

Evaluation of Management of Seed Supply in Oilseeds and Pulses in Maharashtra

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The use of quality seed is very important for increasing and stabilising the productivity of crops. Considering the importance of quality seeds, both the Central and State governments have been making efforts to increase the supply of quality seeds to the farmers in India. While the area cultivated using quality seeds has increased significantly over the years, the spread of adoption of quality seeds is not the same across different crops. Oilseeds and pulses are rich in nutrient content and they also give higher profit per unit of output than many cereal crops. Despite this, the use of quality seeds in these crops is low as compared to many cereal crops. Farmers have been using their crop produce as seed, which generally lacks genetic vigour and thus, it does not help the farmers for achieving higher productivity. Although oilseeds and pulses have occupied an important position in Indian agriculture, comprehensive studies focusing on the use of quality seeds in these crops are very few and far between. In this study, therefore, an attempt has been made to study the production, distribution and adoption of quality seeds in oilseeds and pulses using both secondary as well as primary data collected from Maharashtra.

I Introduction

Good quality seed increases germination and positively responds to yield increasing inputs like fertilisers. Quality seed also plays a crucial role in increasing the productivity of crops. It is recognised that good quality seed helps to increase the productivity of crops up to 20 per cent (Singh *et al.*, 1990). As seed is a basic input for increasing the overall growth of agricultural sector, due attention has been given for supplying quality seeds to the farmers even before the introduction of new agricultural technology (GOI, 1996). However, owing to various reasons, the seed replacement ratio has remained low among different crops in India. Even after making concerted efforts to increase the adoption of quality seeds, the farmers tend to use crop produce predominantly as a seed (Singh *et al.*, 1990). As the crop produce generally lacks genetic vigour, most of the time they do not positively respond to yield increasing inputs. As a result, productivity as well as the profit of the crop declines drastically.

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