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NOW, FISHERS CAN LOCATE CATCH USING ISRO SATELLITES

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THERE'S good news for fishermen hit by dwindling fish population. The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) and the Isro will now identify and forecast Potential Fishing Zone (PFZ) using satellites. The project 'Samudra' will help fishermen locate shoals of fish without wasting time and fuel on boats.

As per the presser issued by the CMFRI, in the first phase the CMFRI and the Space Applications Centre (SAC) of the Isro have jointly launched a research project for identifying, forecasting and monitoring PFZ in the coastal and offshore waters of Tamil Nadu. The collaborative research work focuses on developing and running a satellite-based ocean forecasting model to provide PFZ advisories.

The project aims to develop a satellite-based ocean model to forecast information about the fishing locations by closely monitoring and analysing various physical changes in the ocean. As part of the research work, physically collected data on fish catch, water quality and biophysical parameters will be validated with a satellite-derived data.

CMFRI director A Gopalakrishnan said the collaborative research project is a milestone in the history of the fisheries sector in India. The project assumes significance at a time when India's fishery sector is passing through a difficult phase, he said.

"The new technology will help India achieve a substantial growth in marine fish production. The seas surrounding the Indian subcontinent contribute an average 3.5 million tonne of seafood. The potential yield of seafood is estimated to be around 4.41 million tonne from the Indian exclusive economic zone. In this scenario, identification, mapping and forecasting of PFZ is very essential," he said.

Shoba Joe Kizhakudan, CMFRI principal scientist at its Chennai Research Centre, is the principal investigator of 'Samudra' research project. As part of identifying potential fishing zones, the behaviour of fish habitats controlled by many environmental parameters such as seawater temperature, salinity, currents, the presence of planktons, etc will be monitored. "It is also essential to understand the links among various ocean parameters in order to spot the fishing locations accurately", she said. The project development will be evaluated by experts during the second international SAFARI conference organised by the CMFRI at Kochi in January.