

## **ICAR-CIARI conducts Awareness, Demonstration and Distribution Programmes for the Nicobarese Tribal Farmers of Little Andaman Island**

Sri Vijaya Puram, Dec 08: ICAR-Central Island Agricultural Research Institute, Sri Vijaya Puram conducted awareness cum demonstration programmes on 'DweepCinnRub' and 'Weed mat as a non-chemical means for weed control' on December 3, 2025 for benefitting the tribal farmers at Harminder Bay, Little Andaman under Schedule Tribes Component.

ICAR-CIARI has been developing need based improved technologies for the benefit of the island stakeholders. Recently, to assist the cinnamon growers, the Institute has developed DweepCinnRub, which is a bark rubbing tool aimed at easing the harvesting process. Dr. Ajit Arun Waman, Senior Scientist (SPMA), ICAR-CIARI demonstrated the use of this tool along with its advantages over the traditional method of rubbing. He informed the gathering about the possibility of starting Cinnamon Harvesting as an enterprise among the tribal farmers. Through this approach, the skilled tribal farmers could be provided on call cinnamon harvesting services to the nearby farmers in the Island, who do not possess the necessary harvesting skill.

Weed is a perennial problem experienced by the island farmers and indiscriminate use of herbicides is not appropriate in the fragile ecosystem. Hence, ICAR-CIARI has studied the use of weed mats as a non-chemical means of weed control in the orchards. The mats under experimental farms suggested utility not only in weed control but also in reduction of cost incurred in the manual weeding, said Dr. Ajit. This technology was also demonstrated to the Nicobarese tribal farmers, who found it very useful. Mr. Festus N., Secretary (Tribal Council) appreciated these initiatives and suggested willingness of their community in developing systematic plantations in their farms with the help and guidance from the ICAR-CIARI.

In order to benefit these farmers, DweepCinnRub (130 nos.), weed mat (1,680 m<sup>2</sup>), vermicompost (1,300 kg) and barbed wire (500 kg) were distributed to the individual beneficiaries as well as for community farming.

A total of 66 farmers and farm women attended the programme in the community hall of the Harminder Bay village. The programme was coordinated by Dr. Ajit Arun Waman and Dr. Pooja Bohra under the overall supervision of Dr. Raj Narayan, Head (HCI) and Dr. Jai Sunder, Director (A) of ICAR-CIARI.