



Districts as Export Hubs

Taking India's Exports to Every District

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*While India's export journey has been marked by impressive growth, sustaining this momentum requires a more inclusive approach to development. The **Districts as Export Hubs (DEH) Initiative** is a framework to realise inclusive export growth, which transforms every district into a center of export planning by identifying products and services with global potential and connecting local producers to international markets. Building upon the One District One Product (ODOP) concept, DEH adopts a convergence-based approach, bringing together Central and State schemes, institutions and industry. By unlocking district-level strengths and connecting them to international markets, DEH is driving employment generation, strengthening MSMEs and making India's export growth more inclusive and globally competitive.*

Why India Needed a District-Led Export Model

Exports have become a key engine of India's growth story. Every rupee earned from overseas markets adds to jobs, incomes and industry at home. India's total exports of goods and services touched an all-time high of **US\$ 825.25 billion in 2024-25**, growing further to an estimated **US\$ 863.11 billion in 2025-26**. For decades, export activity stayed concentrated around a handful of established industrial clusters and port cities. Small towns, rural districts and remote regions rarely found their way into shipment manifests, even though many held unique, high-quality products. Products such as **Bastar's iron craft**, **Jalgaon's bananas** and **Meghalaya's Mandarin Oranges** reflected this untapped strength.

Recognising this opportunity, the Government brought in a **district-led export strategy in the form of Districts as Export Hubs Initiative**, enabling every district to contribute to India's export growth by leveraging its unique strengths.

From ODOP to DEH: Evolution of the Framework

The **Districts as Export Hubs (DEH)** initiative is launched to harness the strengths and resources of every district and unlock its export potential. Each district is treated as a **unit of export planning, not merely a unit of production**. It is helping local enterprises access global markets, improve competitiveness and drive district-led economic growth. It also aligns with India's broader vision of *Aatmanirbhar Bharat* and *Vocal for Local*.

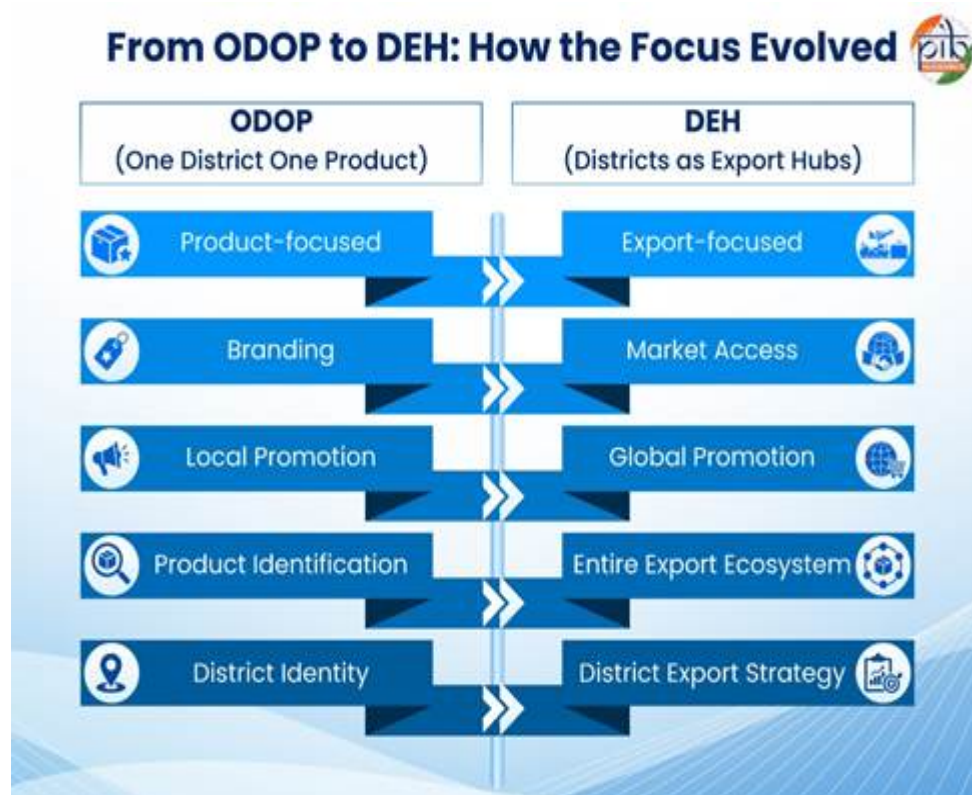
Did You Know?

ODOP began as a **Uttar Pradesh state initiative in 2018**. It was built around **Moradabad's brass industry**, before it was scaled nationally.⁵

The story of DEH begins with the One District One Product (ODOP) programme. ODOP set out to select, brand and promote **one distinctive product from each district**, converting local identity into economic opportunity.



To strengthen this approach, the Department of Commerce **through the DEH initiative** under the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has expanded the focus from **product promotion to a comprehensive export promotion and ecosystem strengthening**. As on January 2026, the DEH initiative covers **more than 770 districts across the country**, reflecting its expanding reach and stronger integration with overall export planning.



DEH is best understood as a convergence framework, not a funding scheme. Rather than introducing a separate financial scheme, DEH leverages the funding available under various ongoing central and state schemes. It promotes exports, manufacturing and employment generation at the grassroots level. In doing so, it addresses district-specific export challenges and enhance district export competitiveness.

The Institutional Architecture

DEH runs on a layered system of coordination between the Centre, States and districts. The Department of Commerce provides overall policy direction, while the DGFT anchors implementation, facilitates stakeholder coordination and monitors progress.

- At the State level, **State Export Promotion Committees (SEPCs)** guide implementation and ensure convergence across departments.
- At the district level, **District Export Promotion Committees (DEPCs)**, identify export opportunities, resolve local challenges and coordinate with industry, exporters and other stakeholders.

A key responsibility of the DEPCs is preparing **District Export Action Plans (DEAPs)**. These plans map products and services with export potential, assess infrastructure and logistics, identify export bottlenecks. They also recommend interventions to improve competitiveness and market access. As of March 2026, draft DEAPs have been prepared for **590 districts**, of which 249 stand formally adopted by the respective DEPCs.

Building District-Level Export Ecosystems

Exports require more than a competitive product. DEH helps districts to build exporter capacity and address awareness gaps in export related logistics, quality standards and market access to strengthen their export readiness.

Mapping products and services

DEH identifies export-worthy products and services across districts. These include **GI-tagged products**, agricultural clusters, and toy clusters, engineering goods etc. District-specific mapping helps prepare targeted export strategies. Some of the products with export potential include:

Product	District	State
Ceramic & Tiles, Potato	Sabarkantha	Gujarat
Minerals, Agro-processing, Glass and Tiles	Aravalli	Gujarat
Jalgaon Banana, Jalgaon Bharit Brinjal	Jalgaon	Maharashtra
Orange	Agar Malwa	Madhya Pradesh
Bastar Iron Craft, Rice, Jowar, Maize	Baster	Chhattisgarh
Bamboo Craft, Cashew	Jamtara	Jharkhand

The list of DEH products across districts can be accessed [here](#) .

Meeting global standards

Once identified, these products must meet international quality benchmarks. DEH **supports** to generate awareness and build capacity regarding **quality standards**, testing facilities, packaging, branding and certification, helping local goods clear global compliance requirements.

Enabling digital export

Digital access has enabled hyper-local reach and expanded market access for all businesses, even those located in remote regions. Partnerships with **e-commerce platforms** under the DEH initiative such as Amazon, Shiprocket, and DHL provide MSMEs with cost-effective courier shipping alternatives to buffer against freight rate volatility. **Dak Ghar Niryat Kendras** extend this reach by offering low-cost postal export facilities for documentation, packaging and small consignments.

Building capacity & Outreach

To build export readiness, DGFT Regional Authorities along with district administrations conduct capacity building and awareness programmes covering **logistics planning, export procedures, packaging norms, and regulatory compliance**. Various ecosystem partners have actively contributed to the successful implementation of these outreach programmes. They include Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC), Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), Ministry of MSME, India Post, and Exim Bank. These events have provided valuable skills to exporter to overcome identified concerns. They also focus to enhance awareness about challenges associated with e-commerce adoption, such as payment-related issues, trust and buyer verification.

Fostering Grassroot Initiatives for Development

DEH is supported through partnerships with specialised institutions. DGFT has partnered with **EXIM Bank** to strengthen export ecosystems in selected districts. As part of the collaboration, six districts - **Anantapur, Raipur, Solan, Tiruppur, Kanpur and Kolhapur**-have been selected for support under EXIM Bank's **Grassroots Initiatives for Development (GRID)** programme. The initiative addresses sector-specific constraints, identifies potential beneficiaries and develops district-specific interventions to enhance export competitiveness.

DID YOU KNOW?

Tiruppur, India's knitwear capital, achieved **record exports of ₹46,000 crore in FY 2025-26**. The Tiruppur Exporters Association has now set an ambitious target of **₹1 trillion in exports by 2030**. This is in line with India's goal to increase textile exports **from \$38 billion to \$100 billion by 2030**.

Focused Approach for DEH Implementation

To fast-track implementation, the Government has adopted an outcome-oriented, focused and phased approach under Districts as Export Hubs Initiative from **1st June 2026**. In the first phase of the implementation, **districts across 27 States and Union Territories have been covered**, with support from **24 DGFT Regional Authorities** and **11 partner agencies**. The focus is on measurable outcomes such as new exporter registrations and increasing value of exports through convergence of ongoing central & state schemes, leveraging GI products and MSME clusters.

Together, the DEH framework is helping districts overcome long-standing structural constraints and translate local production strengths into export opportunities.

The Road Ahead

Districts as Export Hubs marks a shift in India's export strategy from concentrating growth in a few industrial centres to unlocking the potential of every district. By combining local strengths with better export capacity, market access and institutional support, the initiative is creating a more inclusive and resilient export ecosystem.

As India moves towards its **US\$1 trillion export ambition**, stronger coordination between the Centre, States and districts is fundamental. This will transform **local economies into engines of trade, investment and employment**, expanding export-led growth across the country.

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