

# CHAPTER – I

## INTRODUCTION

*However they roam the world must follow still the plougher's team;  
Though toilsome, culture of the ground as noblest toil esteem.*

-Ayyan Thiruvalluvar

**Though the world is revolving around various professions, it always rallies behind Agriculture. Hence, Agriculture is the lead profession in spite of various difficulties.**

- Dr. Kalaignar's Kuraloviam

The Government is continuously taking efforts to make Agriculture which is a primary sector, as a growth engine for economic development of the State. The performance in agriculture needs a real break-through to eliminate poverty and bring prosperity to 56% of the population who are dependant on agriculture. The various factors limiting the agricultural development are conversion of land to non-agricultural use due to industrialization and urbanization, water scarcity, vagaries of monsoon rains, frequent drought / flood situation, scarcity of labour, etc resulted in stagnation in agricultural growth. Among this, the shrinking of agricultural land and inadequate availability of water are the major constraints which need to be overcome with suitable scientific approach to achieve sustainable development in agriculture. Similarly, adoption of advanced technologies for the restoration of soil health, mechanization, cultivation of suitable remunerative crops, effective pest and disease management are essential to step up the agricultural production. More concerted efforts are required to increase the income of the farmers, empowerment of the farmers to make their produce globally competitive and to understand the market trend to sell their produce with reasonable profit. Though the performance on productivity of rice, groundnut and sugarcane in Tamil Nadu is comparatively higher, still there is a great scope for improvement. In respect of millets, pulses and cotton as these crops are largely cultivated under rain fed conditions. The enhancement of productivity continued to be a major task.

In order to bring agriculture as a profitable venture, the government has taken more efforts to bring in a major changes in the method of cultivation of crops. The System of Rice Intensification is one such technology capable of enhancing paddy productivity to a level of 10 MT and above per hectare. The efforts taken to promote this technology extensively have created greater awareness among the farmers and more number of paddy growing farmers have started adopting this technology. This Government have taken a view that the System of Rice Intensification technology will step up the rice production of the State to a great extent besides, the farmers will get more income. Similarly, the Precision Farming technology is proved to increase the productivity of sugarcane, cotton, vegetables, flowers and other horticultural crops to 30% to 40% from the present level. A massive programme to adopt this technology in clusters by formation of societies with the participating farmers by providing higher subsidy is expected to bring a massive change in the agricultural scenario in Tamil Nadu.

The credit requirements are adequately extended to the farmers through Primary Agricultural Co-operative Societies and Commercial Banks. During 2006-07 the State Government have waived agriculture loan obtained from Co-operative Banks to the tune of Rs.6,866 crores. The Government of India during 2007-08 waived agricultural loan obtained from Commercial Banks at national level amounting to Rs.60,000 crores. Out of which Rs.2,843.90 crores waived for the agriculture loan obtained by Tamil Nadu farmers from Commercial Banks. This has helped the indebted farmers to get fresh loan for crop cultivation. Only in Tamil Nadu during 2009-2010 Interest Free Crop Loans are extended through Co-operative Bank for the farmers who repay the loan promptly. After this

Government assumed office, 2.40 lakh pumpsets got electricity connection under self finance scheme have also been extended with free electricity and free electricity continued to be extended to all the agricultural pumpsets. This Government have written off Rs.196.37 crores and issued orders on 5.11.2008 for Soil Conservation Loan including Thakkavi Loan obtained by the farmers which was due from 1.4.1980. This Government is also extending major assistance to the farmers under Tamil Nadu Agricultural Labourers and Farmers Social Security and Welfare Scheme. Government has already taken special steps to protect the farmers from the loss due to natural calamities and also due to pest / diseases by extending massive assistance under crop insurance. In the first time, the farmers of Tamil Nadu have been extended compensation to the tune of Rs.279.55 crores under crop insurance for crop loss during 2007-08. The Government has also fulfilled the demand of the farmers by fixing Rs.1050/-per quintal as Minimum Support Price for Grade A paddy including State incentive bonus of Rs.120 per quintal and Rs.1000/- per quintal for Common variety with State incentive of Rs.100/- per quintal. The Government of India have fixed a price of Rs.811.80 for sugarcane per MT with 9% sugar recovery. The State Government is extending Rs.1220/- per MT including transport besides Rs.9/- for every additional 0.1% sugar recovery.

In order to tide over the fertilizer crisis prevailed throughout the country, the Government have taken pioneer action by nominating TANFED as a Nodal Agency to purchase DAP fertilizer from the importers and to distribute to the farmers through Primary Agricultural Co-operative Societies. The Government have so far released Rs.70 crores to TANFED as interest free loan for this purpose. The Government ensures adequate allocation from Government of India for Urea, Potash and Complex fertilizers and distributes through Co-operative Banks and private outlets adequately. Because of the timely action taken, the fertilizers are made available to the farmers adequately in time.

The restructuring effected during 2007 for Agriculture Department by positioning the technical officers of Agriculture, Horticulture, Marketing and Seed Certification Departments at a single point in block level created greater opportunities to the farmers to get integrated service at the block level Agricultural Extension Centres.

The activities taken up to provide Soil Health Cards to all the farm holdings by strengthening soil testing facilities, production of vermi compost at farm hold level, establishment of municipal compost units, establishment of additional units for bio fertilizer production, promotion of micro nutrients application expected to play a major role in the process of restoration of soil health. Supply of quality seeds of High Yielding Varieties and Hybrids to cover larger extent, effective adoption of Integrated Pest Management concept through Farmers' Field Schools, providing medium range forecast to help the farmers to plan for their cultivation operation, providing technical advice and quality inputs through technically qualified entrepreneurs are the major initiatives taken up by the Government to bring major changes in agricultural development.

In order to fulfill the longstanding demand of the farmers and to promote agro based industries, the Government have announced various assistance for agriculture and agro processing industries under New Industrial Policy 2007. Various incentives are extended for creating infrastructure facilities for Terminal Markets, Special Commodity Markets, Transport, Cold Chain, Godowns, Food Parks, etc. In general, all the incentives and assistances provided to the industrial sector are extended to Agro Based Industry also including the industries for manufacturing agricultural machinery and micro irrigation equipments.