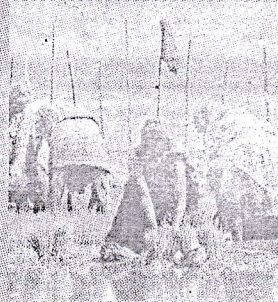


Tap seeds used in tribal, hilly areas: Study

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
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In India's agriculture sector, the seed delivery system suffers severe deficiency, as over 60 per cent of seeds in use is unlabelled. However, the system can be significantly strengthened through investments in the formal sector and by channelising high-quality seed varieties used by tribal and hilly communities into the informal seed chain.

A recent joint study, titled, 'Sowing the policy seeds of a flourishing agriculture sector,' conducted by Assocham and PwC, found that about 60-65 per cent of seeds in use in the country is unlabelled. To overcome this handicap, the study suggested that "high-quality seed varieties used by tribal and hilly communities be brought into the informal seed chain with some



amount of genetic purity."

"These farmer varieties are important for future breeding programmes, as they possess useful traits developed through natural evolution. Their integration would enable effective seed delivery to farmers at affordable costs," it said.

When asked about this, an official in the agriculture ministry said, "The agri sector has huge potential for growth supported by seed policies in favour of seed producers and

exporters... We are aware of the fact of deficiency and the government is working on it"

India has a share of four per cent in the global seed market. The Indian seed market had a value of \$1.6 billion in 2017, exhibiting a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of about 17 per cent during 2010-2017.

The Indian seed market is dominated by maize, cotton, paddy, wheat, sorghum, sunflower and millets.

The study also said strengthening the seed village programme will improve seed delivery. It suggested putting in place a measure to improve seed traceability to control the distribution of spurious seeds. "Besides deterring spurious seeds, using a unique code could also help in tracing their origin in case of quality issues," suggested the study.