

State Level Seminar Concludes with a Commitment Towards Development of Agripreneurship in the Islands

Denis Giles – 08 March 2025



Sri Vijaya Puram, March 7: A three days' State Level Seminar on 'Entrepreneurship Opportunities for Island Youth and Women in Spices, Arecanut and Medicinal Plants Sector' was successfully conducted during March 5 to 7, 2025 by ICAR- Central Island Agricultural Research Institute, Sri Vijaya Puram in collaboration with Directorate of Arecanut and Spices Development, Kozhikode, Kerala and ICAR-All India Coordinated Research Project on Plantation Crops, Kasaragod, Kerala. The programme was inaugurated by Ms. Pallavi Sarkar, IAS, Secretary (Agri.), Andaman and Nicobar Administration in the presence Dr. Eaknath B. Chakurkar, Director, ICAR-CIARI. During the inaugural programme, the Chief Guest appreciated ICAR-CIARI for taking initiative of conducting entrepreneurship oriented programmes to facilitate development of agri based businesses in the islands.

She emphasized that the islands have agricultural commodities spread across different islands in scattered way and hence, aggregation of the produce would be the key to increase the quantum of production and efficient marketing. She also urged the entrepreneurs to focus on appropriate packaging, branding and advertisement to make the ventures competitive in the national and international markets.

Dr. Chakurkar informed the gathering that CIARI has been providing technical guidance to the local stakeholders so that agripreneurship could be developed in these islands. He also highlighted the need of coordination of various sectors to provide the congenial environment for start-ups to grow. The dignitaries felicitated Mrs. R. Karthika Devi, a young entrepreneur who took the license of Dweep CinnRub technology from ICAR-CIARI, which was in line with development of entrepreneurship in the islands. The programme consisted of technical sessions in which dignitaries from reputed institutes in mainland India as well as CIARI delivered the presentations.

Dr. T.E. Sheeja, ICAR-Indian Institute of Spices Research, Kozhikode, Kerala delivered the presentation on Entrepreneurship Opportunities in Spices Sector; while Dr. R.S. Matche, CSIR-Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore, Karnataka spoke in details about Packaging Techniques for Tropical Spices. The topic on Opportunities for Value Addition of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants of Warm and Humid Tropics was covered in depth by Dr. Smitha G.R., ICAR-Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, Bengaluru, while Dr. Nagaraja N.R., ICAR-Central Plantation Crops Research Institute, RS, Vittal, Karnataka showed the ways for Arecanut Waste Utilization for Entrepreneurship Development. Considering the local conditions and practical issues, Dr. Pooja Bohra, Co-organizing Secretary of the programme elaborated on the Agripreneurship Opportunities from the island perspective. Open sessions were also conducted in which the existing entrepreneurs sought clarifications about various issues which they are facing in their businesses, while the other participants showed curiosity in knowing novel ways for starting their ventures.

Dr. Ajit Arun Waman, Organizing secretary of the event dealt the practical sessions on scientific harvesting, postharvest processing and value addition of spices, use of machineries for drudgery reduction and quality improvement apart from the field visits showcasing opportunities of spices and plantation crops based agroecotourism in the islands. Dr. Pooja also coordinated the field visits showcasing the nursery entrepreneurship and medicinal plants garden of the institute. The event showed participation from all the walks of life and 71 participants covering South Andaman, North Andaman, Middle Andaman, Car Nicobar, Shaheed Dweep, Baratang and Little Andaman islands participated in the event. Representatives from Department of Agriculture and Department of Rural Development also showed keen interest in learning the new business avenues for wider dissemination of the same among general masses. Participants were provided with scientifically processed island spices and planting material of various spices and medicinal fruits as souvenirs.