Status of research and development in seed spices in India

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Seed spices are annual and seasonal herbs, whose dried seeds or fruits are used as spices. Most of the seed spices are "Low volume high value crops" which are pre-dominantly comprising of coriander, cumin, fenugreek and fennel and few minor seed spices such as ajwain, dill, anise, nigella, caraway and celery. A sizable area is under these 10 important seed spice crops contributing nearly 41.70 per cent share in area and 19.72 per cent share in production of the total spices in the country. At present these seed spices are grown on an area of 1.65 m ha and with an annual production of 1.23 million MT. Rajasthan and Gujarat states in the country have maximum area under cultivation and production of these seed spices. Among these seed spices cumin and coriander almost occupies 80% of the area and production in India. India is the largest producer, consumer and exporter of seed spices and their products in world. Nearly 80 per cent of the annual production is coming from semi-arid and arid parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat state well known as the "bowl of seed spices". Our 10% annual production of seed spices alone meets nearly 50% of the global demand and rest 50 per cent of global demand is met by other Middle East and Asian countries which are becoming strong competitors for India in trade of Seed Spices in world. Seed spices are also of great economic significance. In recent past the trend of the seed spices cultivation and export had increased despite of global recession. Total export during 2012-13 was 1,86,075.00 tonnes by volume and Rs. 1,673 crores in terms of value. Significant research and development work has been done in seed spices in the last two decades in India through which more than 100 improved varieties and several number of improved production, plant protection, postharvest management and value addition technologies have been developed which have put India on top rank in the field of seed spices in world.

Keywords: Seed spices, high value, area, production, export, postharvest management, production technology, value addition.

Biography

Balraj Singh has completed his PhD in 1991, specialised in Vegetable production Technology from CCSHAU, Hisar, Haryana. Presently he is working as Director, NRC on Seed Spices, a pioneer Institute on Seed Spice Research under ICAR. He has been working in the area of research for more than 25 years, and has more than 100 peer reviewed research articles to his name. He is a member of more than 18 National and International Societies. He is known as a national expert in field of protected cultivation of crops in the Country.

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