

## Commercial Crops

### Oilseeds

15. Amongst the nine major oilseeds, groundnut still occupies the dominant position accounting for nearly 34 per cent of total oilseeds production of 24.2 million tonnes. Rapeseed/mustard which occupied second rank now accounts for only 26 per cent of oilseeds output. Soyabean has come to occupy the second rank recently accounting for 28 per cent of production. This trend is likely to continue and groundnut may soon be overtaken by either rapeseed mustard or soyabean. Production trend shows that despite increase in production in some oilseeds-notably soyabean and sunflower - India's consumption requirement of edible oils would still not be met. Imports have therefore become vital for supplementing domestic supplies. Current output of edible oils is about 68 lakh tonnes which falls short of consumption by about 15 lakh tonnes. The production of oilseeds in 1998-99 is likely to be 24.2 million tonnes (Table 8.6).

### Cotton

16. Prospect of cotton production touching the record output of 14.2 million bales in 1998-99 became uncertain due to the damage caused to the crop in Punjab by excessive rains in October. In Andhra Pradesh also unexpected cyclonic storms appear to have damaged the crop. Nevertheless, 1998-99 cotton output would still be better than the preceding years output of 11.1 million bales and is likely to be 14 million bales.

### Sugarcane

17. 1998-99 sugar year (beginning October 1998) is expected to be better with an estimated output of 289.7 million tonnes as against preceding years output of 276.3 million tonnes. Hence there is considerable optimism about this year's sugar output rising to 150 lakh tonnes from a low of 128 lakh tonnes last year.

### Jute and Mesta

18. Jute and Mesta had for quite some time declined in importance due to falling domestic and world demand. Domestic demand was largely sustained by Government policy of mandatory jute packing of foodgrains by FCI and the packaging of cement, sugar and fertilizers. The world demand for jute arose mainly from carpet backing which, of late, had shrunk because of increased use of synthetic substitutes. World is now veering towards use of biodegradable packing and this may generate fresh hope for Indian jute. Production of jute/mesta has been stagnating at 8 to 11 million bales. In 1997-98 jute production was 10 million bales and together with mesta combined output of jute/mesta was 11.1 million bales. 1998-99 production is estimated at 9.3 million bales of which production of jute would be 8.4 million bales (Table 8.6).

### Horticulture

19. The diversity of physiographic, climate and soil characteristics enables India to grow a large variety of horticultural crops - fruits, vegetables, flowers, spices, cashewnut, coconut, cocoa,

**TABLE 8.6**  
**Commercial Crop Production**

(Million Tonnes)

Crop	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99 Estimated
Groundnut	8.1	7.6	8.6	7.8	8.2
Rapeseed/Mustard	5.8	6.0	6.7	4.7	6.2
Soyabean	3.9	5.1	5.4	6.5	6.8
Other six Oilseeds	3.5	3.4	3.7	3.0	3.0
<b>Total nine Oilseeds</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>24.2</b>
Cotton*	11.9	12.9	14.2	11.1	14.0
Jute & Mesta**	9.1	8.8	11.1	11.1	9.3
Sugarcane	275.5	281.1	277.6	276.3	289.7

\* Million bales of 170 Kgs each

\*\* Million bales of 180 Kgs each

arecanut, root and tuber crops, medicinal and aromatic plants, etc. India is the largest producer of fruits in the world and, second largest producer of vegetables. India enjoys the unique distinction of being single largest producer, consumer and exporter of spices in the world. India is also the leading producer and exporter of cashew in the world (Table 8.7).

20. Horticulture produce such as fruits, vegetables and flowers are highly perishable and suffer heavy damage or deterioration in quality during post harvest handling. According to Planning Commission estimate, post harvest handling accounts for 37 per cent of the losses at different stages of storage, grading, packaging etc. The National Horticulture Board is the nodal agency for establishing post-harvest infrastructure, an essential aspect of which should be frozen storage capacity creation and, frozen

<b>TABLE 8.7</b>			
<b>Production of Principal Horticultural Crops</b>			
<b>(Million Tonnes)</b>			
<b>Crops</b>	<b>1994-95</b>	<b>1995-96</b>	<b>1996-97*</b>
Fruits	38.60	41.51	46.97
Vegetables	67.29	71.59	80.80
Spices	2.46	2.50	2.78
Cashew	0.37	0.42	0.43
Arecanut	0.29	0.30	0.31
Coconut**	13299	13967	12988
<b>* Provisional      ** Million Nuts</b>			

transportation of perishable fruits and vegetables. Special efforts at creating new storage capacity through concessional finance is actively being pursued.