

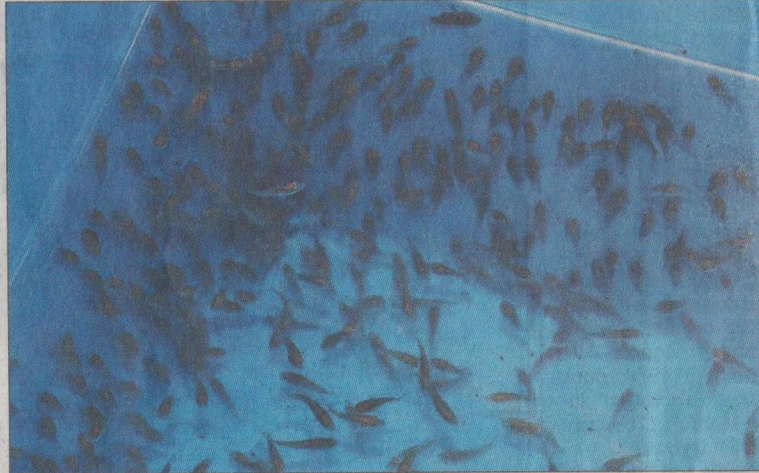
## CMFRI achieves breakthrough in mariculture through seed production of orange spotted grouper

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**Visakhapatnam:** In a major breakthrough in the mariculture business in the country, the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Visakhapatnam, has succeeded in mass scale seed production of orange spotted grouper (*Epinephelus coioides*), a fish species high in demand. The achievement is said to be the first-of-its-kind in India.

The hatchery seed production of the species, carried by the Vishakhapatnam 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.

Shubhadeep Ghosh, senior scientist at Vishakhapatnam Regional Centre of CMFRI, 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 water quality (by changing the water salinity and oxygen content) and feeding protocols, enhanced survival rate with 10 per cent was achieved this time. The



Mass scale seed production of orange spotted grouper

larvae are now in advanced fry stage with a size of around three 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 said.

Dr A Gopalakrishnan, director of CMFRI, stated that the success in seed production of orange spotted grouper has raised 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. Orange spotted grouper is a potential species for mariculture because it is compatible to high temperature, hardy nature and tastier with high market value," he said.

"In most of the major fish landing centres, the fish fetches Rs 400 to Rs 450 per kg in the wholesale market,

Orange spotted grouper is available globally but predominantly in the tropical and sub-tropical waters and it forms the mainstay in the world Live Reef Food Fish (LRFF) trade, particularly in several Asian countries such as Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia

whereas the live fish sale in the international market fetches three to four times higher price. Further, the success in the seed production of the fish will help India to contribute significantly to the global production of the grouper," he added.

Orange spotted grouper is available globally but predominantly in the tropical and sub-tropical waters and it forms the mainstay in the world Live Reef Food Fish (LRFF) trade, particularly in several Asian countries such as Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia. Known as 'amur,' the groupers are highly in demand in the Middle Eastern countries. In India, it is distributed in both the east and west coasts.