

Chief Secretary Inaugurates 'Dweep Agro-Eco-Walk', an Agro-Eco-Tourism Initiative of ICAR-CIARI

Denis Giles – 19 March 2025



Sri Vijaya Puram, March 18: The Dweep Agro-Eco Walk, an agro-eco-tourism initiative of ICAR-CIARI and its KVKs was inaugurated by the Chief Secretary, A&N Administration, Dr. Chandra Bhushan Kumar, IAS, today in the presence of Ms. Pallavi Sarkar, IAS, Secretary (Agriculture & Animal Husbandry) at Horticulture Farm in Sippighat and also the two-day Kisan Mela-cum-Exhibition at Garacharma Farm being held at the Mela ground within Garacharma Research Complex. The Chief Secretary and Secretary (Agriculture) also planted coffee saplings at the Horticulture Farm in Sippighat.

In his inaugural address, the Chief Secretary lauded the contributions of ICAR-CIARI in advancing technology development and transfer in the fields of Agriculture, Horticulture, Livestock and Fisheries. He emphasized that agriculture is the cornerstone of India's economy, referencing an old adage that prioritizes farming over employment. He also pointed out the challenges urban residents face when establishing small kitchen gardens, noting the significant effort required in managing diseases and climate conditions. This raises concerns about the difficulties faced by large-scale farmers, who need technical support from research institutions to avoid substantial losses that could impact both the farmers and the broader community, he said.

The Chief Secretary also lauded the agro-eco walk initiative at the Sippighat Farm and emphasized that more focus should be given to branding the quality of organic produce for better market acceptance and tourism potential. He further added that with good coordination between ICAR-CIARI and the development Department, more technological benefits would reach the Island farmers, contributing to the Island's economic growth.

The Chief Secretary observed that many farmers in the Islands tend to focus solely on cultivating arecanut, which is less susceptible to climate variations and requires minimal effort, as opposed to more labor-intensive crops like paddy, spices, and vegetables. He also underscored the critical role of food processing, branding, and packaging in increasing farmers' profits in the Islands. He urged ICAR-CIARI and local Administration to collaborate for the benefit of Island farmers and advocated for more events like Kisan Mela to enhance farmers' knowledge and skills.

The Chief Secretary visited all the stalls and interacted with scientists, expressing his satisfaction with the technologies showcased that have the potential to enhance farmers' incomes.

A total of 22 stalls, including technological displays from ICAR-CIARI, the Department of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, NABARD, SBI, SHGs, PPVFRA, and private firms, were set up. Approximately 250 farmers, farm women, and school children participated in the program.

In his welcome address, Dr. E. B. Chakurkar, Director of ICAR-CIARI, provided an overview of the Institute's mission, highlighting its relevance to farmers, youth, and other stakeholders in A&N Islands and Lakshadweep. During the event, six farmers were felicitated for their successful implementation of agricultural technologies and entrepreneurial achievements, representing three districts.

Dr. Jai Sunder, Head of the Animal Science Division, delivered the vote of thanks while Dr. Pooja Bohra, Senior Scientist, coordinated the event.