

EXPORT | FALLS

■ State suffers a loss of ₹150 cr in 2015 due to a sharp fall in the availability of sardines

Oil sardine in troubled waters as climate goes awry

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Fisheries sector in Kerala has suffered a loss of ₹150 cr in 2015 due to sharp fall in the availability of oil sardines in coastline of the state, according to a study prepared by the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI). The Kochi-based CMFRI has submitted a report based on the study to

Minister for Fisheries J Mercykutty Amma on Thursday during a meeting of research and academic institutes in fisheries sector convened by the Minister held at the CMFRI here.

The sardine famine has resulted in 28.2 per cent losses in employment and 45.8 per cent in wage share in the fisheries sector. Average price increase for sardine consumers in the



state was 60 per cent, with the price going up from ₹26 per kg to ₹65 per kg.

CMFRI analysed reasons behind the sharp decline in

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sardine catch in recent years. "After 2012, there has been serious disruption in the timing of breeding time and strength of environ-

mental events like upwelling in the Arabian Sea. Besides, 2015 was a strong El Nino year with reduced rainfall and increased sea surface temperature. These coupled with excessive fishing on the stock beyond the maximum sustainable yield and excessive capture of juveniles during 2010-12 has led to a famine in the oil sardine stock in the Arabian Sea off Kerala", the study said.

The report, prepared under the leadership of Dr. V Kripa, Head, Fishery Environment and Management Division of the CMFRI, also indicates the chances of a full recovery in sardine catch this year is remote.

"The conditions of the fish and upwelling are good. But a depleted fish stock requires time for rebuilding its population", the report said.

The CMFRI proposed the State government to introduce effective precautionary measures, including strengthening the curbs on fishing juvenile fishes and bringing in regulation on reducing the length and depth of fishing net. Dr. A Gopalakrishnan, Director of CMFRI offered all support to the state government in carrying out research for improvement of the fishery sector in the state.