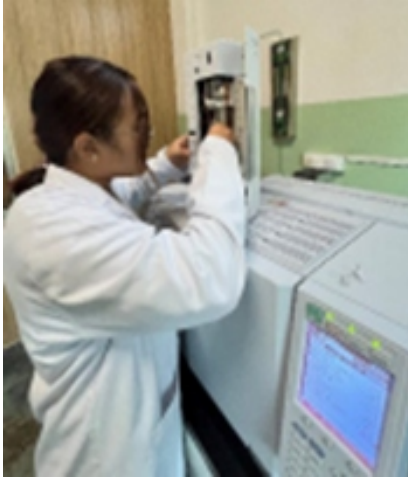




Lemongrass and All Things Essential: The Story of the Churachandpur Aromatic Cluster



A Model for Innovation and Sustainable Agriculture

When we think of the Northeast, it's not just about breathtaking landscapes—there's so much more. In Churachandpur, Manipur, a gentle wave of lemongrass fragrance is marking the rise of a quiet revolution in sustainable farming.

Situated in the Churachandpur district, renowned for its wealth of aromatic plants and medicinal herbs—the Churachandpur Aromatic Cluster is part of the SFURTI initiative led by Indian Micro Enterprises Development Foundation (IMEDF), the special purpose vehicle of Development Alternatives Group. It is a powerful example of how traditional farming is being transformed into a modern, sustainable industry.

The cluster is focused on cultivating lemongrass for its essential oil, widely valued for its fragrance and healing properties. The aim is to create long-term livelihood opportunities for farmers while improving community well-being through the introduction of innovation in cultivation and processing.

From Tradition to Transformation

Redefining Agriculture Through Innovation

At the core of the Churachandpur Aromatic Cluster is a bold vision, to modernise age-old agricultural practices and turn them into a competitive, value-driven industry. By prioritising quality lemongrass cultivation, advanced essential oil extraction, and product value addition, the cluster is setting new benchmarks in rural enterprises. Through the use of research-backed techniques and modern technology, it is redefining the region's agricultural potential.

A Ground for Growth

Technology, Testing, and Local Enterprise

The cluster's strength lies in its role as a center for innovation. Continuous research and development efforts are improving cultivation techniques and refining the extraction process. A major milestone has been the establishment of an in-house essential oil testing facility, allowing the cluster to meet stringent quality standards for both domestic and international markets. This innovation hub is a testament to how local resources, when supported by technology, can compete at a global level.

Leading with Expertise

Ms. Chinghoihkim and the Science of Quality

A key figure behind this success is Ms. Chinghoihkim, a trained pharmacist from RIPSAT,



Agartala. She leads the oil extraction process and ensures that the final product meets strict quality standards. She operates the Shimadzu GC-MS system at the Common Facility Center (CFC), a sophisticated tool that tests the purity and composition of oils. By conducting regular tests twice a week, she plays a crucial role in maintaining the cluster's high standards.

Beyond Agriculture

Empowering Communities and Building Resilience

The Churachandpur Aromatic Cluster is more than a farming initiative; it is a driver of rural economic development. By blending indigenous knowledge with modern technology, the project has created a thriving agro-based industry that benefits local communities. It fosters collective ownership, improves farming practices, and ensures sustainable use of natural resources.

The Bigger Picture

A Scalable Model for the Future of Sustainable Farming

The Churachandpur Aromatic Cluster is a remarkable example of how innovation and traditional knowledge can come together to build a resilient, sustainable economy. With its focus on lemongrass cultivation and essential oil production, the cluster has uplifted livelihoods and established a model for environmentally sound and economically viable agriculture. It showcases the vast potential of Northeast India to emerge as a leader in the aromatic and medicinal plant sector—setting an inspiring precedent for others to follow.

