**Blue Revolution Scheme:
ICAR-CMFRI launches programme to train 5000 fishermen in open sea cage farming**

The ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has launched a major project for boosting the open sea cage farming in Indian waters, setting a stage for the Blue Revolution. The Institute started providing training to 5000 fishermen across the country in sea cage farming with an aim to bolster the mariculture activities in the country in the wake of a stagnation in the capture fishery. The project envisages accelerating the process for ushering in the Blue Revolution by providing effective training to the fishermen with a financial support of nearly Rs 1 crore from the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare.

The first phase of the programme began at the Headquarters of the ICAR-CMFRI in Kochi on 29th January 2018 with a three-day long training that was attended by 50 fishermen in the central region of Kerala. CMFRI will extend the training programme to the fishermen in all the maritime States accordingly.

While speaking at the inauguration of the programme, Dr A Gopalakrishnan, Director of ICAR-CMFRI said: “ICAR-CMFRI will extend all technical support to the fishermen to start cage farming enterprises in the open sea waters which will become an additional income to the fishermen and will help increase the marine fish production of the country. CMFRI’s door will be always open to the fishermen community”.

S Mahesh, Deputy Director of Fisheries, Government of Kerala inaugurated the three-day training programme. Dr A Gopalakrishnan, Director of ICAR-CMFRI presided over. Dr Imelda Joseph, Head of Mariculture Division of ICAR-CMFRI and Dr Boby Ignatius, Principal Scientist of the Institute interacted with the fishermen on the occasion.

The cage fish farming technology has proved 70 times more productive than the normal methods of the fish farming in ponds. Conventional pond culture of marine fishes produces an average 0.5 kg/m3 (5000 kg/ha) whereas cage farming offers a production of 35 kg/m3.

The ICAR-CMFRI has already commenced the works to establish a brood bank of high value marine fishes suitable to the cage farming with a financial support of Rs 9 crore from the NFDB.

Mariculture Division of the ICAR-CMFRI is coordinating the programme.

It is presumed that by 2030, fish consumption in developing and developed countries is expected to increase by 57% and 4% respectively. Cage fish farming in sea waters has proved economically viable as it requires comparatively less cost of capital input. It is expected that the sea cage farming will get a major boost once the National Mariculture Policy is notified and comes in force in the country in near future. The species such as cobia, seabass, groupers, snappers, mullet, lobster and pearl spot are highly suitable for cage farming in sea waters.