

## Open sea cage culture to help boost fish production in state



Open sea cage culture implemented in Karwar by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI)  
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As the fish production in the country is not proportionate to its demand, the government is all set to promote ‘open sea cage culture’ in a big way.

Cage culture is an alternative to inland and brackish water farming, whereby existing water resources are used to increase fish and shellfish production, and the fish are enclosed in a cage allowing the water to pass freely between the fish in the sea.

Using technology developed by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), various state governments are likely to implement the method in a phased manner to build confidence among the fisherfolk, so that it can be opted as a livelihood opportunity to increase their income.

Around 50 cages in Goa, 20 in Maharashtra and 16 in Karnataka (eight each in Karwar and Kumta) will be implemented in the coming days, according to a CMFRI scientist.

“The decline in marine fish landing along the Indian coast poses a serious question about the availability of fishery resources, which are a source of cheap protein to common man. Unlike farmers, fisherfolk do not have assets like estates and plantations. So, there is a need to produce more from the same resources, and open sea cage culture is one way to address this issue,” said K K Philipose, scientist-in-charge, Karwar research centre of CMFRI.

“We are currently producing only around seven million tonnes of fish; it is likely to increase to 20 million by 2020,” he added.

Apart from the ecological factors resulting in reduction of fish catch, scientists believe that since the existing capture methods have exploited resources indiscriminately, mainly due to socio-economic pressure, there is a need for sustainable practice of fish production