

## Cage fish farming becoming a hit in Kerala

**Kochi, Apr 2 (PTI)** The cage fish farming model is becoming popular in Kerala after its success in a nearby tiny island where farmers, mostly women, have reaped mega harvest of fish varieties such as pearl spot, seabass and tilapia.

Guided by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) here, the farmers in Pizhala Island took to the model an year ago and their success has inspired the institute to popularise it in other parts of the state.

CMFRI said even the non-farming community in the state had turned to the less expensive model attracted by the story of farmers in Pizhala island.

Besides Ernakulam where the maximum number of cage farming enterprises are in operation, the initiative has been taken up in Kannur, Malappuram, Thrissur, Alappuzha, Kottayam and Kollam districts.

"It is the success story of cage fish farming venture in Pizhala in Ernakulam which has attracted more people including non-farmers into the cage culture," Head of Mariculture Division in CMFRI Dr Imelda Joseph said.

"There are around 100 farming units in place in Pizhala Island under the guidance of CMFRI where most of the farmers are women", she said.

The institute said it provided technical support to those interested in the cage farming to equip them launch the model by giving guidance on areas such as cage fabrication and installation, site identification, seed selection, feed management and trading.

Soon after the training, the participants belonging to different parts of the state launched the farming of commercially important fish varieties such as pearl spot, sea bass, red snapper, tilapia and giant trevally in the brackish and fresh water bodies in their respective regions.

The farming in Pizhala was started nearly a year ago by stocking fish seeds in cages made of GI pipes with the size of four metre each width and length and six metre depth.

The technical support is being extended by the Mariculture Division of CMFRI to the farmers, helping them become successful entrepreneurs in cage fish farming.

Imelda said two years ago, the farmers in Kerala were not much interested in investing money on cage culture, but now the situation had considerably changed.

"More people from across the state is approaching CMFRI expressing their willingness to launch cage farming enterprises. This is a positive sign that Kerala is moving towards for a fish revolution utilising its highly prospective water resources", she said.