

Industrialists urged to invest in mariculture

A meet of eminent scientists, policy makers, research managers, academicians, industrialists, bankers and administrators today urged industrialists to invest money in mariculture to increase fish production in the country.

The meeting was organised by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute here to mark 37 years of mariculture research, education and development in the country.

Pointing out the present crisis in capture fishery, J K Jena, Deputy Director General of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi, asked industrialists in the sector to come forward and concentrate on mariculture besides their entrepreneurial initiatives in shrimp farming.

"Since the union government is deliberate on eradicating poverty in India by 2030, it will promote and encourage all initiatives to increase the production in food and nutrition sectors", he said adding that mariculture was one of the best alternative for ensuring the food security in the country.

The meet, which was organised by as part of the ongoing year-long platinum jubilee celebrations of CMFRI, proposed to formulate industrial advisory bodies with the participation of scientists and industrialists to accelerate mariculture entrepreneurship in India. Experts opined that consortium of experts from research, industry and banking was required to elevate the mariculture industry from a mediocre level to corporate level.

The meet also demanded that the PG and Ph D programmes in mariculture be restarted in the country. Representing industry, P Surendran, an industrialist, said mariculture was one of the emerging and prospective sector for entrepreneurs. "The industry at present is mostly constrained to shrimp farming, which produces five million tonnes per annum earning Rs 35,000 crore," he said.

A Gopalakrishnan, CMFRI Director, said private-public partnership was the need of the hour to boost mariculture in the country. "We have to emulate the successful mariculture models implemented by South East Asian countries where mariculture has grown significantly catering to the food and economic security of those countries."

"The Chinese model of developing seafood based products from plant-origin materials such as seaweeds and micro algae can complement our requirements on growing demand for seafood", he said. Apart from the traditional monotonous single species oriented culture systems, India should go for multiple species in mariculture, he added.

Gopalakrishnan also said CMFRI is in the process of preparing guidelines to formulate the National Mariculture Policy to enhance sea cage fish farming ventures in India.

P S B R James, former CMFRI Director, said CRZ rules should not be amended for the sake of tourism. "The regulation is meant for the protection of the sea and coastal areas, not for promoting tourism", he added.

Suresh Kumar, senior official from NABARD, explained the financial assistance being given by NABARD for promoting agricultural initiatives.