

## ICAR-CIARI Imparts Hands on Training on Nursery Techniques to the staff of Department of Agriculture

Denis Giles – 10 February 2025



**Sri Vijaya Puram, Feb 10:** Spices are the major commercial crops of the islands; however, their cultivation in the islands faces several challenges. One of these challenges is non-availability of quality planting material. A number of superior varieties of various spice crops have been developed/ identified at ICAR-CIARI through years of research for improving the profitability of the island agriculture. Also, several efficient nursery techniques for these crops have also been standardized at this Institute. In order to disseminate these recent techniques and educate the grassroot as well as managerial level staff working at various farms of the Department of Agriculture, two consecutive capacity building programmes entitled "Hands-on training on nursery techniques of Horticultural Crops (Spices)" of three days each were organized by ICAR-CIARI in collaboration with CSS-MIDH(NHM) Project on Spices during February 04 to 08, 2025.

The technical sessions were handled by Dr. Ajit Arun Waman, Senior Scientist cum Course Director of the programmes and Dr. Pooja Bohra, Senior Scientist cum Course Co-Director. A total of 28 participants representing 18 farms of the department spread across all three districts of the islands attended the programme. Technical session started with an orientation to propagation techniques and basic requirements to establish and run a nursery unit. Trainees were then taken to the Horticultural Plants Propagation Unit of the Institute, wherein they were given exposure about various types of polyhouses, shade net houses and poly tunnels required for planting material production. Creation of suitable microclimate inside these structures through manual operated and sensor-operated micro-sprinklers and foggers were demonstrated to them. Use of drip irrigation, sprinklers, weed mats etc. for the mother blocks and nursery units was also demonstrated.

Participants underwent hands on training on multiplication of spices viz. black pepper, nutmeg, cinnamon, tejpat, woody pepper and sapota using suitable vegetative propagation techniques including stem cutting (herbaceous, softwood, semi-hardwood and hardwood), layering (air layering and serpentine layering) and grafting (approach grafting and softwood grafting). Practical sessions on plant growth regulators preparation for cutting/layering, preparation of potting mixtures, use of biocontrol agents, biopesticides, Bt formulation, Bordeaux mixture and paste were also organized during the programme. An exclusive session was dedicated for demonstration of Dweep Goottee- 365 technique (a novel propagation technique developed by ICAR-CIARI) to the participants.

Dr. E.B. Chakurkar, Director, ICAR-CIARI was the Chief Guest during the valedictory programme of both the batches. He urged the participants to utilize the knowledge gained in the training programmes for achieving self-sufficiency in spices planting material production in the islands. He further opined that such inter-organizational collaborations would pave way for the better prospects of island agriculture and island farmers. Participants of both the batches expressed that the programme was aptly designed and empowered them with required skills in taking up their assignments with higher efficiency. The practical sessions were assisted by Shri Sandip Kujur, Shri Dilip Kumar, Shri Pradeep Kerketta, Ms. Karthika Devi and Ms. Kausalya of the institute.