

Seeds

8.39 Quality seed is the most critical and basic input for agricultural output, and accounts for 25-30 per cent of yield increase. In India, 80 per cent of the farmers rely on farm-saved seed, and the low seed replacement rate results in low yields. The production and distribution of seeds is a complex process involving farmers, growers, government agencies, research institutions and other stakeholders. While the public sector continues to play a dominant role in production and distribution of low-value high-volume seeds like cereals, pulses and oilseeds, the private sector seed industry is growing in high-value, low-volume segments like vegetables and horticultural crops. Private seed industry's role in promoting genetically modified (Bt) cotton has been particularly significant. India is now a mega cotton producing country. The National Seed Policy 2002 envisaged a symbiotic relationship

between the public and the private sector. Now, an enabling environment exists for promoting quality seed production in India. Establishment of Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority for protection of rights of farmers and rights of plant breeders is expected to promote investment in development of new varieties. Seed export and import regime have been simplified to facilitate availability of quality seed to Indian farmers and help India emerge as a global hub for seed production.

8.40 Indian seeds programme recognizes three kinds of seed generation, namely breeder, foundation and certified seeds. While the production of breeder seeds is expected to decline in 2005-06, production of foundation seeds and distribution of certified/quality seeds is likely to increase. The annual rate of growth of certified/quality seeds distribution is targeted to accelerate from 4.1 per cent in 2004-05 to 22.5 per cent in 2005-06 (Table 8.15).

Table 8.15 : Production of Breeder and Foundation Seeds and Distribution of Certified Seed

Year	Production of Breeder Seed (quintals)	Production of Foundation Seed (lakh quintals)	Distribution of Certified/Quality Seed (lakh quintals)
2003-04	61,826	6.5	108.59
2004-05	66,460	6.9	113.10
2005-06	54,700 (Indent)	7.4 (Anticipated)	138.5 (Target)

Source : Ministry of Agriculture.