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INTRODUCTION1.1 **The Edible oils Crisis**

1.1.1 From food grains it is now edible oils. The issues and concerns of the 1960s in India's food policy has emerged for a second time in the 1980s and yesterday's headlines are running once again today, with only one difference, this time it is edible oils. The persistent low per capita availability, the widening gap between demand and domestic supply, the resultant steep rise in market price, the inevitable last resort to large scale imports and the consequent drain of substantial amounts of foreign exchange has stirred up much concern and has raised several policy issues.

1.1.2 Encouraged by the success in overcoming the food crisis of the 1960s, the Government of India has reacted to the situation with reassurance, initially through the National Oilseeds Development Project (set up in 1984-85) and subsequently through the Technology Mission on Oilseeds (set up in March 1986) and is currently in the process of developing and implementing several strategies to achieve self sufficiency in edible oils by the year 1990. However, this appears to be a distant dream and inspite of a bumper crop of about 18 million tonnes of oilseeds in the year 1989-90, the Government has resorted to import of nearly half a million tonnes of edible oils to augment the domestic availability and keep the market price in control.