Preface

The global agriculture is changing at a greater pace in response to rapid advancement in technologies related to farm sector. Cereal farmers are adding vegetables to their crop rotations in response to increased consumer demands. Assuming a 3.5 and 5.5 percent GDP growth rate, the projected demand for vegetables in the year 2030 for India alone is 151 and 193 million tones, respectively. Agriculture in India accounts for nearly 65% of the country’s employment, 26% of the total GDP and nearly 20% of total export earning and supplier of raw material to major industries. Agriculture is not only the backbone of Indian economy and food security but also a way of life, a tradition and anchor of overall livelihood opportunity for about 700 million of over one billion populations.

Vegetable cultivation has been recognized as an important enterprise to provide nutritional security and to raise the income and employment opportunity especially for small and marginal farmers of the society. Vegetables are common in human diet and a meal without a vegetable is supposed to be incomplete in any part of the world. India is the second largest producer of vegetables in the world, next to China. The limited cultivable area can be best utilized for growing vegetables which are known to give higher yields per unit area. Vegetable growing being labour intensive can substantially increase employment avenues too. Our country is gifted with a wide range of agro-climatic conditions which enables the production of vegetables throughout the year in one part of the country or the other and then maintaining a continuous supply of fresh vegetables.

Among the Solanaceous vegetables, tomato, eggplant and chilli are most widely cultivated in India. These vegetables are now being grown throughout the year in one and other parts of this country. In India, solanaceous vegetables constitute a major bulk of the total vegetable production. During 2007-08, tomato and brinjal with a
productivity of 17.9 t/ha and 17 t/ha, accounted for 8.9 % and 7.62%, respectively of the total vegetable production of 125.88 million tons. India is the largest producer and consumer of chilli among other major producers in the world and is at the top in terms of international trade, exporting 20% of its total production. In India, dry chilli production rose by nearly 43 % from 8.7 lakh tons in 1997-98 to 12.5 lakh tons in 2007-08. Vegetable exports also more than tripled by volume in the decade from 1995 to 2005 and now represent about 2.5% of production. Therefore, a focus on high-value horticulture such as vegetables coupled with trade and market reform, could contribute substantially to several of the government plans for socioeconomic targets.

With this in view, certain studies have been undertaken to assess different aspects of vegetable cultivation in many parts of the country. However, hardly any systematic study is available for all the agro-climatic zones for solanaceous vegetables. Keeping in view the present problematic situation and the need of a planned appraisal of the current economic scenario, particularly of solanaceous vegetables, the present research work entitled 'Economic Appraisal of Production and Marketing of Solanaceous Vegetables in Different Agro-climatic Zones of India' was formulated in order to study the resource-use pattern and its efficiency in production, profitability, temporal price behaviour and supply-price relationship of solanaceous vegetables, along with their export performance and constraint faced by vegetable growers in the field of production and marketing. This research work is a bonafide work and need of the hour since it covers all the eight agro-climatic zones of the country. The outcomes of this work not only bring the actual scenario of solanaceous vegetable cultivation, resource utilization, marketing and export, but will also help policy makers and people of other related departments to act in the desired direction for the betterment of the growers as well as consumers.