

Jindal Stainless inks MoU with Odisha Government to raise farmer income

Scheme to benefit over 2 lakh farmers across 9 districts in the next 3 years, in partnership with Gram Unnati Foundation

Bhubaneswar, 29, June, 2018: Marching forward in its commitment towards sustainable development, Jindal Stainless Limited today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment, Government of Odisha, at the Chief Minister's Office here today. Aimed at doubling the incomes of farmers spread across 9 districts in the state, the initiative is financed by Jindal Stainless Limited, with the Gram Unnati Foundation as its implementation partner. The MoU was signed in the presence of Hon' Chief Minister of Odisha, Shri Naveen Patnaik, by Director, Agriculture & Food Production, Govt. of Odisha, Dr M Muthukuma, and Unit Head, Jindal Stainless Limited, Mr Mohan Lal and Mr Aneesh Jain on behalf of Gram Unnati Foundation.

The nine districts which will benefit under this scheme include Angul, Balasore, Bhadrak, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Keonjhar, Khurda and Puri. This scheme can be easily expanded to other districts based on the project success in these 9 districts. Speaking on this development, **Chairperson, Jindal Stainless Foundation, Ms Deepikka Jindal**, said, *"Doubling farmers' income is an ambitious program which seeks to augment productivity and earnings of farmers. Right from soil health management and yield improvement, to diversifying income sources and establishing market linkages, the scheme offers solutions through multi-pronged interventions."*

As per the plan, Jindal Stainless Limited will be overseeing the day-to-day operations. Jindal Stainless Limited will also encourage other companies to partner in the project in order to expand the physical scope of this scheme. Government of Odisha shall be setting up a State-level Advisory Committee and District-level Guidance Committees comprising relevant stakeholders to guide, assist, and monitor the field deployment and impact of the system. Directorate of Agriculture and Food Production, Directorate of Horticulture, and Odisha Livelihood Mission will serve as nodal offices for relevant portions of the project.

The scheme was pilot tested in FY 2017-18 with 500 farmers in Jajpur district by providing them 360 degree support. This included, among others, soil testing, pest management, crop diversification, training in best practices, connecting with banking services, and tying up with institutional buyers. The pilot ensured that there was ready market for farmers' produce by linking them up with canteens and apartment complexes in Jajpur. This led to improvement in productivity and price realization by over 20%. Gram Unnati Foundation is a social enterprise which has been working with smallholder farmers in Rajasthan & Madhya Pradesh since 2013.