PREFACE

Oilseed crops are considered as backbone of the Indian agricultural economy. Oilseed production assumes great importance in India because of the gap in demand and supply, which forced the country to import vegetable oils causing a heavy drain on the foreign exchange reserves of the country.

Although India enjoys the distinction of having the largest cultivated area under oilseeds in the world, yet it is paradoxical that the current consumption levels of a crucial nutrient, such as, oils and fats in the country are not only below the world average but also far below even the minimum nutritional requirements recommended by the ICMR. Low rates of growth in production, high instability in production and prices, virtual stagnation in yield levels, considerable speculative trading in oilseeds and its productions, are some of the conspicuous features of India’s oilseeds economy.

Many researches were conducted for increasing the yield potential, increasing oil content, reducing crop duration, breeding pest and disease resistant varieties, large scale production of nucleus and breeders’ seeds, import and evaluation of promising exotic varieties and hybrids, developing suitable implements for oilseed cultivation, developing technologies for storage of oilseeds and oils, inter and sequential cropping systems, integrated weed control, reducing aflatoxin and so on. All these researches are focussed on the improvement of technological aspects of Oil seeds cultivation.

The above issues are certainly creating lot of problems for the Indian vegetable oil industry and the best way to overcome these problems is to have efficient management of oilseeds economy, including management of production, financial and marketing areas along with improvement in their technologies which are of critical importance for the economic health of India.

Among the oil seeds, Oil Palm has been recognized as one of the best yielding crops which can yield of 4-6 tonnes of oil from 3-30 years of life span
and produces two distinct oils i.e. Palm oil and Palm Kernel Oil. Yield of Oil Palm per hectare is high compared to other nine annual oil seed crops providing sustainable income to the cultivators.

Although many researches were conducted on the biological aspects of Oil seeds, very few researchers have focussed on the management aspect of Oil seeds especially on Oil Palm. In the context of the importance of oilseeds in the Indian economy and the urgent need to boost their output this study attempted a comprehensive and an in-depth study of production, financial and marketing problems of Oil Palm cultivators in Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh.

The present study of analysis of cultivation, financial and marketing problems of Oil Palm cultivators can surely be relevant to the needs of the society for more than one reason. First of all, such a detailed study as this has not been conducted so far in this district. Secondly the identification of the problems helps in finding suitable solutions for increasing the returns of the Oil Palm Cultivators. Thirdly this study will be helpful to the Policy makers in understanding the problems that were not yet identified by them which help them to formulate effective policies. Fourthly the study can be the base for further researches to conduct in depth study of each and every problem areas.

The present study by making objective assessment of the cultivation costs and returns for Oil Palm cultivators can pin point the aspects of their low returns and suggest the possible solutions to plug the loopholes in order to tone up their performance. In view of the importance of the present study, it can be a useful contribution to improve the returns for oil palm cultivators who in turn contribute to the satisfaction of needs of the consumers.