

Awareness training programme on commercial cultivation of medicinal plants for the farmers of north Bengal

Institute of Forest Productivity (IFP), Ranchi, organized one day awareness training programme entitled “*Commercial cultivation of medicinal plants with special reference to Ashawgandha (Withania somnifera)*” at Seed Farm, Directorate of Agriculture, Salbari, District Darjeeling (West Bengal) on 16th November, 2018. The programme was organized by the Institute of Forest Productivity, Ranchi through the Environmental Research Station (ERS), Sukna (an experimental station of IFP). In all, 28 farmers of Darjeeling and adjoining villages participated in the programme. Participation of 25 women participants underlines the strength of women empowerment in this region. Sh. Sanjeev Kumar, Scientist-D & Course Director of the training programme delivered a training lecture on the importance of medicinal plants and important steps to be undertaken for successful commercial cultivation of medicinal plants. The farmers were informed about the cultivation of identified high yielding variety by the institute for this region among five improved varieties of *Withania somnifera* through appropriate field trials and benefits arising out of adopting the identified variety. The cost – benefit analysis and uses of *Withania somnifera* were also discussed in the training programme. Dr. Ananaya Mandal, Assistant Director, Directorate of Agriculture, West Bengal, informed the farmers about importance, uses and cultivation practices of important medicinal plants of the related areas. Besides, four extension videos in local vernacular language (Bengali) were shown to the house depicting cultivation practices, uses and success stories in the field of medicinal plants.

Participants appreciated the training programme and expressed that more such training programmes are required in future also. Shri Sanjeev Kumar formally presented the vote of thanks at the end of the training programme. He specially thanked Dr. Nitin Kulkarni, Director, IFP, Ranchi and Dr. Yogeshwar Mishra, Group Coordinator Research, for guiding and motivating whole organizing team for their active and dedicated efforts for making this training programme a success. Last but not the least, the cooperation extended by Shri Pramod Chand Lakra, the Officer-in-Charge and all the staff of ERS, Sukna is highly applauded in making the training programme a great success.



Fig.1 & 2. Participants attending the Training Programme



Fig. 3 & 4. Dr Ananaya Mandal giving presentation on Medicinal Plants



Fig. 5 & 6. Sh. Sanjeev Kumar sharing the research experience done by the institute on Ashwagandha



Fig. 7 & 8. Showing the video film to the farmers on medicinal plants