

## 1. INTRODUCTION :

India is one of the major oilseeds grower and importer of edible oils. India's vegetable oil economy is world's fourth largest after USA, China & Brazil. The oilseed accounts for 13% of the Gross Cropped Area, 3% of the Gross National Product and 10% value of all agricultural commodities. This sector has recorded annual growth rate of area, production and yield @ 2.44%, 5.47% and 2.96% respectively during last decade (1999-2009).

The diverse agro-ecological conditions in the country are favourable for growing 9 annual oilseed crops, which include 7 edible oilseeds (groundnut, rapeseed & mustard, soybean, sunflower, sesame, safflower and niger) and two non-edible oilseeds (castor and linseed). Oilseeds cultivation is undertaken across the country in about 27 million hectares mainly on marginal lands, of which 72% is confined to rainfed farming.

During the last few years, the domestic consumption of edible oils has increased substantially and has touched the level of 18.90 million tonnes in 2011-12 and is likely to increase further. With per capita consumption of vegetable oils at the rate of 16 kg/year/person for a projected population of 1276 million, the total vegetable oils demand is likely to touch 20.4 million tonnes by 2017.

A substantial portion of our requirement of edible oil is met through import of palm oil from Indonesia and Malaysia.

It is, therefore, necessary to exploit domestic resources to maximize production to ensure edible oil security for the country. Oil Palm is comparatively a new crop in India and is the highest vegetable oil yielding perennial crop. With quality planting materials, irrigation and proper management, there is potential of achieving 20-30 MT Fresh Fruit Bunches (FFBs) per ha after attaining the age of 5 years. Therefore, there is an urgent need to intensify efforts for area expansion under oil palm to enhance palm oil production in the country.

Tree Borne Oilseeds (TBOs), like sal, mahua, simarouba, kokum, olive, karanja, jatropha, neem, jojoba, cheura, wild apricot, walnut, tung etc. are cultivated/grown in the country under different agro-climatic conditions in a scattered form in forest and non-forest areas as well as in waste land /deserts/hilly areas. These

TBOs are also good source of vegetable oil and therefore need to be supported for cultivation.