

Exposure Visit of JFMC members to NTFP Processing Centre at Taipu Beat, Siliguri

► **Purpose:** The purpose of the exposure visit is to motivate the JFMC/ EDC members towards formation of small enterprise.

► **Duration & Place:** 3 days at NTFP Processing Centre, Taipu Beat

► **Number & Composition of Participants:** 18 (APCCF / DFO, JFMC / EDC / SHG members)

► **Description:**

An Introductory programme was organized at the NTFP Processing Centre, within the Taipu Beat campus under Kurseong Forest Division. Sri S. Das, Sr. research Scientist of Regional Centre, NAEB welcomed all the participants including Forest officials. Sri A. K. Saha, IFS, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, North Bengal, addressed the participants and briefly described about the necessity of development of SMFE for forest conservation. He also highlighted the importance of this exposure visit to the Processing Centre followed by visit to the field where raw materials for the processing Centre are being produced. He wished that the programme will be meaningful and the participants will learn and enjoy. Sri Bhagwan Das, WBFS, DFO, NTFP, Siliguri, mentioned about the processing unit and that the JFMC members supply raw materials i.e. medicinal plants at the fixed price. The Range Officer in charge of the Centre and his Staff demonstrated various functions and aspects of the Centre. The participants visited the processing unit starting from drying, grinding, mixing, packing etc. There is also a quality testing lab for quality control of the products.

On the second day, the participants visited Banarhat area and met Mr. D. L. Sarkar a local resident who deals with growing, collection and marketing of various medicinal plants available in the area. He encourages poor villagers in growing, medicinal plants by supplying seed, seedlings, cuttings etc and buy back the product at market price. Thus Sri Sarkar provided income opportunity to a good number of poor villagers of the area with practically no capital. Sri D. L. Sarkar entertained the participants in his residence and showed them seeds and other cultivars of various medicinal plants stored/preserved in his house. The participants were much impressed with the endeavour of Sri D. L. Sarker in the area of preservation and extension of med plants.

Sri A. Mukherjee, WBFS, D.M., WB Forest Development Corporation, Siliguri, and Sri B. K. Biswas, WBFS, ADFO, Jalpaiguri Forest Division was very kind to guide the participants throughout the field visit.

On the 3rd day, the participants visited the medicinal plants garden in the North Bengal University, designed and developed under the guidance of Prof. A. P. Das of North Bengal University. He, personally guided the participants in his Medicinal Plant Garden within the University campus and explained about the medicinal plants in the garden along with their taxonomy and medicinal properties.

► **Outcomes**

- ✓ Highlighted the necessity of establishing low cost, eco friendly Processing Unit to provide income opportunity to rural poor villagers (grower/collector) and urban technicians.
- ✓ The programme brought out the richness of our Med. Plant resource base in North Bengal area.
- ✓ Generated Awareness about the potential of NTFPs, particularly Medicinal Plants in the area of Income generation and Biodiversity conservation.
- ✓ Motivated a good number of participants towards developing NTFP (Medicinal Plant) based enterprise.
- ✓ Meeting with Sri D. L. Sarkar and visiting his areas of operation may be considered as the most meaningful outcome of the exercise.

► **Recommendations**

- ✓ Such Exposure visit programmes have been proved to be very effective and should be undertaken as frequently as permissible.

Photographs of Exposure Visit at Taipu

