Community farming can revive agriculture: Mantri

Panaji: Fallow lands are increasing in Goa due to various social factors. These must be revived with the help of community farming and by doing in-depth microclimatic studies, said agriculture minister, Vijai Sardesai.

“We must thus attempt to revive agriculture through community farming which is a cooperative cultivation model like the ‘gaunkari’ (comunidade) system in Goa,” he said.

Sardesai was speaking at the release of the report on Agricultural Land Use Planning of Goa on Tuesday.

“The fallow land study must be followed up with microclimatic studies so that farmers know what crops grow best in which soil. This will ensure a horticulture hub model,” he added.

The agriculture department had signed an MoU with ICAR-National Bureau of Soil Survey and Land Use Planning, Nagpur, for mapping the fallow land under a project titled ‘Characterization and mapping of land resources of Goa in reference to cultivated and fallow land use system – A step towards enhancing agricultural productivity.’ The statistics of fallow land mapping in the state of Goa indicate that fallow lands in the district of North Goa cover an area of 8,563 hectares and in South Goa, fallow land occupies 3,510 hectares area.

Taluka-wise distribution reveals that fallow lands cover the highest area on 3,669 hectares in Tiswadi and the lowest area on 77 hectares in Sattari. A land resource inventory of Goa has been prepared which reports the extent, distribution and characteristics of soils in Goa.

Each soil series in the state is described in terms of soil depth, drainage, colour, texture and slope and the associate landforms. A total of 33 soil series are identified and mapped into 171 soil mapping units at phases of soil series level. “This soil database is very useful in providing exhaustive information not only for farmers but also for the planners, executors and administrators. It has its relevance not only in agriculture but also for other allied activities like irrigation, soil conservation, water harvesting, forestry, horticulture, floriculture and landscape developers,” said an agriculture official.