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ASA and ICAR-CIARI Organize Workshop on Agro-Ecotourism

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Port Blair, May 22: Two days workshop on “Sustainable Agro-Ecotourism for A&N Islands: Opportunities and Challenges” to commemorate International Bio-diversity day was organized by Andaman Science Association (ASA), ICAR-Central Island Agricultural Research Institute in collaboration with Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Botanical Survey of India (BSI), Anthropological Survey of India (ASI), National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Fishery Survey of India (FSI), Department of Ocean Studies and Marine Biology Department of tourism A&N Administration with financial support by NABARD, Port Blair. The workshop was inaugurated today on 22nd May, 2023 at ICAR-CIARI, Port Blair.

Speaking on the occasion the Chief Guest, Dr. Jatinder Sohal, DANICS, Director (IP & T), A&N Administration, welcomed the initiatives of the Institute in conducting such important workshop for the stakeholders. He informed that A&N Islands has evolved as the best destination not only at National but also International level. He exhorted that tourist should be made a responsible tourist; beside he advocated introducing the concept of countryside visit which is gaining more popularity elsewhere due to its exposure to sustainable practices that is local culture, food and behaviour.

The Guest of Honours, Smti. Archana Singh, General Manager, NABARD, Port Blair, informed that ANI has become the choicest place of visit and we have to capitalize on it. The sensitivity of the local inhabitants towards cleanliness is USP of ANI. She advocated that NABARD can facilitate launching of “My District My Project” to promote Agro eco-tourism in a team mode. She referred to the introduction of showcasing the local culture of ANI as that of Rajasthan local culture Chokhi Dahni.

Dr. P. Abdul Salam, Asst. Professor, JNRM College, Port Blair informed that stakeholder should have wider and comprehensive understanding, so that agro eco-tourism can be promoted both nationally and internationally thus creating job opportunities and adding to National exchequer. Mr. Ankit Kumar Tripathi, Member Secretary, Tourist Vehicle Owners Association, Port Blair stressed to highlight resources of the Island (Flora & Fauna) followed by noting by A & N Administration and promoting the same by tour operators so that the young mind can opt for entrepreneurship in agro eco-tourism.

The President, ASA and Director of ICAR-CIARI, Dr. E.B. Chakurkar while expressing his happiness on promoting agro eco-tourism in these island which is his dream project informed that conservation has to be the top priority along with local food, flora, fauna, climate change, population pressure etc. He defined that agro eco-tourism is a symbiotic association of farming sector, tourism industry and farm business for sustainable production with three key concepts i.e. something to see, something to do and something to buy and sell. Paid customized training program can be organized by CIARI in participatory mode for the benefit of the people. Later, he delivered a special talk to mark the International Bio-diversity day on the topic “Role of Agro eco-tourism in conserving the Island ecosystem.

During the technical session, Dr. S. Senthil Kumar, IFS, Additional PCCF, A & N Administration delivered a talk on “Role of Agro-forestry in Agro-eco-tourism. Dr. Naveen Namboothri, Programme & Academy Convenor, Dakshin Foundation, Island Based Ecotourism spoken on “Fisheries and Aqua-tourism (Ornamental fish farming, recreation fishing). Dr. Grinson George, Pr. Scientist. ICAR-CMFRI, Cochin presented “Coastal ecosystem in agro-ecotourism and its conservation”.

At the outset, Dr. Jai Sunder, Vice President, ASA welcomed the august gatherings and Dr. Pooja Bohra, scientist proposed vote of thanks. Dr. T Sujatha, Organising Secretary coordinated the inaugural program.

The workshop was attended by the participants from Development Department, students of BBA, JNRM, Progressive farmers, Entrepreneurs, Scientist, Tourism vehicle owner association and other stakeholders.