

CIARI-DASD imparts training on spices to island farmers at SURABI-DISHA, Caddlegunj



SRI VIJAYA PURAM, DEC 26/—/ CAR-Central Island Agricultural Research Institute, Sri Vijaya Puram conducted training programme on 'Harvest and Post-harvest Management of Major Spice Crops of Andaman & Nicobar Islands' at the community hall of SURABI-DISHA at Caddlegunj on December 22, 2025.

Spices are the high value commodities which have good scope for cultivation under the agroclimatic conditions of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. However, still many farmers are not aware about the scientific techniques involved in the harvesting and postharvest handling of these spices. As a result, quality of final produce reaching the markets is not always superior. Further, the prevalence of high relative humidity and extended rains also contribute to the deterioration of the produce quality during storage. In order to educate the stakeholders about standard practices, a training programme was organized for the benefit of the

farming community, mainly the women led self-help groups.

During the programme, Dr. Ajit Arun Waman, Senior Scientist, ICAR-CIARI, addressed the gathering about the need for conducting the programme. In order to give exposure about the scientific techniques, he made a series of practical demonstrations on harvesting and postharvest handling of major spices grown in the islands. In black pepper, maturity indices to judge the stage of harvesting, method of harvesting, technique of blanching and packaging were demonstrated to the participants.

In case of cinnamon, importance of selection of correct size of stems, use of test cut, method of harvesting and use of Dweep CinnRub (cinnamon bark rubbing tool developed by the researchers of ICAR-CIARI) were practically demonstrated. These practices not only help in improving the quality of the produce but also contribute to the cost-reduction by reducing the manpower involved in

harvesting process.

Considering the ongoing harvesting season of clove in the islands, the stage of maturity of buds for harvesting, correct method of plucking and drying were shown to them. Also, nutmeg and mace processing were shown to provide them with first-hand information about this lesser grown but high potential spices. Considering the suitability of islands for cultivation of Malabar tamarind, the importance of selecting improved varieties viz. Dweep Agrim and Dweep Vishal, adoption of grafting and mechanical processing were also discussed.

Considering the changing climatic conditions, importance and relevance of foliage-based spice- Tejpat, was discussed during the programme. Participants were also educated about Dweep Tej-1, the first ever improved variety of tejpat developed in the country. Woody Pepper- the islands' own spice was also covered in detail. Dr. Waman also informed about recent research works being done at ICAR-

CIARI and urged the stakeholders to come forward for large scale cultivation of these spices.

To give impetus for this, planting material of various spices including cinnamon, black pepper, Malabar tamarind, woody pepper and lemongrass were distributed to the participants. The training was conducted under the CSS-NHM Project on Spices funded by Directorate of Arecanut and Spices Development, Kozhikode, Kerala in collaboration with Gender Research in Agriculture Cell of the ICAR-CIARI.

The programme was organized by Course Directors- Dr. Ajit Arun Waman and Dr. Pooja Bohra under the guidance of Dr. Jai Sunder, Director, ICAR-CIARI which benefitted 75 stakeholders mainly the members of the women SHGs of South Andaman Island. The programme was coordinated by Fr. Michael Raj, DISHA, Caddlegunj, who expressed gratitude for organising this practical oriented programme for the rural stakeholders.