PREFACE

Agriculture in India has a long history dating back to 10,000 years. It began by 9000 B.C. The Indian economy had been known for centuries for its self contained village communities. In the middle ages, the irrigation channels are developed to reach a new level of sophistication in India affecting the economies of other regions of the world. There was a continuous exploitation of natural resources and economic wealth from India by British till attaining Independence in 1947.

Agriculture is the most common and fundamental determinant of the prosperity of civilizations. It as has been at the mainstay of Indian economy and it provides sustenance to more than two-thirds of Indian population. Indian agriculture faces the challenges from climatic change, fragmented land holdings and illiteracy of farmers. In spite of economic development and industrialization, agriculture is still the backbone of the Indian economy. As Mahatma Gandhi said, “India lives in villages and agriculture is the soul of economy”. The successive five year plans accorded top priority in the agricultural sector.

Chemical fertiliser has been the key input in Agriculture. Fertiliser consumption in India has been increasing over the years and today India is one of the largest producers and consumers of fertilisers in the world. It is evident that application of fertiliser is essential for increasing agricultural production. Though India is the second largest consumer of fertilisers in the world after China, the average intensity of fertiliser use remains much lower than most countries in the world. The demand-supply gap of fertilisers in India has increased in recent times, thereby leading to increased dependency on imports. The intensity of fertiliser use varies from one state to another state in India and majority of Indian soils are deficient in many macro and micro nutrient.

In India, there are 57 large sized and 72 small and medium sized fertiliser units manufacturing a wide range of nitrogenous, phosphatic and complex fertilisers. Public sector companies are still playing a predominant role in the production of fertiliser. Due to constraints in the availability of Gas in the country, a near total dependence on imports for phosphatic fertiliser and its raw materials and full import dependence for MOP, the government encouraged Indian companies to establish joint
ventures abroad and as a result number of companies were established. The Government of India has been consistently pursuing policies conducive to increase the availability and consumption of fertilisers in the country. The green revolution in the late sixties gave impetus to the growth of fertiliser industry in India. Government of India has declared fertiliser as an essential commodity under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and notified Fertiliser Control Order (FCO) 1985 under this Act to ensure the supply of quality fertiliser by the manufacturers. The Department of Fertilisers, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers, Government of India has been monitoring the Indian Fertiliser Industry.

Andhra Pradesh is the fifth largest state in India in terms of population and about two-thirds of population is living in rural areas. Agriculture is the chief source of income to the State’s economy and is considered as one of the most progressive states with respect to agricultural development. In India four important rivers, the Godavari, Krishna, Penna and Thungabhadra flows through Andhra Pradesh providing extensive irrigation. Andhra Pradesh is known as “the rice bowl of India”.

Andhra Pradesh consists of 23 districts in the three regions, coastal, Rayalseema and Telangana districts. The state is endowed with a variety of soils ranging from poor coastal sands to highly fertile deltaic alluvial soils. Red soils occupy over 66 per cent of the cultivated area and are mostly located in Rayalaseema and Telangana areas. These soils have a low nutrient status. Red soils can be sub classified as Dubha soils, chalkas, sandy clay loams, silty soils, deep loamy sand, and sandy loams with clay sub soils. Chalukas occur mostly in the Telangana districts, while red loams combined with sands are present in the upland regions of coastal districts. The state receives its rainfall from the South-west and North-east monsoons. Food crops occupy the prominent place in the cropping pattern of the state. Among the food crops, rice occupies about 34 per cent of grass cropped area. Among the non-food crops ground and cotton accounts for 13 per cent and 11 percent respectively on the grass cropped area. The Krishna, Khammam and Kurnool districts are the districts of Coastal, Telangana and Rayalaseema regions of Andhra Pradesh and have different agro-economic conditions.

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