

## Kandiyur shows the way

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### **IFGTB initiative aims at transferring results of research to people in the village**

An initiative by the Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB), a research institute under the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) has turned a number of villagers in Kandiyur into enterprising farmers as part of its initiative to transfer the findings of the laboratory research to the land. Director of the Institute N. Krishnakumar told *The Hindu* that over the past 25 years the institute carried out various research in the field of forest biotechnology, genetics and tree improvement, bio-fertilizers, forest protection including pest and disease control, silviculture, seed collection, storage and utilization for developing various technologies to increase productivity and enhance green cover. Giving the details about the technology transfer to the land from the laboratory, Dr. Krishnakumar said that the IFGTB has adopted the village 'Kandiyur' as a 'demo village'. The hamlet is situated in Mettupalayam range of Coimbatore forest division and the aim is to demonstrate the technologies and products developed by the Institute and popularize them among the people. At present, the village and surroundings in Kandiyur have about 2,000 acres under tree cultivation, points out U. Suresh, a farmer who has been doing well in the project.

### **Tribal families**

The project is successful in the demo village which has a population of 3,518 comprising 554 families including 63 'Irula' tribal families living in the settlement called 'Irularpathi'. This helped them well because the main occupation of the tribal people was agricultural labour.

All the technologies and products developed are being deployed at the village to increase productivity of the land as well as improve farm income through raising plantations with good quality seedlings and application of bio-fertilizers. The technologies demonstrated have been adopted by farmers for increasing the tree-based income.

### **Agroforestry models**

Establishment of successful Agroforestry models and model plantations using improved planting stock and the clones developed by IFGTB in several farm fields has enabled additional higher income from trees. The species used in agroforestry and plantations include Teak, Casuarina, Eucalyptus, *Melia dubia*, *Gmelina arborea*, *Ailanthus*, *Mahogany* etc. Ground nut, cowpea, brinjal and tomato are used as agricultural crop in these Agroforestry models.

Under the Van Vighyan Kendra (VVK) programme, separate budget has been allotted every year for demo village to carry out various activities including production of quality seedlings from the nursery, establishment of various

agroforestry models including bund planting. The nursery activity has ensured work for the villagers and is closely reviewed by the Village Panchayat Head Krishnasamy, Suresh added. In the demo village, on-farm field training on production of bio-fertilizers and nursery establishment and management has been conducted and the technologies were transferred. Borewell has been established in the tribal settlement for establishment of agroforestry models with vegetables (Moringa, Brinjal, Tomato, Chillies, etc.) and the trees (Teak, Mahogany, Kumil, etc.) on the bunds.

Also, road side plantations were carried out with Neem, Pungam and Naaval species. Awareness programmes and field visits had been arranged for the village people to IFGTB laboratories, nurseries and modern facilities.

For better livelihood opportunities and economic improvement of the tribal people, IFGTB has involved various activities including establishment of nursery facilities in the settlement, including permanent shed and borewell for production of quality planting materials of various tree species which are prioritized for the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Conservation and Greening Programme. The Forest Department is going to plant more than 10 crore seedlings in the farm fields in the next five years.

Further, with funding support from the State Planning Commission, a programme on 'Feasibility study on tree nursery in the demo village' is to be implemented and a tree nursery will be established in the village. Through this programme, quality seedlings of commercially important species will be produced by the tribal people and the seedlings will be given to village, public and the Forest Department on cost basis. The establishment of 'tree nurseries' in Kandiyur village will act as a definite income generation activity for the tribal people and it will improve the livelihood opportunities and socio-economic status with sustainable income over a period of time, Dr. Krishnakumar said.

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