As per estimate during 2012-13 in Odisha state the total production of potato was 2,01,060 metric tonne from 14,140 hect. of land with yield rate of 142.19 quintals/hect. The potato is mostly grown in the rabi season in Odisha state.

In the production of potato, Cuttack district ranks first by way of producing 45.96 thousand metric tonnes of potato covering 2.91 thousand hect. of land during 2012-13. (157.93 quintals/hect.) Cuttack district contributes 22.86 percent of the state production of potato out of 20.58 percent of the state area coverage under potato crop during the period. The other potato growing districts in the state are Kendrapada, Kondhamal, Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Balasore and Koraput.

Successful mission can be better attended through intervention of NGO sector of activities on Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode of operation. Thus the state level production of crop will increase significantly to carter to the need of consumers and a stable market price on the crops can be maintained without much scarcity or hoarding by the middlemen involved in marketing of crop produce.

In case of onion also similar situation prevails in Odisha state. The state production was only 4.19 lakh metric tonnes out of coverage of 0.35 lakh hectares of land with yield rate of 120 quintals/hect. In onion production Bolangir district in Odisha state ranks highest with 29.41 percent contribution to the state onion production during the period. The onion in the state imparts wide gapping between demand and supply during 2012-13. In case of ginger the harvest price ranges from Rs.4500/- to Rs.5500/- per quintal whereas during the lean period the market price of ginger sore up to Rs.20,000 per quintal i.e the market price is multiplied about 4 times.

Similar situation prevails in case of garlic. Hence the market price of potato, onion, ginger and garlic widely varies round the year due to wide gapping on demand and supply in Odisha state.

The department of Agriculture Government of Odisha needs to attempt on constructive approach to extend area coverage under onion, potato, ginger and garlic crops with sound extension practices of advanced technologies. The implementation on statewide supply of high yielding variety seeds and other inputs on subsidised prices are necessary. The extension of area coverage under the corps would lead to increase in production of crop to meet the need of the consumers. Thereby the demand and
supply gap will be minimised leading to stable market price of the produce in Odisha.

In Odisha state the production of potato meets only about 20 percent of the state requirement. In the state the annual requirement of potato is about 10 lakh metric tonnes. But the Odisha state produces only about 2 lakh metric tonnes to 2.5 lakh metric tonnes (MT) of potato yearly covering about 14000 hect. of land. 80 percent of potato demand requirement in Odisha state depends on supply from neighbouring states like West Bengal, Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh. The terms dictation of neighbouring states stop supply of potato in to Odisha. The high demand situation creates clamour among the consumers leading to hoarding and high price rise of potato in Odisha market.

The potato and onion being the common need for the people in remote villages in day to day life, the short supply of potato and onion in the market severely affects the food habits of the common man in Odisha. During 2014 the short supply of potato in the market severely affected the common man’s food habit in Odisha. The short supply of potato and onion in every alternate year creates havoc among the consumers in Odisha market.

The attempt made by the Government of Odisha during 2014 by way of encouraging the potato growers supplying improved variety seeds and other inputs with subsidised rate and providing improved technologies on extension practice has extended the area coverage and doubled potato production in the state during the period. During rabi 2014-15 in south Odisha pockets of catchment areas of stream water facilitated potato production in Nandapur, Semiliguda, Pottangi, Laxmipur and Dasmantpur blocks. With governmental incentives the potato area coverage has increased leading to double production of potato in south Odisha and some of the districts climatic conducive for potato cultivation. These pockets were given special emphasis for extension of potato area coverage and production. But the absence of cold storage facility in the potato growing areas is leading to short supply of potato during lean periods. The insufficient number of active cold storages in the state lead to insufficient storing & hence wide price fluctuations occur round the year. It severely affects the potato growers from getting remunerative price during harvest period.

Due to absence of cold storage facility, the farmers in the potato growing areas are forced to sell their produce at a compromised price. During 2014, 25,000 quintals of potato produced in Koraput district was sent to other states including Delhi due to absence of cold storage in the areas.

In the process to boost production of potato during 2014, the Government of Odisha made attempt by way of providing subsidy to the growers, improved seed supply and Rs.8000/- per acre for purchase of fertilizers to the farmers. But after harvesting the potato, due to absence of remunerative price and cold storage facilities in the producing areas, the potato produce was sent to other states including Delhi. Although the Government of Odisha took sincere efforts to boost up potato production in the state, the real benefit on potato production went to other states instead of storing in the state itself. During the lean period again there will be scarcity of potato in the state markets due to demand rise, short supply and terms dictation of neighbouring states.

For ameliorating the situation and creating a stable domestic market round the year for potato and onion, the Government of Odisha needs to
erect cold storages in the pockets of producing areas with top priorities.

**The strategic measures necessary to boost production:**

* Mini cold storage facility needs to be developed in every Gram Panchayat in co-operative sector with greater participation of the producers/ farmers for direct better benefit and accessibility of the producers and consumers round the year.

* For the protection of the farmer’s interest crop insurance facility must be mandatory. High yielding/improved seeds as per the need of the farmers location wise must be stored in the cold store in advance for required timely supply and availability to the growers. Other inputs needed in the crop production process need to be supplied/ made available to the farmers in time with advanced planning strategy.

* Subsidised farm machineries and implements need to be timely made available to the farmers for best benefit on crop production process so as to boost up crop productivity.

* Untimely supply of canal water and it’s scarcity severely affect the crop production process. The timely supply of cannel water for crop production is imperative by the governmental agencies and it should be taken care of to support the same activity for growth of production process.

* The extension practice to advise the growers in time is most important on plant protection measures to protect the crop from pest attack. The preventive chemicals need to be supplied to the farmers on the spot after advising on plant protection measures with the permissible subsidy by the government extension workers.

* For better benefit of the growers and the consumers, minimum support price (MSP) for potato needs to be implemented with enforcement on the nodal agencies for procurement during harvest period. The nodal agencies should procure the produce from the producers and steps should be taken to store it in cold storages and supply the product during lean period to the market. So a stable market situation will be created round the year without much price variation statewide. It would evade the hoarding and inflation situation created by the middlemen involved in the marketing process.

* The potato and onion seeds advance storing system needs to be developed locally to cater to the timely need of the grower. The seed varieties supplied to the growers need to be soil and climatic suitable to the growing condition for best germination of the seeds. The seed testing laboratory, Government of Odisha should take care to test germination of seeds prior to supply to the farmers. The exhaustive and scientific germination testing must be conducted on sample testing before supply of seeds to the growers.

* The potato and onion seed production activity needs to be intensified at least in the potential growing areas through which there will be no dearth of seeds at the proper time.

* Initiative needs to be taken for MSP fixation and procurement of potato after harvesting to provide price incentive to the growers in the state.

* The potato mission’s ambit should cover onion, ginger and garlic production activities. In case of ginger and garlic 500 percent price variation occurs round the year over the harvest prices.

* The suggested measures and implementation by the Governmental agencies
would positively extend the area coverage under the crop leading to boost up production so as to meet the domestic need of the consumers in the state.

The Government of Odisha through the implementation of Potato mission is going to intensify potato production in the state of Odisha. Number of positive measures are going to be incorporated through which the potato growers in the state will be significantly benefited on factual implementation of the potato mission’s objectives and activities. As envisaged, by the year 2017 the potato production would significantly increase and the state will be self-sufficient on potato production and hence the gap between demand and supply of potato will be minimised. Further through erection of cold storage/ mini cold storage in the growing area of the state, the potato seed will be sufficiently stored and supplied to the growers in time. The potato seed production and supply which is the thrust problem among the growers can be resolved through timely supply to the growers. The good variety and quality seed can also be stored in the cold storages in the growing areas so as to supply to the growers in time as required by the growers. About 80% of the cost of cultivation of potato is contributed by the seed cost in the production process. Hence through strengthening potato seed production process and storing, the major problem on potato production can be resolved statewide.

The distress sale of potato in the state after crop production or harvesting can be evaded through collection of potato by the nodal agencies paying the minimum support price. The grower’s interest in the state can be protected and hence on receipt of remunerative price, the growers will be inclined to extend area and production of potato.

In the state about 12 lakh tonnes of potato per annum is needed to meet the consumers' demand in the state. But the state level production of potato meets only 25 percent of the consumer needs leading to import of potato from neighbouring states. The neighbouring states also direct terms and conditions on the Government of Odisha and stop supply of potato on the transport line on failure of conditions. Thereby due to wide gap between demand and supply there is inflation in the market leading to soaring prices of potato statewide. In the state 112 cold storages have been proposed to be erected. 70 per cent of the subsidy can be made available if the cold storage is erected in KBK districts. For other districts 55% subsidy can be available on erection of cold storage as per the potato mission’s objective.

The production of onion has been laid parallel importance for the extension of area and production in the state.

The Odisha state looks forward to ameliorate the consumer’s and the producer’s interest for growing potato and onion and extend the area and production in the state so as to minimise the gap between demand and supply.

Dr. Binod Chandra Mohanty, Field Supervisor, Comprehensive Scheme, OUAT, Bhubaneswar.