IN 1951 India had a population of 360 million people, 70% of them engaged in agriculture. Of the 326 million acres of crop land, 51 million were irrigated. Crop yields were very low, the average for rice, wheat, and peanuts being less than 700 pounds per acre. Drouths made both 1950 and 1951 bad crop years. In 1951, 4,725,000 tons of foodgrains were imported, most of it from the United States under the Special Wheat Loan.

Under these unfavourable conditions India started the First Five Year Plan with the emphasis on agricultural development. The same year the United States Congress provided funds for the Technical Cooperation Administration and 52 million dollars were allotted to India. India’s proposals for technical and economic assistance included fertilizer projects. The senior author accompanied a small group of U. S. technicians to India in December 1951 to establish the U. S. Technical Cooperation Mission and to develop the Indo-American program.

Stewart’s summary and analysis of fertilizer and soil fertility research in India, a visit with him in Aberdeen and with Imperial Chemical Industries, London, provided useful information about the fertilizer and soil fertility situation in India.

The fertilizer development program that was planned with the Government of India had the following broad objectives:

i. Imports to help increase agricultural production,

ii. The development of a modern fertilizer industry,

iii. A determination of fertilizer requirements and returns from their use.

iv. The creation of a demand for fertilizers,

v. Provision for a soil testing service.