

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT PROMOTIONAL INITIATIVES IN IMPROVING SPICE PRODUCTION

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Abstract: -

Spice cultivation plays a very crucial role in Indian agrarian development, employment generation and good export potential. The country is one of the leading producers of various spices such as black pepper, turmeric, ginger, cardamom, coriander and cumin. India produces spices on 4.68 million ha area with an annual production of about 11.99 million tonnes during 2024-25 (Spice Board of India, 2025). The government of India has introduced several promotional initiatives through extension services, farmers training programmes, financial and technical assistance. These promotional programmes promote the adoption of advanced cultivation practices, supply of quality planting materials, use of disease-free high yielding varieties along with value addition of produce and sustainability. Spice board of India and ICAR-NRC on Seed spices plays a very important role in executing development schemes, conducting field demonstration and export promotion activities. Awareness and capacity-building programmes encourage farmers to adopt scientific cultivation practices and improved post-harvest management techniques.

Key words: *Spice production, Government initiatives, Value addition, Post-harvest management, Export promotion etc.*

1. Introduction:

Spices are those plants, product of which are used as food adjuncts to add aroma and flavour, utilised not only for their taste and fragrance but also for their preservative and medicinal properties. Spices have played a very crucial role in human civilization, especially in India where rich spice heritage is present. It plays an important role in agriculture development, employment generation, domestic consumption and

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international trade for economic development (Rajasri, 2025). As per the Spice Board of India, country produces over sixty varieties of spices out of which various spices are native to India and hence, it has been recognised as the “Spice Bowl of the World” (Pradhan, 2018). It has been a traditional and largest producer, consumer and exporter of spices. India is considered as home of spices. The country is the world’s largest producer, consumer and exporter of spices. About 109 varieties are listed by International Organization for Standardization (ISO) out of which 75 varieties are produced in India.

The government of India has introduced several promotional initiatives for the Indian spice industry through extension services, farmers training programmes, financial and technical assistance which aims to enhance productivity and income, quality assurance and supporting sustainable development (Rajasri, 2025). The Indian spice industry continues to be a leading player in the global market due to its long ancient history, strong production levels and rising exports. However, improving quality standards and addressing environmental concerns are necessary to sustain its growth. In the future, the development of value-added products and an increased focus on sustainability will be important for ensuring long-term success (Ainapur,2025).

2. Promotional initiatives to support Indian spice industry:

The Spices Board of India, functioning under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, plays a significant role in the development of the spice sector. It promotes the adoption of modern agricultural practices, facilitates the establishment of processing infrastructure and ensures compliance with international quality standards. Initiatives such as the establishment of spice parks, provision of financial assistance and support for research and development have contributed to farmer empowerment, increased export performance and strengthened India’s position in the global spice market.

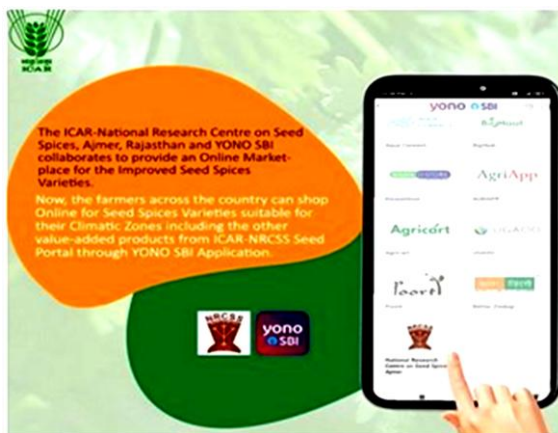
Eight crop-specific spice parks have been developed in key production centres to enable farmers to achieve higher price realization, expand export potential and access facilities adhering to international standards. Encompassing the entire spice value chain from cultivation to export; these parks provide advanced infrastructure, quality testing laboratories and warehousing, thereby improving product quality, promoting rural employment and fostering a sustainable and competitive supply chain.

The Government of India implemented export promotion schemes such as Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) and the Export Promotion Capital

Goods (EPCG) scheme, to support spice exporters. The MEIS scheme provides duty credit scrips to reduce costs and enhance the international competitiveness of Indian spices, while facilitating value addition through improvements in production, packaging and branding. The EPCG scheme permits the import of machinery and equipment at concessional or zero customs duty, supporting technological modernization. Collectively, these initiatives contribute to enhanced product quality, operational efficiency, compliance with global standards and strengthened export performance (Directorate General of Foreign Trade, 2024).

Furthermore, the Government of India, through the Spices Board, has introduced various schemes to support the cultivation and export of Indian spices.

2.1 ICAR-NRC on Seed Spices collaborates with YONO SBI



- It provides an online market platform for the improved seed spices varieties.

- The outcome of this collaboration will enable farmers across the country to purchase online varieties of seed spices that are suitable for their specific climatic zones along with additional value-added products through the YONO SBI application.

2.2 Masala Shetra Vistar Yojana:

- It provides 50% Subsidy on Seed Spice and Rhizome Crops.
- Launched by the **Government of Madhya Pradesh** under the Department of Horticulture and Food processing.
- The scheme aims to expand cultivation and enhance the production of selected spice crops (including seed spice crops, rhizomes such as turmeric and ginger) through quality high-yielding varieties.

Benefits:

- Seed Spice Crops:** 50% subsidy on the cost of seeds, up to a maximum of ₹10,000 per hectare (Whichever is less).
- Root and Rhizome Crops:** For garlic, turmeric, and ginger, a 50% grant on the cost of planting material is provided, up to a maximum of ₹50,000 per hectare (whichever is less).

Eligibility

- ☞ Availability to new farmers who have not yet started to grow spices.
- ☞ This initiative is open to all groups including farmers with forest rights certificates.
- ☞ Grant is given only once to each farmer.
- ☞ A farmer is allowed to cultivate crop in any area, but grant applies for a least **0.25 hectare** and no more than **2.00 hectares**.

2.3 Sustainability in Spice Sector through Progressive, Innovative and Collaborative Interventions for Export Development (SPICED)

- ☞ Implementation of the various components/ programmes under the SPICED scheme, for FY 2025-26, will be through online mode. The submission of application started from 26th May 2025.
- ☞ The Spice Board's EFC proposal, entitled Sustainability in Spice Sector through Progressive, Innovative and Collaborative Interventions for Export Development (SPICED), has received ministerial approval. The scheme will be implemented during the remainder of the Fifteenth Finance Commission Cycle up to 2025-26, with a total sanctioned budget of Rs. 422.30 crore.

- ☞ The scheme is designed to expand the cultivation area and enhance productivity of cardamom (small and large varieties), generate a surplus of high-quality spices through post-harvest improvements, promote exports, increase the proportion of value-added spices in the export basket, ensure adherence to quality and safety standards, and facilitate capacity building and skill development among stakeholders.

- ☞ SPICED places particular emphasis on empowering farmer groups, including Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), ODOP and DEH clusters, SC/ST communities, North-Eastern region exporters, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

- ☞ The scheme aims to advance value addition, innovation and sustainability within the spice sector through dedicated sub-programs, including Mission Value Addition, Mission Clean and Safe Spices, promotion of Geographical Indication (GI) spices and entrepreneurship support via Spice Incubation Centres.

2.4 Establishment of Spice Farmers Producer Companies (SFPCs) in Arunachal Pradesh

- ☛ The program was inaugurated by Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman on 26th April 2017 in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, marking the establishment of India's first Spice Farmers Producer Company (SFPC).
- ☛ SFPCs in Arunachal Pradesh were created to promote the cultivation of spices and herbs in the State's hilly regions and to link local farmers with domestic and international markets.
- ☛ The State has strong export potential for naturally organic spices such as large cardamom, ginger, and turmeric.
- ☛ SFPCs consolidate farmers from key spice-growing districts, facilitating direct market linkages with exporters, processors, and institutional buyers, while supporting post-harvest management, value addition, packaging, and direct marketing.
- ☛ They also enable cultivators to participate in national and international trade fairs, enhancing market access.

Conclusion

Government initiatives play a significant role in boosting spice production by providing financial aid, research support, and enhanced market access for cultivators. Measures such as subsidies, training programs, and the dissemination of modern technologies improve both crop quality and productivity.

Export promotion bodies and branding efforts facilitate the entry of Indian spices into global markets, increasing farmers' earnings and profitability. Additionally, government-backed quality standards and certification schemes help maintain international competitiveness. By encouraging innovation and sustainable practices, these initiatives enhance post-harvest management practices.

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