

## Experts to analyse declining sardine catch in Arabian Sea

**‘Intensity of El Nino will decide the decrease or increase in sardine availability’**

Experts from different research institutes in the country will gather at the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) on Tuesday to analyse the reasons behind the fluctuation of oil sardine in the southern Arabian Sea.

The national-level symposium will try to identify the factors affecting this marine species along the southwest coasts and will find ways and means to address the issue.

Experts working in the areas of climate change, oceanography, fishery biology and socio-economics will engage in a panel discussion to set a way for the future course of research on fluctuating trend of oil sardine on a multi-disciplinary platform.

“The meet aims to recognise micro-level ecological factors of the ocean that influence the biological cycle of oil sardine,” said EM Abdussamad, Principal Scientist at the CMFRI. “Recent investigation of the CMFRI had indicated that climate change, especially El Nino-La Nina episodes, has a significant impact on the oil sardine.

### Micro-level analysis

Based on this, CMFRI had issued an advisory that availability of sardine from Kerala coasts this year would decrease drastically depending on the intensity of El Nino. The collapse experiencing today endorses the CMFRI findings. However, micro-level analysis is required to identify how various oceanographic and climatic parameters affect the biology of the fish, he said.

Apart from El Nino, various oceanographic phenomena such as increase in the sea surface temperature, up-welling and fluctuations in ocean productivity are considered crucial factors affecting the life-cycle of oil sardine. A multi-disciplinary approach is essential to analyse these aspects to generate a refined view on this enigmatic fish species, he said.

The sardine resource is highly susceptible to frequent and heavy fluctuations, but specific causative agents for this remain an enigma to the researchers, fishers and managers, he said, adding that the discussion on a multi-disciplinary approach would lead to a better understanding of the reasons behind the situation.