

The Wave Andaman

The Voice of Andaman and Nicobar Islands

ICAR-CIARI Promotes FPOs and SHGs for Sustainable Agriculture in Andaman



Sri Vijaya Puram, June 12: A strong push for sustainable agriculture, collective farming and agri-entrepreneurship emerged from a farmers' conclave organised by ICAR–Central Island Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR–CIARI) under the nationwide “Khet Bachao Abhiyan”, where experts urged Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to take the lead in transforming agriculture and allied sectors across the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

The FPOs, SHGs and Progressive Farmers' Sammelan on Balanced Use of Fertilizers was held at ICAR-CIARI, Sri Vijaya Puram, bringing together farmers, scientists, extension workers and financial institutions to discuss sustainable farming practices, soil health management and income-generation opportunities. Around 85 participants, including farmers from South Andaman, representatives of SHGs and FPOs, scientists from ICAR-CIARI and Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), and officials from NABARD, attended the programme.

The event focused on promoting the balanced and judicious use of fertilizers, improving soil fertility and encouraging environmentally sustainable farming systems. Participants were also briefed on various government schemes and opportunities related to value addition, branding, packaging and marketing of agricultural produce aimed at increasing farm profitability and strengthening rural livelihoods.

Addressing the gathering, Alok Nath Puspak, Assistant General Manager, NABARD, highlighted the growing importance of financial inclusion and entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector. He said collective institutions such as SHGs and FPOs are better equipped to access institutional credit, government assistance and financial support programmes.

Puspak encouraged farmers to establish stronger producer organizations with larger membership bases, stating that collective action could improve bargaining power and create better market opportunities. He also expressed NABARD's willingness to support projects related to shrimp farming and other income-generating activities and invited stakeholders to submit proposals focused on climate-resilient agriculture, climate adaptation and sustainable livelihood development.

ICAR-CIARI Director Dr. Jai Sunder emphasized that collective production, processing and marketing can generate significantly greater returns than individual efforts. He encouraged farmers to form producer groups focused on spice cultivation and value-added enterprises to improve productivity and profitability.

Highlighting the unique agricultural resources of the islands, Dr. Sunder pointed to products such as virgin coconut oil, cinnamon, banana, jackfruit and tuna-based products as having strong commercial potential beyond local markets. He stressed that effective branding, packaging and marketing would be essential to unlock higher value for these products.