



**PRESS RELEASE
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Farmers Raise Alarm over Proposed Amendments to PPVFR Act; voice concern over secretive new Seed Bill; also oppose enhanced international access to all national plant genetic resources and their Digital Sequence Information (DSI) under ITPGRFA

New Delhi, India — Farmer groups and civil society organizations across India are voicing strong opposition to the Government of India's proposed amendments to the **Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPVFR) Act, 2001**; and also apprehension over the yet-to-be-disclosed **Seed Bill**, citing grave concerns over violation of farmers' rights and seed sovereignty. They also point out the serious undermining of vital national interests by corporate encroachment on our heritage genetic resources.

The proposed amendments are seen by perceptive observers as being positioned in the context of India's negotiations at the upcoming **Governing Body Meeting of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)**, scheduled for **November 24-29, 2025 in Peru**, where it is proposed to expand international open access to all plant genetic resources and their Digital Sequence Information (DSI). It is relevant to note that the critically important treasures of genetic diversity are predominantly found in the global south that are now becoming prey to enhanced pillage.

Critics of the proposed changes to the PPVFR Act, as well as the amendments to the 'International Seed Treaty' (ITPGRFA), argue that such steps align more with international corporate and big agri-business interests than with the welfare of farmers. They pave the path for eroding national sovereignty and the independence of our *atma-nirbhar* (self-reliant) farmers, thereby holding a Damocles' sword over India's agricultural sustainability and food security.

It is further alarming to learn that '**synthetic seeds**' are proposed to be included in the definition of seeds in the undisclosed Seed Bill, which can be seen as a covert endorsement of potentially hazardous **genetically modified (GM) or genetically engineered/edited (GE) seeds/crops**, which not only affect Indian farmers' independence in sowing their own, uncontaminated farm-saved seeds, but are also fraught with grave risks to human and ecological health. Such a move could open the floodgates to yet more rampant privatization, commercialization and contamination of India's rich heritage of seed germplasm, evolved over millennia through

adaptation and selection by many generations of Indian farmers in diverse agro-climatic conditions and soils.

While India has long claimed to be a global leader in protecting farmers' rights over their seeds, some of the proposed amendments to India's PPVFR Act aim to strengthen intellectual property regimes over plant and seed varieties, thereby threatening to undo decades of struggles to protect farmers' rights.

Despite the PPVFR Act's original intent to safeguard farmers from intellectual property regimes like UPOV, its implementation has actually failed to protect farmers' rights. While the Act included plant 'Varieties of Common Knowledge' (VCK), the PPVFR Authority failed to open a national registry of such pre-existing plant and seed varieties, protected from all forms of private property claims. Such a registry of India's numerous farmers' varieties of common knowledge (VCK), should have indeed been the first category of registration undertaken by the PPVFR Authority in order to ensure that commonly known traditional varieties are not registered under private names. BBSM demands that such a grave error of omission be immediately remedied; and that a national registry of traditional/heritage varieties also includes the seeds provided to CGIAR institutions by Indian farmers and Government bodies, including the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR) that boasts a collection of over 4,50,000 plant accessions sourced from Indian farmers over many decades.

BBSM further demands that the PPVFR Authority convene an early consultation meeting of custodian farmers and communities within this year with the aim to rectify all weaknesses in national law and its implementation; and to create a robust regime for protecting farmers' rights. It is essential that not only our traditional plant genetic resources but also their 'Digital Sequence Information' (DSI) should be protected from any form of patents, IPR claims. Such protection should not only cover Varieties of Common Knowledge (VCK), but also all traditional varieties sourced from farmers or national organizations by CGIAR institutions over many decades.

The proposed amendments to the International Seed Treaty (ITPGRFA) are also not in the interest of common farmers. **Bharat Beej Swaraj Manch, BBSM (aka India Seed Sovereignty Alliance)**, a national network of farmers and seed savers, has submitted a detailed response to the ITPGRFA governing body and is mobilizing farmer groups nationwide to demand transparency and accountability (<https://seedtreaty.org/#bbsmletter>)

While opposing the expansion of the Multi-Lateral Scheme (MLS) of ITPGRFA to allow enhanced open international access (from earlier listed 64 crops) to *all* plant genetic resources, BBSM also notes the abject failure of benefit sharing to farmers, the primary source of the genetic resources/seeds. The recent stakeholder consultations held by the PPVFR Authority on **October 26–28, 2025**, were criticized too for prioritizing seed companies over farmers, with the latter invited at short notice only on the final day.

India has sadly failed to value and respect her immense genetic wealth of **climate-resilient and pest resistant traditional seed varieties** conserved by her farmers and indigenous communities. Unlike the USA and EU, where farmers struggle under corporate seed monopolies, Indian farmers have historically bred and preserved seeds suited to diverse agro-climatic conditions. It is however alarming to note that over 54% of the global trade in seeds

is already monopolized by just 4 giant agri-business multinationals based in the bio-diversity poor global north.

Why should India effectively hand over on a platter our fabulously rich genetic treasures to mega corporates that fundamentally prioritize profits over people, and care little for ecological health and sustainability?

As negotiations under the **Multilateral System (MLS)** of ITPGRFA consider expanding the treaty's scope to cover all plant germplasm, farmer groups warn that without robust protections for **community ownership** and **farmers' rights**, the treaty could become a tool for corporate takeover.

BBSM and allied organizations call on the Government of India to:

- Reconsider proposed amendments to the PPVFR Act. and make only such changes that enhance rather than weaken farmers' rights;
- Conduct full, extensive, transparent and participatory hearings with farmers and farmer groups on amendments to both the laws.
- Conduct audit of Gene Fund
- Immediately disclose the contents of the proposed Seed Bill.
- Reconsider the inclusion of synthetic seeds in the forthcoming Seed Bill/Act.
- Ensure meaningful consultation with farmers and indigenous communities.
- Uphold India's legacy of seed sovereignty and biodiversity conservation.

For media inquiries, interviews, or access to BBSM's submission to the ITPGRFA governing body, please contact:

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