much emphasis on post-harvest management and then managing/altering the flavors of the cocoa beans during manufacturing of chocolates.

Post-harvest improvements help improve the flavor profile of the cocoa beans and make it suitable to make specialty chocolates where like in the case of wine, flavor notes are detectable in the final chocolate which occur naturally in the cocoa beans. Since large chocolate makers who currently source cocoa beans did not bother about flavor, there was no need for Indian cocoa farmers to focus on any aspect other than cultivation and trying to increase yield. The flavor aspect was not very important. Hence the incentive for the farmer to think beyond increasing yield did not exist. Since cocoa process has remained volatile and are tightly controlled by cocoa traders who would

make use of every opportunity to reduce prices upon increased productivity during season, the farmers never felt motivated to increase productivity or yield beyond a point seriously and did not invest in post-harvest improvements. Institutions like Cocotrait offer post-harvest assistance to cocoa farmers and arrange for buyback programs to encourage them.

With the advent of Bean to Bar chocolate makers on the rise and institutes like Cocoashala in Chennai offering 3 day International bean to bar certification programs, an industry is forming in India around this effort. With this advent of small-scale chocolate production called Bean to Bar chocolate evolving, thanks to availability of small scale machinery in India and the rise of awareness of the vegetable fat used in chocolates, it is imperative to make fine flavored cocoa beans available in the Indian Market so that Bean to Bar chocolate makers can produce fine flavored chocolates. Indian cocoa beans not only have national appeal but are also quite desired internationally. Cocotrait offers international market linkages and access to farmers who wish to export their beans.

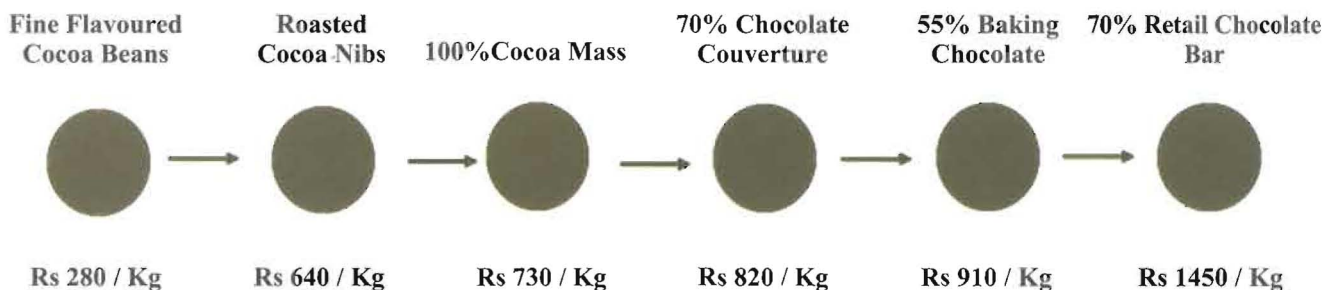
Once fine flavored cocoa beans are made available, there is an obvious opportunity for cocoa

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farmers to also forward integrate himself and add value to their cocoa beans and sell value-added products. The cocoa farmer can decide to start from cocoa beans and add value and sell a final chocolate bar! Adding value also insulates the cocoa farmer

from the fluctuating prices of cocoa beans and helps him achieve much larger profitability apart from opening export opportunities and keeping the younger generation interested. The various stages of value addition are expressed below:



The highlight of this industry is that value addition can be done at a very attractive Return on Investment (ROI) and the Indian cocoa farmer is best placed to improve his post harvest practices and invest in Bean to Bar Chocolate Making unit to add value to his produce. A typical Bean to Bar Chocolate Making unit with a capacity to produce 400 Kgs of Pure chocolate using Indian cocoa beans can be set up at a cost of 25 lakhs (without Subsidy) and the expected Return on Investment is less than 2 years.

About the Author:

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L Nitin Chordia is India’s 1st Certified chocolate taster and the only Indian Judge at the International Chocolate Awards, London. Nitin operates Cocoashala a premier Bean to Bar training institute offering the 3 day bean to bar certification course. Nitin also works with farmers across the world to improve post harvest practices and produce Fine flavoured cocoa beans. Nitin also operated Cocotrait that helps provide international market access for Indian cocoa beans. Nitin is based in Chennai and can be contacted at nitin@cocotrait.com or +919600064846

