

## **Info kiosks to make rural India e-sufficient**

Ministries like agriculture, education, and railways will be collaborating with the National Information Centre (NIC) at different levels of content development to enhance the performance and utility of the community services centres (CSCs) to be set up across the rural India. The ambitious plan to set up 1,00,000 CSCs, connecting 6,00,000 villages across the country, is slated to be operational by 2007 and aims to bridge the digital divide in the country. It will work on a self-sustaining model between the state and the Centre. While the Central government will provide a fixed stream of revenue of 33 per cent, the remaining will be shared among private players to be selected through competitive bidding basis. Since information technology can play a key role in educating farmers on trade, commerce and help them keep a track of movement and flow pattern of commodities, the government will extend both the Agriculture Resources Information System (AgRIS) and the Agmarknet projects to the 1,00,000 web-enabled CSCs. AgRIS is a pilot project by department of agriculture and co-operation (DAC), agriculture ministry and the NIC to educate farmers in good agricultural practices. The Agmarknet project is at present operational in 2,200 agricultural wholesale produce markets located across the country. The project, undertaken by the DAC and the NIC, provides market price information on 300 commodities and 200 varieties. The government has also set up a national-level service agency to raise the finances for the scheme and monitor project implementation. The CSCs will also have the railways department offering its booking and reservation facilities, besides carrying examination results of all school and college examinations.

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