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History and Development of Vegetable Seed Industry in India

History and Development of Vegetable Seed Industry in India

- India is the second largest producer of vegetables, which occupy 6.2 m ha producing about 94 million tonnes with an average productivity of 15 t/ha of fresh vegetables, yet the productivity is not sufficient to provide diet to our growing population.
- Low productivity of vegetables was observed due to poor availability of quality vegetable seeds. Since ages, Indian framers have been mostly dependent on local varieties and farm saved seeds, whose quality is not assured, this affected the vegetable production drastically.
- After Independence, greater emphasis was placed on the development of seed programmes during all the Five Year Plans and Annual Plans by Govt. of India. With establishment of AICRP (vegetables), tremendous progress has been made in development of High yielding varieties.
- It solely depended on the multiplication and distribution of seeds of the newly developed varieties. Originally, vegetable seeds were produced by public sector organization like NSC, SFCI, SSCs, SAUs, ICAR institutes etc., but at present its share is marginal and a large portion of vegetable seed demand in the country is still met by the private seed companies only.
- In most of the public sector endeavors, still the major share is of open pollinated varieties. Use of quality seeds of improved varieties/ hybrids of different vegetable crops has witnessed tremendous growth in vegetable productivity and total production.
- The development of vegetable seed industry in India initiated even before independence and can be tracked as below.

1876	A hand book on seed testing was published The World's first Seed Testing Station was established by Prof.F.Nobbe in Tharandt, Saxony, Germany.
1916	Supply of quality vegetable seeds was introduced by M/s. Sutton and Sons at Kolkata, India
1924	International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) was established in Norway.
1925 -28	The Royal Commission on Agriculture analyzed <i>(for the first time)</i> Indian seed production system and its problems and encouraged supply of quality seeds to the farmers and the private sectors.
1939	Association of Official Seed Analysts was established for evaluation of seed testing procedures
1939 -1945	In India ,temperate vegetable seeds were imported
1942	Seed production of temperate vegetable varieties was started at Quetta (Pakistan), as the seed supplies were cut-off due to World War-II.
1942-1943	Seed production programme started at Katrain (Himachal pradesh) and Kashmir Valley and the Vegetable seed industry made a rapid progress.
1946	All India Vegetable Seed Growers, Merchants and Nurserymen's Association was established.
1947	Supplies of vegetable seeds were cut off from Quetta (Pakistan) after partition of the country.
1949	Seed production programme was started at Central Vegetable Breeding Station, Katrain, Kullu Valley by Govt. of India. Central Potato Research Institute was established at Shimla to develop varieties and production technology.
1951	First Five Year Plan started with an aim to multiply and distribute seeds.
1955	Central Vegetable Breeding Station, Katrain was transferred to the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi with a view to intensify the improvement work on temperate vegetables and renamed as IARI, Regional Station.
1956	Second Five Year Plan started, with an idea to establish 25 acre farm in each Extension Service Block, setting up Seed Testing Stations to ensure vegetable seed quality standards, production of nucleus and foundation seed at block level, and distribution thereof among farmers.
1961	The first Seed Testing laboratory was established in IARI, New Delhi.
1961	The proposed Central Seed Corporation was approved by the Union

	<p>Cabinet.</p> <p>Rock-Feller Foundation equipped the Seed Testing Laboratory, IARI, and was designated Central Seed Testing Laboratory.</p> <p>Systematic research work on temperate vegetables, sugar beet and chicory was initiated at Kalpa and Solan (Himachal Pradesh).</p>
1961	Seed Multiplication Review Team stressed the need for intensive seed multiplication programmes for crop seeds.
1963	National Seeds Corporation was established to develop Indian Seed Industry.
1963	Scientific seed processing was initiated by NSC
1963-1964	NSC was made responsible for making available foundation seeds of crops including vegetables.
1966	Indian Seeds Act was passed by Government of India with a view to regulate quality of seeds on 29th December.
1967	The first Horticultural Research Institute in the country established by the Indian Council of Agriculture Research was called as Indian Institute of Horticultural Research is a premier Institute conducting basic, strategic, anticipatory and applied research on various aspects of fruits, vegetables, ornamentals, medicinal and aromatic plants and mushrooms.
1967	Seed Plot Techniques in potato was developed for raising healthy seed stocks.
1968	The Seed Rules were framed in India in consultation with ISTA. NSC established its own Seed Testing Laboratory.
1969	The Seeds Act came into force throughout the country on 2nd October with seed rules
1969	Establishment of Tarai Development Corporation (TDC) with world bank assistance with primary objective of production of quality seeds.
1970	All India Co-ordinated Vegetable Improvement Project (AICVIP) was established at IARI, New Delhi. A Center under AICVIP was stated at IARI, Regional Station, Katrain.
1971	The Central Seed Committee was framed by the Govt. of India to fix genetic purity standards of seeds. First Indian vegetable hybrid - <i>Pusa Meghadoot</i> in Bottle gourd was developed and released by the IARI, New Delhi.
1971	Indian Society of Seed Technology (ISST) was established to serve an educational link among Seed Technologists
1974	National Seed Project was launched by Govt. of India with the assistance of World Bank to develop seed production infrastructure.
1974-1975	NSC produced a record of 8000 tonnes of vegetable seeds of 28 kinds and 60 varieties. Similar quantity of vegetable seeds was produced by private seed sector.
1976	National commission on Agriculture submitted the report, reviewing all aspects of seed industry, including teaching, training and research. Maharashtra State Seed Corporation Ltd. was started under Companies Act with registered Head Office at Akola.
1983	Enactment of Seed Control Order -Seeds was declared an essential commodity.
1985	Y.S.Parmar University of horticulture and forestry was started at Solan
1986	Elevation of status of AICVIP, to the level of Project Directorate of Vegetable Research (PDVR).
1988	Announcement of New Seed Policy called New <i>Liberalized Seed Policy</i> by Govt. of India on seed development on 16th September. GOI liberalized vegetable seed imports, giving farmers very wide choice of seed. More conducive environment for international seed companies. A specially designed vegetable seed extraction machine (with axial flow) was developed at PAU, Ludhiana. Indian Minimum Seed Certification Standards published by the Central

	Seed Certification Board, Department of Agriculture and Co-op, Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India, New Delhi during July.
1989	There was 22.27% increase in vegetable production in India (over 1979 – 81) Seed Industry sought further incentives / concessions
1992	De-linking of PDVR from IARI and shifted to Varanasi (UP.)
1994	A separate NSP on vegetables was approved and initiated by IIVR (PDVR), Varanasi.
2001	The protection of plant varieties and Farmers' Rights bill was formulated to establish an effective system for protection of plant varieties, the rights of farmers and plant breeders and to encourage the development of new varieties of plants
2002	National Seed Policy – to provide appropriate climate for seed industry, safeguarding the interest of Indian farmers and conservation of agro biodiversity.
2004	The New Seed draft Bill was submitted to address all seed related issue which will replace all other existing Acts regarding seeds.
2005-06	National Horticulture Mission a centrally sponsored scheme was started by Government of India. It provides 100% assistance to the state mission during the Tenth Plan.
2007	Andhra Pradesh Horticultural University was started at West Godavari
2008	University of Horticultural Sciences was started at Bagalkot to promote horticultural studies
2010	National Conference on Production of Quality Seeds and Planting Material – Health Management in Horticultural Crops was held at New Delhi

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