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Women soar high in fisheries sector

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From the deep sea-fishing Rekha Karthikeyan near Chettuva to mussel farming Praseela Shaji at Moothakunnam, there is in these women a spirit of determination and readiness to take on the challenges of life in their battle for survival. If you thought fishing came easy to these women entrepreneurs living close to the sea and backwaters, it is not true.

"It was so frightening initially," says Ms. Karthikeyan, about her first venture into deep-sea fishing. "But the fright did go away. I was never intimidated," she adds.

She has been recognised by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute as the lone wo-

man in the country actively engaged in deep-sea fishing.

She and her husband Karthikeyan use their boat for fishing ventures on a daily basis.

The couple with four children, routinely take to the seas to feed the family.

Undeterred by deluge

For Ms. Shaji, the mid-August 2018 flood was a life-changer. It threatened to derail her life. The floodwaters washed away the mussel farming ventures of dozens of women entrepreneurs like her. While some of them gave up, she did not. Ms. Shaji her friends have put the pieces together and is now fast on the road to achieving normality in mussel production.



For a good catch: Praseela Shaji engaged in oyster farming in Moothakunnam.

The major fishery based micro-enterprises being taken care of by women self-help groups include bivalve farming (mussel and edible oyster culture), seaweed culture, ornamental fish culture, cage culture, Chinese dip-net units, fish amino acid units, fish fer-

tilizer units, clam processing, fish drying, fish pickling, ready-to cook and eat fish products, aqua-tourism, seafood kitchen units, dry fish procuring, fish vending, prawn culture, crab processing, aquaponics and fish feed production, says a CMFRI scientist.