

**National Conference on
Startups and M SMEs in Food Processing
August 8, 2018, College of Fisheries, Lembucherra, Tripura**

One day National Conference on “**Startups and MSMEs in Food Processing**” was jointly organized by the College of Fisheries, CAU (I), Lembucherra, Tripura and ASSOCHAM in collaboration with the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India. Prof. Premjit Singh, Hon’ble Vice Chancellor, CAU (Imphal) graced this programme as ‘Chief Guest’ and Dr. D. P. Sarkar, Director of Agriculture, Govt. of Tripura was ‘Guest of Honour’. The Organizing Secretary of the programme was Prof. R. K. Majumdar, HoD, Dept. of Fish Processing Technology and Engg., College of Fisheries, Lembucherra, Tripura. The conference was attended by 54 nos. of both male and female entrepreneurs in the age group of 25 to 40 and about 150 students of the college.

In the Inaugural session, the opening remarks by Shri S. N. Nundy, Co-Chairman, ASSOCHAM, Eastern Region Committee was on the importance of *e-commerce* in capacity building for food processing entrepreneurs in Tripura using local resources like pineapple, rubber, jackfruit etc. He also expressed the potential of creating pineapple hub in Tripura and emphasized the role of food processing sector for the development of the state.

Dr. Pramod Kumar Pandey, Dean, College of Fisheries, CAU (I), in his welcome address highlighted that, Government of India is promoting the food processing sector in the region to utilize its vast potential of raw horticultural produce. He expressed his views that doubling of farmers’ income cannot be witnessed only through increasing the farm output, but need to focus upon improvised post harvest and food processing sectors. In this regard, the Startups and MSMEs can play a pivotal role. He mentioned about the various government programmes and schemes which need to be utilized by the farming community.

Dr. Om. S. Tyagi, Assistant Secretary General, ASSOCHAM, also laid emphasize on the increasing demand for processed and packaged food due to changing life style and enhancement in horticultural production in Tripura. He invited the youths to come out from their comfort zone and initiate food processing Startups for better employment prospect.

Mr. Rajesh Datta, Assistant General Manger, NABARD, focused the importance of food processing using the raw materials and forest resources of Tripura. He informed the house regarding the financial support rendered by NABARD for creating and expansion of food processing infrastructures in Tripura. He also expressed the importance of Food Park in Tripura.

Dr. D.P. Sarkar, Director of Agriculture, Govt. of Tripura briefed the present status and prospect of agriculture in Tripura and expressed the importance of the conference in inviting the youth to grasp the opportunity for Startups in food processing and value addition to cater the market demand.

Shri. Tinku Roy, Chairman, Tripura Industrial Development Corporation Ltd. highlighted the previous failures in industrial development in Tripura and informed the house regarding the proper planning and vision taken by the present Govt. to establish the resource and demand

based industry in Tripura. He also assured the benefit of single window system in industry which will help the entrepreneurs to take up the industrial development in the state.

In the address of the Chief Guest, Prof. M. Premjit Singh, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, CAU (I) briefed the house about the activities and glory of CAU (I) in different aspects like academic, research and extension in the NE region. He expressed his concerns regarding the farmers' income and profit in the region. He said that for doubling the farmers' income by 2022 there should have emphasize on integrated farming and post harvest technologies. He also explained as to why the growth of food processing sector in the region is not growing satisfactorily, although there are number of horti products which are unique and have potential to be processed for export. He stressed on the development of communication facilities and setting up of mini processing plants in the raw material production centres to protect the farmers from the grip of middlemen. Lastly, He presented the different processed food products developed by CAU (I) and there scope for commercialization especially for the Startups.

Prof. R. K. Majumdar, HoD, Dept. of Fish Processing Technology and Engg., College of Fisheries, Lembucherra, Tripura concluded the inaugural session briefing the salient points of each speakers. He also extended a warm 'Vote of Thanks' to all the dignitaries on and off the dais.

The Plenary Session was chaired by Shri S. Prabhu, Director, Skill Development, Directorate of Skill Development, Govt. of Tripura, and the eminent speakers were Shri R. K. Giri, Director, MSME-Development Institute, Govt. of India; Shri Binod Vyas, Deputy General Manager, North East, NSIC; Shri K. Venugopal, DGM, NABARD; Dr. B. Das, Principal Scientist (Horti), ICAR Tripura; Shri Avinash Sikaria, Managing Director, Sikaria Mega Food Park Pvt. Ltd. Kolkata; Dr. Anil Dutt Upadhyay, Asst. Prof. (SS), College of Fisheries, (CAU) and Dr. Abhijit Chatterjee, Assistant Professor, NIT, Agartala. The entrepreneur participants and students were found to be highly impressed by the lectures delivered on different aspects like scope of Startups, scope of financial support, facilities in Food Park, processing and preservation of horti and fish products etc. About 25 questions were asked from the participants. Lastly, the Chairman of the Plenary Session briefed all the deliberations by the speakers and also urged the participants to contact him for any kind of help for Startups as well as for skill development.

