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Nicobarese Farmers Trained in Diversifying Plantation Based Farming with Spices

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In an effort to enhance agricultural practices and boost farm incomes among Nicobarese farmers, a three-day training program titled "Appropriate Cultivation and Post-harvest Practices for Producing Quality Spices in the Plantation Crops Based Cropping Systems" was conducted from February 19 to 21, 2024, at ICAR-CIARI in Port Blair. This initiative, organized under the CSS-MIDH (NHM) Project on Spices, aimed to provide theoretical and practical knowledge on spice cultivation and management.

The inaugural session saw Dr. E.B. Chakurkar, Director of ICAR-CIARI, engaging with the farmers, emphasizing the significance of active participation in the program. Dr. Chakurkar addressed various challenges related to production and marketing faced by farmers from the southern group of islands. Course Director Dr. Ajit Arun Waman, along with Co-course directors Dr. Santosh Kumar, Dr. Pooja Bohra, and Dr. P.K. Singh, also shared insights during the opening ceremony.

In the technical sessions, Dr. Sharath S. Yeligar discussed the perception of Nicobari farmers towards Coconut Climbing Devices, while Dr. Ajit Waman delivered a talk on improved production and post-harvest technologies for spices in Island ecosystems. Practical demonstrations on plant propagation techniques and hands-on training on harvesting and processing of cinnamon, black pepper, and turmeric were conducted by experts like Dr. Pooja Bohra, Dr. Abhilash, and Mr. Talaviya Harshankumar from ICAR-CIARI.

The training program also included exposure visits to various research farms, such as the Horticulture Research Farm in Sippighat and Bloomsdale Farm in Chouldari, offering farmers insights into research activities and best practices. Dr. Senthil Kumar, Principal Scientist from ICAR-IIHR, Bengaluru, shared insights on vegetable cultivation prospects and experiences of tribal farmers during an interactive session.

During the valedictory session, Dr. Jai Sunder, Director (In-charge), commended the efforts of the organizing team and participants, highlighting the potential for increased farm incomes through sustainable inclusion of spices and horticultural crops. The training was attended by twenty Nicobarese farmers from Car Nicobar Island, along with the Chief Captain and Captains from various villages.