Andaman Chronicle

Sri Vijaya Puram, June 29: As part of the nationwide Khet Bachao Abhiyan, ICAR-Central Island Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR-CIARI), Sri Vijaya Puram, organized an awareness and capacity-building programme on sustainable soil and farm resource management at Tushnabad Village, South Andaman, on June 29, 2026.

The programme was jointly conducted by Dr. I. Jasiankar, Principal Scientist (Agroforestry); Dr. Abhilash, Scientist (Agricultural Meteorology); Dr. Jess Maria Wilson, Scientist (Fisheries); and Dr. Chaitrashree J., Scientist (Extension Education) from ICAR-CIARI, along with Dr. Y. Ramakrishna, Principal Scientist and Head, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Sippighat. The programme was organized in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Andaman and Nicobar Administration, and the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA), South Andaman.

A total of 41 farmers, including 28 men and 13 women, participated in the programme and actively interacted with the experts. During the technical sessions, emphasis was laid on the importance of conserving and improving soil health for sustaining crop productivity, enhancing climate resilience, and ensuring long-term agricultural sustainability in island ecosystems. The scientific team advised farmers to undertake regular soil testing for informed nutrient management and highlighted the benefits of integrated soil fertility management through the combined use of organic manures, crop residues, biofertilizers, and balanced fertilizer application. Farmers were encouraged to adopt green manuring and legume-based crop diversification to improve soil organic carbon, enhance nutrient recycling, and maintain soil productivity. Experts also sensitized farmers on the preparation and use of indigenous bio-inputs such as Jeevamrut and Neemastra as environmentally sustainable alternatives for improving soil biological activity and reducing dependence on external chemical inputs.

As part of the Gramin Krishi Mausam Sewa (GKMS) initiative, Dr. Abhilash highlighted the importance of weather-based agro-advisories in farm decision-making. Farmers were encouraged to regularly access and utilize weather forecasts and agrometeorological advisories for timely sowing, irrigation scheduling, nutrient application, and pest and disease management to minimize weather-related risks and improve farm productivity. Addressing the fisheries component, Dr. Jess Maria Wilson provided practical guidance on scientific pond management practices, including maintenance of optimum water quality, regular pond monitoring, judicious feeding, and disease prevention measures for improving fish production and sustaining pond health.

The participating farmers actively engaged in discussions and sought expert guidance on issues related to soil management, weather-based farming decisions, and integrated farming practices. The farmers appreciated the initiative and expressed their willingness to adopt the recommended technologies for enhancing productivity, reducing cultivation costs, and promoting sustainable farming systems.

The programme concluded with an appeal to farmers to adopt science-based and climate-resilient agricultural practices and to actively participate in the conservation of soil and natural resources in line with the objectives of the Khet Bachao Abhiyan.