

## The Indian Sugarcane and Sugar Industry: An Overview

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Sugar industry is the second largest agro-based industry in India and contributes significantly to the socio-economic development of rural population. Sugarcane is cultivated in an area of over 5.0 million hectare, and supports 6 million farmers and their families, provides direct employment to over 0.5 million skilled and semi skilled persons in sugar mills and integrated industries. The Indian sugar industries plays a leading role in global sugar market being the world's second largest producer after Brazil, producing nearly 15 and 25% of global sugar and sugarcane respectively. The sugar industry which encompasses 599 operating sugar mills 356 distilleries and 215 cogeneration plants and numerous pulp, paper and chemical making units is supported by four leading sugarcane research institutions, 22 state sugarcane research stations, world class sugar machinery manufacturers, suppliers and technical experts. Currently, the industry produces around 300-350 million tons cane, 24-26 Mt white sugar and 6-8 Mt *jaggery* and *khandsari* every year to meet the domestic consumption of sweeteners. Besides, about 2.7 billion liters of alcohol and 3,000 MW of power and many chemicals are also produced. The industry is able to export around 1500 MW of power to the grid. The major challenges for sugarcane agriculture is static sugarcane productivity (70 tons/ha) and sugar recovery (10%) at national level. The Indian Sugar industry is fully capable of meeting demand of potable alcohol as well as 10% blending in gasoline. Industry is gradually transforming into sugar complexes by producing sugar, bioelectricity, bioethanol, biomanure and chemicals; these contribute over 1% of the national GDP. Emergent businesses like fuel ethanol, raw sugar and structural changes in global market have provided new horizons for the Indian sugar industry. The sector today has transformational opportunities that would enable it not only to continue to service the largest domestic markets but has also emerged as a significant carbon credit and green power producer and has potential to support and ethanol blending program of E 10 and beyond. The sugar industry is gearing up to meet the challenges of 2030 through judicious integration of agro-technology, improved management practices, diversification and farmers friendly policies.