

## FREE MOBILE PHONES TO FARMERS

Access to information on ruling prices of agricultural produce in different markets is the key to proper planning of crops and better price discovery by the farmers. State Government has ensured payment of Minimum Support Price (MSP) for paddy by a scientific procurement system through the Odisha State Civil Supplies Corporation involving the Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS) and other agencies. In respect of other farm produce, access to the market price has not been easy for the ordinary farmers and as such, the middlemen have been dictating the price and in the process making huge profit by exploiting the farm families. At present, in a limited manner, market intelligence on agricultural produce is made available to the farmers through the 91 nodes established in Regulated Market Committees (RMCs) under AGMARKNET and Price Ticker Boards installed in different Market Yards, which is not accessible to all the farmers. In order to simplify the process of accessing information and to remove the barrier of time and distance by providing required market information to the farmers through their mobile phones, the Scheme Digital Mandi for the farmers of Odisha is being implemented in the State. Under the scheme, Farmers will get information on market prices on agricultural produce on a selected basis through their mobile phones.

### Objectives

- To provide market information to the farmers in the local language i.e. Odia.
- To enable the farmers to plan for marketing of their produce at the proper time and place.
- To enable the farmers to have better bargaining power to realize a better price for their produce.
- To enable the farmers to have better planning of their crops based on the market price of various produce.

### Activities under the Scheme

Digital Mandi for the farmers of Odisha is a project conceptualized by the IIT, Kanpur and implemented by the Government of Odisha in BSNL platform. For execution of the project, the State Government have formulated the Scheme 'Providing free Mobile Phones to Farmers to access market information' under which mobile phones will be provided to 20,000 farmers selected by the District level Committee headed by the district Collector. The cost of each mobile phone has been estimated at Rs.1 000/- approximately and the total expenditure under the Scheme would be Rs.2.00 crore for 20,000 mobiles @ Rs.1000/- each. Farmers will have to get themselves registered in the respective Regulated Market Committees to get market information in their mobile phones.

### Funding

The Government of Odisha have made a budget provision of Rs.2.00 crore under the State Plan for 2013-14 to fund the expenditure for 20,000 mobile phones to be provided to the farmers free of cost.

### Launching

The project "Digital Mandi for the farmers of Odisha" was launched by the Hon'ble Chief Minister in Bhubaneswar and free mobile phones to 5000 farmers were distributed on 18.06.2013.