

PIB Maharashtra-Goa Region Organises Press Tour for Journalists from Maharashtra's Aspirational Districts to ICAR-IARI

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The Press Information Bureau (PIB), Maharashtra-Goa Region, organised a Press Tour to New Delhi for journalists from Maharashtra's Aspirational Districts, with three journalists each from Gadchiroli, Washim, Dharashiv and Nandurbar. As part of the tour, the journalists visited the ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR-IARI), New Delhi, to gain insights into agricultural research, technological advancements and innovations aimed at addressing emerging challenges in Indian agriculture.

The visit provided the journalists an opportunity to interact with scientists and understand how agricultural research and technological interventions are being translated into solutions for farmers.

Dr. R.N. Padaria, Joint Director (Extension), ICAR-IARI, welcomed the delegates and provided an overview of India's agricultural journey since Independence as well as the genesis and growth of Indian Agricultural Research Institute. Recalling the food shortages faced by the country in the early years, he highlighted the role of agricultural research, scientific interventions and farmer-centric extension in transforming India from a food-deficit nation into a food-surplus country.

Dr. Padaria also highlighted the contributions of ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute and Dr. M.S. Swaminathan in ushering in the Green Revolution in India. Emphasising the need for region-specific approaches, he highlighted that ICAR institutes work with farmers, State departments and other stakeholders to develop and disseminate technologies suited to local needs. He said that differences in climate, water availability, soil conditions and cropping patterns make location-specific solutions essential. In this context, he highlighted the important role of journalists from Maharashtra's Aspirational Districts in taking information on relevant agricultural technologies and innovations to farmers and rural communities in their respective regions.

Ms. Jaydevi Pujari Swami, Deputy Director (Media & Communication), Press Information Bureau (PIB), Mumbai, appreciated the efforts of ICAR-IARI and highlighted the Institute's contribution to advancing the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat through agricultural research, innovation and technology.

The delegation was also shown a video film on ICAR-IARI, highlighting the Institute's journey, major research achievements and contribution to the development of Indian agriculture.

A key discussion during the interaction centred on declining soybean productivity in parts of Maharashtra, particularly due to inadequate and erratic water availability during critical stages of crop growth. Scientists advised farmers in moisture-stressed areas to consider short duration soybean varieties, along with complementary practices such as life-saving irrigation, mulching and improved land configuration. The journalists were also encouraged to disseminate information on suitable varieties and technologies available through agricultural research institutions, Krishi Vigyan Kendras and State agriculture departments.

The delegation also raised queries regarding genetically modified (GM) food crop research in India. Scientists explained the regulatory framework governing such research and the scientific rationale for undertaking studies aimed at improving crop resilience and productivity with deployment of genome editing technologies.

Following the interaction, the delegation visited the Centre for Protected Cultivation, Integrated Farming System and Natural Farming facilities at ICAR-IARI, New Delhi. The delegates were apprised of greenhouse-based hydroponic farming for water-efficient, year-round cultivation; an integrated farming model combining crops with dairy, poultry, fisheries, fruit production, agroforestry, beekeeping and biogas to generate year-round income and employment from a one-hectare farm unit; and natural farming practices focused on improving soil health, reducing dependence on external inputs and promoting sustainable agricultural production.

The press tour highlighted the importance of strengthening communication between scientific institutions, the media and farming communities, particularly in Aspirational Districts, to facilitate wider dissemination of location-specific agricultural technologies and innovations for improved productivity, sustainability and farmers' livelihoods.





(Source: ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi)

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