

Business Standard

CMFRI claims success in mass seed production of fish species

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In a major breakthrough, scientists of a city-based premier research institute claim to have succeeded in the mass scale seed production of orange spotted grouper (*Epinephelus coiodes*), a highly demanded fish species in the market.

The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) claimed that the achievement is the first-of-its-kind in India and the hatchery seed production of the species, carried out by the Vishakapatnam Regional Centre of CMFRI, is expected to boost the sea cage culture enterprises in the country.

The orange spotted grouper is a commercially important carnivorous fish with high market demand in many parts of the world, scientists said.

Senior Scientist at Vishakapatnam Regional Centre of CMFRI, Shubhadeep Ghosh said the institute made this achievement after the continuous efforts of scientists and technical staff for the last two years to enhance the survival rate of the larvae.

"Initial success in seed production of the fish was achieved in 2014, but the survival rate of the larvae was very low. After manipulating different water quality and feeding protocols, enhanced survival rate with 10 per cent was achieved this time," he said.

The larvae are now in advanced fry stage with a size of around 3 cm after 42 days of rearing in the hatchery and ready to be transferred to the nursery rearing. Later the fingerlings can be used for mariculture in grow-out cages, he added.

Director of CMFRI, Gopalakrishnan said the success in seed production of orange spotted grouper has raised a ray of hope for the mariculture of the fish using hatchery produced seeds in the country.

"The development will generate enormous scope for mariculture helping the farmers to carry out sea cage culture of the species, opening a good business opportunity for fish farmers and exporters in the country," he said.

Gopalakrishnan said, in most of the major fish landing centres, the fish fetches Rs 400-450/kg in wholesale market, whereas the live fish sale in international market fetches 3-4 times higher prices, indicating the prospects of mariculture of the species.

In the context that FAO demanding the species be cultured and produced one lakh tonne a year globally, the success in the seed production of the fish will help India to contribute significantly to the global production of the grouper, he added.