



# Facing and quashing taboos

## Express Features

**A**dventurous and inspiring life sketches of Rekha Karthikeyan, the first fisherwoman of India, dominated the experience sharing meet of women farmers and entrepreneurs in fisheries sector organised by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) on Monday

Thrilling anecdotes about her battle against giant waves and taboos existed in the society in connection with Rekha venturing into the sea for a livelihood helped the audience at the CMFRI understand the real meaning of women empowerment.

The meet was organised in the wake of the National Women Farmer's Day to share experiences of women employees and entrepreneurs in a slew of areas such as fishing, cage fish farming, bivalve farming, ornamental fish farming, fish fertiliser, dried fish, fish trade and integrated farming.

Rekha Karthikeyan, who was recognised by the CMFRI as the first fisherwoman in the country last year, shared her sufferings and difficulties she faced during the early phase of her career in fishing, with the audience.

According to Rekha, women can succeed in all the fields just like men if they have willpower and patience. She goes into the sea for around 50 km for fishing in a fibre boat with her husband, and is also confident that anything that a man can do using a fibre boat can be performed by her in the sea.

Smija T M, a cage fish farmer in Periyar, said even though she suffered a huge loss due to the recent floods, she was in no

way to avoid cage fish farming. Around 20 women shared their respective experiences with the audience.

A panel discussion, held as part of the programme, observed that cage fish farming and ornamental fish culture were highly prospective areas suitable for women for livelihood.

V Kripa, Shoji Joseph, Rema Madhu and N Aswathy were the panellists at the discussion.

K K Joshi, C Ramachandran and Vipin Kumar spoke on the occasion.

A talk on health issues in women was delivered by Vinita Murali. A painting competition for Fisheries VHSC girl students on the topic 'Women Empowerment in Fisheries

Sector' was also held on the occasion.

The programme was jointly organised by the Socio-Economic and Evaluation division and the Women Cell of the CMFRI.



Rekha Karthikeyan

