

FPOs and SHGs Encouraged to Drive Sustainable Agriculture and Agri-Entrepreneurship in A&N Islands



Tarun Karthick



Save it

Last updated: June 11, 2026 6:45 pm

Share



Sri Vijaya Puram | June 11, 2026

SHARE



Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and progressive farmers in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been encouraged to adopt collective approaches to farming, promote sustainable agricultural practices, and explore agri-based entrepreneurship to improve incomes and strengthen rural livelihoods.

The call was made during an FPOs, SHGs and Progressive Farmers' Sannelan on Balanced Use of Fertilizers organised by ICAR–Central Island Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR-CIARI), Sri Vijaya Puram, under the nationwide "Khet Bachao Abhiyan" on Thursday. The programme brought together around 85 participants, including members of SHGs, FPOs and progressive farmers from South Andaman.

Scientists from ICAR-CIARI and KVK South Andaman, along with officials from NABARD, discussed sustainable agricultural practices, balanced and judicious use of fertilizers for improving soil health, and eco-friendly farming systems. Participants were also informed about various government schemes and opportunities in value addition, branding, packaging and marketing of agricultural produce aimed at enhancing farm profitability.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Jai Sunder, Director, ICAR-CIARI, highlighted the economic advantages of collective production, processing and marketing through SHGs and FPOs. He encouraged the formation of producer groups, particularly for spice-based and value-added enterprises, to improve efficiency and market access.

Dr. Sunder pointed to the vast potential of unique island products such as virgin coconut oil, cinnamon, banana, jackfruit and tuna-based products, stressing the need for effective branding, packaging and marketing to maximise their value. He also advocated the use of digital platforms, including e-commerce portals, WhatsApp groups and social media, for product promotion and wider market outreach. He assured participants that ICAR-CIARI and Krishi Vigyan Kendras would organise need-based training and skill development programmes to support entrepreneurial initiatives.

Alok Nath Puspak, Assistant General Manager, NABARD, elaborated on financial inclusion, entrepreneurship and livelihood development among farmers. He noted that collective institutions such as SHGs and FPOs are better positioned to access institutional credit, financial assistance and government schemes. He urged farmers to establish strong Farmer Producer Organisations with broad membership to enhance bargaining power and market access.

He also expressed NABARD's interest in supporting initiatives related to shrimp farming and other income-generating enterprises, and encouraged stakeholders to submit proposals focusing on climate-resilient agriculture, climate change adaptation and sustainable livelihood development in the Islands.

Dr. Raj Narayan, Head of the Division of Horticulture and Crop Improvement, underscored the importance of the Khet Bachao Abhiyan in promoting balanced fertilizer use and soil health management. He advocated organic and natural farming practices, mulching for moisture conservation, weed suppression and prevention of nutrient loss, while emphasising the need to maintain soil fertility through organic manures and crop residues for long-term agricultural sustainability.

Highlighting opportunities in the fisheries sector, Dr. M. Muruganandam, Head of the Division of Fisheries Science, said farmers and SHGs could significantly enhance their incomes through fisheries-based enterprises such as fish seed production, biofloc-based fish farming, feed manufacturing and distribution, fish processing, post-harvest management and value addition.

He also pointed to the market potential of fish-based fertilizers, fish pickles and other tuna-based products, and informed participants about support available under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) and other initiatives of the Government of India and the Andaman and Nicobar Administration. Collective efforts through SHGs and producer groups, he said, could improve market access and generate better returns from fisheries-based livelihoods.

Earlier, Dr. Y. Ramakrishna, Principal Scientist and Head of Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), South Andaman, welcomed the participants and stressed the importance of collaboration among farmers, scientists, extension personnel and other stakeholders in promoting balanced nutrient management, improving soil health and advancing sustainable farming systems across the Islands.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Mr. Mohit, Subject Matter Specialist.